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A GIFT FOR BBC Grant funds green studies

AT THE BAY PAGE 3

'WELL' DONE Energy options become available

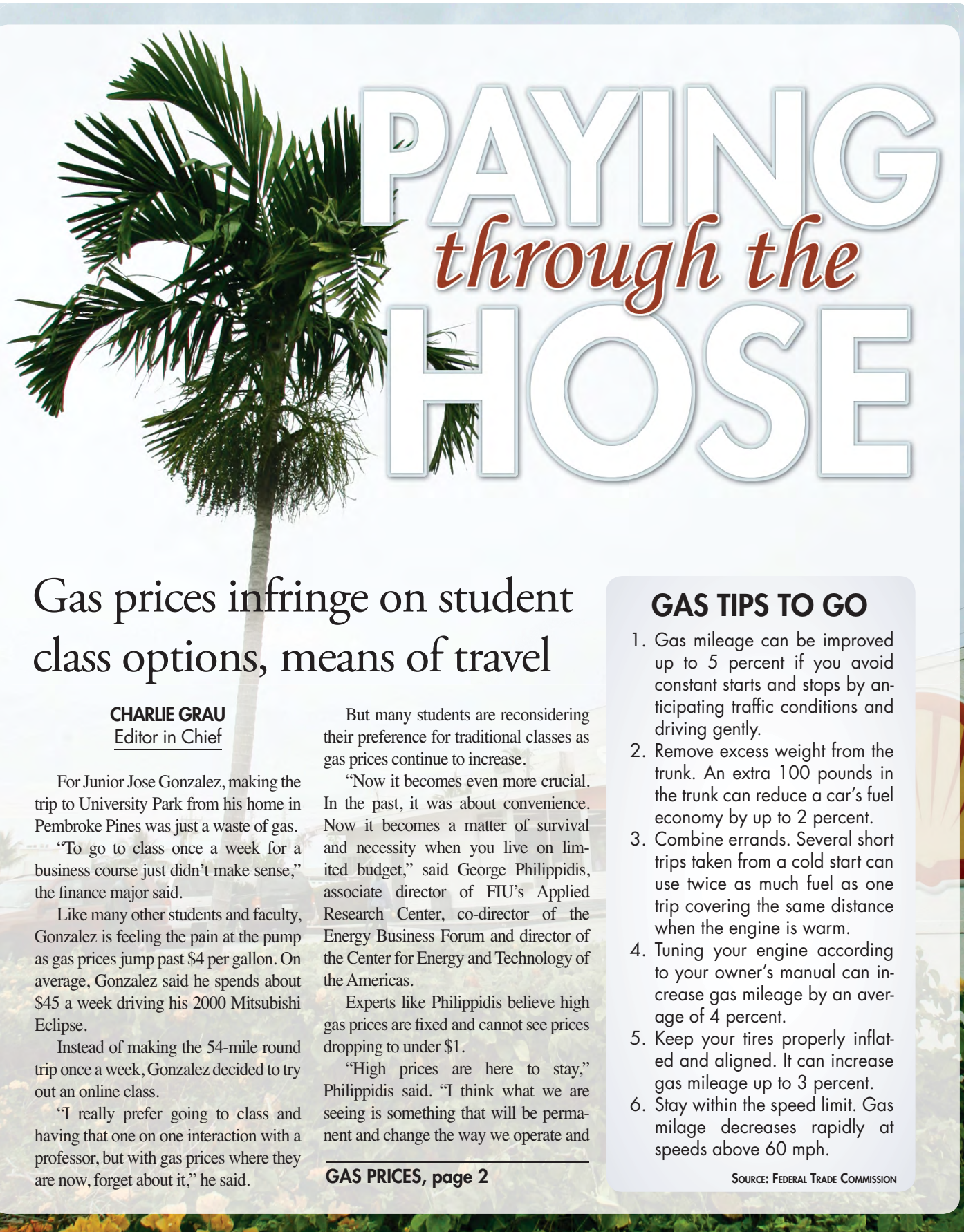
OPINION PAGE 4

WARPED PHOTOS Punk rock fest comes to Miami

LIFE! PAGE 6

FOOTBALL FIGHTER Linebacker training to be a fighter

SPORTS PAGE 8



Gas prices infringe on student class options, means of travel

CHARLIE GRAU
Editor in Chief

For Junior Jose Gonzalez, making the trip to University Park from his home in Pembroke Pines was just a waste of gas.

"To go to class once a week for a business course just didn't make sense," the finance major said.

Like many other students and faculty, Gonzalez is feeling the pain at the pump as gas prices jump past \$4 per gallon. On average, Gonzalez said he spends about \$45 a week driving his 2000 Mitsubishi Eclipse.

Instead of making the 54-mile round trip once a week, Gonzalez decided to try out an online class.

"I really prefer going to class and having that one on one interaction with a professor, but with gas prices where they are now, forget about it," he said.

But many students are reconsidering their preference for traditional classes as gas prices continue to increase.

"Now it becomes even more crucial. In the past, it was about convenience. Now it becomes a matter of survival and necessity when you live on limited budget," said George Philippidis, associate director of FIU's Applied Research Center, co-director of the Energy Business Forum and director of the Center for Energy and Technology of the Americas.

Experts like Philippidis believe high gas prices are fixed and cannot see prices dropping to under \$1.

"High prices are here to stay," Philippidis said. "I think what we are seeing is something that will be permanent and change the way we operate and

GAS PRICES, page 2

GAS TIPS TO GO

1. Gas mileage can be improved up to 5 percent if you avoid constant starts and stops by anticipating traffic conditions and driving gently.
2. Remove excess weight from the trunk. An extra 100 pounds in the trunk can reduce a car's fuel economy by up to 2 percent.
3. Combine errands. Several short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as one trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm.
4. Tuning your engine according to your owner's manual can increase gas mileage by an average of 4 percent.
5. Keep your tires properly inflated and aligned. It can increase gas mileage up to 3 percent.
6. Stay within the speed limit. Gas mileage decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 mph.

SOURCE: FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Carpool initiative allocates open spots

SAUL PEREZ
Contributing Writer

Rounding the floors in the Gold and Blue garages, searching for available parking spots but wasting time and gas instead; students are looking for alternatives to cut both.

Students can find salvation in the GreenRide Carpool Program, a software program bought by the University to encourage students and faculty to conserve fuel, decrease traffic congestion, and preserve the environment by reducing pollution.

GreenRide, a Web-program with geographic information system software, offers users the fastest routes to take and allows them to connect with other potential carpoolers in the same area with similar work schedules.

In the process, users save gas as drivers rotate driving responsibilities, and time as the University will offer more spaces for these commuters.

Operating since July 1, students have already registered and complimented on FIU's initiative to respond to these issues.

"There will be less of a reason to have cars which might mean more spaces," sophomore Kaisy Maldonado, who registered the first week of its introduction, said. "I think that it will benefit the students by providing them with a safer and more cost effective way to travel."

Registration is simple. Users enter their location and schedule information and are automatically matched with other users according to the fastest route to and from campus.

Users can then form carpool groups that must apply to the Parking office for a GreenRide decal.

Students, such as sophomore Ana Linares, see the new program as a relief to gas prices and to parking on campus.

"FIU offers better parking spaces in return for participating in a carpool--it's a good compromise" said Linares.

The University is providing preferred parking spaces to registered users with designated GreenRide decals.

The department will only hand out a decal once a carpool group is confirmed. This allows students to meet up with other students ahead of time so there are no insecurities in riding with someone the students hardly know.

Miss FIU claims more than a crown

OLGA VELEZ
Contributing Writer

Though being in a state-run pageant is only a dream for some, thanks to the Miss FIU pageant, Michelle Montesino made the dream a reality.

Montesino won the second annual Miss FIU pageant last month, landing her a spot in the Miss Florida competition earlier this month.

"I was very nervous competing for Miss FIU," Montesino

said. "My nervousness further increased just a couple of hours before the big event when I injured my toes during rehearsal. But I somehow pulled through by the end of the night when I was announced as the next Miss FIU. Although exhausted, with blood stains at the tips of my evening gown, it is a moment I will treasure forever."

Out of the nine women who competed to be the next Miss FIU, Michelle won because "[The judges] saw

her enthusiasm, poise and determination shine through in all areas of competition," said Zasha Fernandez, director of Miss FIU Public Relations.

This is not the first time she has competed in a pageant.

"Well, my first pageant was when I was eleven and I was sort of forced to enter because my mom was paying for it. It was a lot of fun, but after that experience I didn't think I'd ever enter a pageant again," Montesino said.

But she was wrong.

"Then, when I was 16, I competed in the Miss Miami Tropic

Scholarship pageant which was a local pageant that gave away scholarship money. I won that title. Then I decided to take it up a notch when I went for Miss FIU," Montesino said.

However, this is the first year she has competed for Miss FIU and Miss Florida.

"I always loved watching pageants on television and I'd frequently wonder whether I'd ever get to compete for a local title. I first received the application for Miss FIU during Freshman Orientation



MONTESINO

MONTESINO, page 2

GREENRIDE, page 2

Winner treasures family, service as beauty competitor

MONTESINO, page 1

and I thought it was the perfect opportunity to not only compete for the title of Miss FIU but get involved on campus as well," Montesino said.

Montesino said she is attending FIU because of the diverse environment and because it is a great choice for her major, business management. She is currently in her sophomore year also pursuing a minor in dance education in order to one day open up her own studio.

The beauty queen said family is an important part of her life.

"We are a big Cuban family, therefore we have a tendency to get loud, but we all love to have fun and spend quality time with one another," Montesino said. "My family is extremely supportive of my decisions. They are behind me each and every step of the way."

The Miss FIU pageant is an annual event in its second year; it is organized by the Student Government Association and is completely run by volunteers. According to Fernandez, local vendors also assist the pageant by providing prizes for the contestants and winner, or by placing advertisements in the Miss FIU program booklet.

Additional money is raised by the Miss FIU committee throughout the year. According to Katie McGee, staff director and advisor for Miss FIU, FIU's Panhellenic Council donated \$250 this year to the Miss FIU scholarship.

The Miss FIU pageant also raises money for the Children's Miracle Network. According to McGee, all of the local pageants in Florida raised over \$30,000 for the CMN this year. The Miss FIU pageant raised around \$250 and spent time volunteering at the Miami Children's Hospital, which is part of CMN.

"I also do community service at Miami Children's Hospital and with my platform 'The Art of Hope.' I help to instill a more imaginative and hopeful spirit in the children's playroom by engaging patients in fun-filled art projects," Montesino said.

According to the Miss Florida Web site, Michelle Montesino represented FIU in the Miss Florida pageant; however, Sierra Minnot of Palm Beach County was named Miss Florida on July 6, 2008.

"Michelle was outstanding in all areas of competition. She also did a great job representing FIU at the Miss Florida Pageant," McGee said.

Drivers look to save gas with GreenRide

GREENRIDE, page 1

Students see this as a great idea, but some think there are a lot of points to look into when discussing a driving or transportation solution, such as the implementation of insurance cases or safety precautions.

"The department of parking should assess driving records and insurance policies, to minimize risk," said Junior Jean Roseme.

According to Roseme, the program is a "step in the right direction," but it might serve as a short-term solution if the current gas

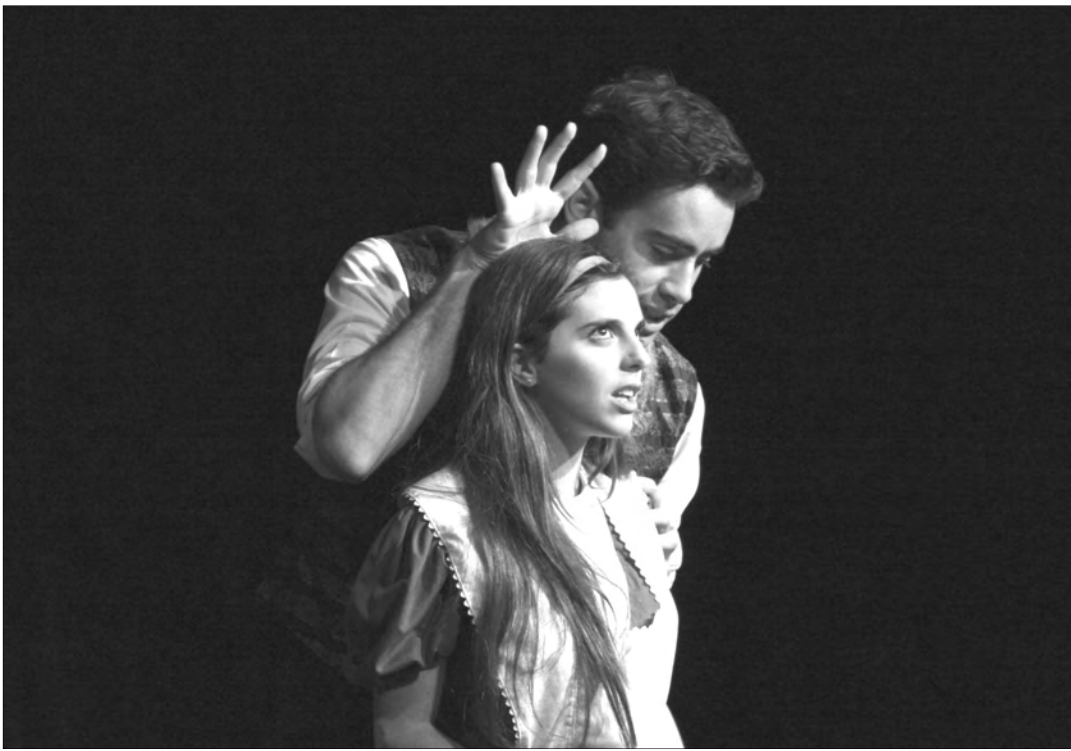
prices and University budget dilemmas continue.

A suggestion that arose from student leaders was that the faculty, administration, and student organizations should take the initiative in creating carpool groups to increase involvement in the program.

"FIU administration and student leaders should lead the charge as effective marketing," Roseme said.

GreenRide is part of the University's broad Go Green initiative established by the President's Climate Commitment Taskforce at FIU.

MUSHROOM IN HER HANDS



GIOVANI GUADARRAMA/THE BEACON

HELLO, ALICE: Junior Janine Granda and Senior Pedro Mir portray Alice Liddle and the Chesire Cat in a Distinguished Monkey Production of "Mushroom in Her Hands." The adult adaptation of Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" was directed by Senior Matthew Mur and ran from July 9-13.

Students turn to selling cars, online classes to save cash

GAS PRICES, page 1

live."

Because prices do not look like they will drop anytime soon, some students have decided to ditch their trucks and SUVs, opting for smaller, more fuel efficient vehicles.

Miguel Martinez, a graduate student, traded in his Land Rover for a 2008 Honda Accord after he decided spending \$400 a month was the final straw. Every Saturday, Martinez makes the 28.11 mile drive from his home located close to University Park to Biscayne Bay Campus.

"Before, I used to go everywhere and I didn't even think about gas. Now I have to make sure I have enough money for gas. You have to include it in your monthly budget. Before \$20 would fill up your tank," Martinez said.

Many other truck and SUV owners are trying to dump their gas guzzlers, but aren't finding many buys.

A June 4 article in *The Los Angeles Times* said that cars were outselling trucks and SUVs by almost 200,000 in May.

Graduate student Nithin Zachariah has been trying to sell his Mitsubishi Montero Sport for the past month. He has had some people inquire about the SUV, but no serious buyers.

"I spend \$40 a week on gas, so I decided to sell my car so I can buy a more fuel efficient one," Zachariah said.

Some students are trying to have their class schedules match up with their friends so they can carpool to school.

Another option for students to save money on gas is to enroll in the University's GreenRide Carpool Program. The online application allows students and FIU employees to set up carpooling groups. Members enrolled in the program can search for other members based on location, schedule and lifestyle

LOWEST GAS PRICES NEAR CAMPUS (Unleaded Regular)

UNIVERSITY PARK

- \$3.97 - Chevron on 6201 Sunset Drive
- \$4.05 - Sunoco on Coral Way and 88 Ave.
- \$4.07 - Citgo 10450 W. Flagler Street
- \$4.07 - Sunoco on 10198 West Flagler Street

\$4.08 - Shell on 8701 S.W. 24 Street

BISCAYNE BAY CAMPUS

- \$4.01 - Amerika on 98 N.E. 167 Ave.
- \$4.05 - U-Gas on 290 N.E. 167 St.
- \$4.07 - BP on 14590 Biscayne Boulevard

SOURCE: GASBUDDY.COM

preference.

"In just the first two days, we have had over 100 people register and have had two different carpool

decided to take the Golden Panther Express shuttle instead.

"When my gas tank is close to E, I just take the shuttle," Jean said, who

I really prefer going to class and having that one on one interaction with a professor, but with gas prices where they are now, forget about it.

Jose Gonzalez, Junior

possibilities contact the office," said Parking and Traffic Director Bill Foster.

Foster also said that the University has had preliminary discussions with a vanpool provider to try to make another option available.

But for sophomore Lisa Jean, carpooling isn't an option.

The nursing student who lives in North Miami said she doesn't know anyone who takes classes at UP and

spends about \$50 a week on gas on her 1996 Toyota Corolla. "My car is not gas efficient and it's over 30 miles from where I stay to here."

For more gas prices by campus, visit our web site, www.fiusm.com/gasprices



THE BEACON

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Grant funds new science certificate

DAINELYS MARTINEZ
Contributing Writer

In recognition of FIU's commitment to the educational needs of the state's diverse population, Jane's Trust awarded the University a \$140,000 grant, laying the foundation for a new environmental studies program at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

BBC has a "unique advantage," said Peter Craumer, chair of the Coastal Environmental Initiative Committee. "The campus has an accessible body of salt water. There is no other campus in the U.S. that has marine sciences, arts and science, a mass communication school and hospitality all together ... educating so many minority students."

The Coastal Environmental Initiative Committee was established to explore possibilities for a new certificate program with a coastal and marine science focus using existing resources at BBC. The committee's members are from diverse departments and schools, including geography, English, humanities and biological sciences.

In April 2007, the committee released a report that was then turned into the proposal submitted to the Boston-based Jane's Trust.

Jane's Trust was created to hon-

or the legacy of Jane B. Cook who was known to be practical and generous to the communities where she lived. The organization's trustees are interested particularly in organizations and projects which primarily benefit under-served populations and disadvantaged communities.

According to the grant proposal, one of the initiative's purposes is to "prepare future leaders of South Florida to confront issues of environmental health, development and recreation management in coastal areas from an interdisciplinary, holistic perspective." The main outcomes will be a multidisciplinary certificate in coastal and marine affairs; an undergraduate fellowship research program; a state-of-the-art coastal environmental research center; a nature center; a "Kayak Day on the Bay" program for BBC freshmen and local elementary students and restoration of BBC's mangrove habitats.

"An interdisciplinary certificate, [encompassing] environmental and coastal themes from all perspectives – that's where the collaboration from different colleges comes in," said Julissa Castellanos, director of operations and academic support services.

The proposal requested a \$200,000 budget, and Jane's Trust contributed two-thirds of that

WAVES OF CHANGE



OLIVER MACDONALD/THE BEACON

FALL FORECASTING: Phase one of restoration construction is underway at BBC's pool. The first phase will focus on the refacing of the diving pool and the area's surrounding landscaping. The project is slated for completion at the end of fall 2008.

amount.

The committee will pursue outside funding from other private foundations and internal funding from the University may also be forthcoming.

A yet to be hired environmental coordinator will conduct activities and programs, such as research, campus restoration projects and outreach community programs. The faculty coordinator, Craumer, will be in charge of the academic part

of the program.

Funding will also be used to add tiki huts with picnic tables, a coastal nature trail and a public lecture series in coastal and marine issues to BBC.

The certificate will be available beginning in the fall of 2009.

"The first step is to get the courses offered," said Michael Heithaus, assistant professor of biological sciences.

Thus, students can start taking

courses this fall. Science courses will include marine biology, introduction to oceanography and marine and coastal environmental policy. Available electives include literature of the sea, cruise line management, coastal and marine tourism, hurricanes and the media, and ecology of South Florida.

Any student from any major can pursue the marine and coastal affairs certificate. All classes for the certificate will be held at BBC.

NEWS FLASH

Biscayne Bay Dramatics club hosts Game Show Day

BBC's Dramatics will host Game Show Day on July 22 in the WUC Ballroom 244 from 2 to 7 p.m. Participation is open to all students and gift cards will be given as prizes. For more information, call (305) 919-5800.

Fitness Center offers free yoga classes and massage therapy

The Fitness Center hosts free yoga classes on Mondays from 3 to 4 p.m., Wednesday from 10 to 11:30 a.m. and Thursdays from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Free massage therapy is available Mondays and Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday massages are offered by appointment only. All fitness levels are welcome to attend. Call (305) 919-5307 for details.

Free HIV testing available at Wellness Center

The Wellness Center provides free HIV testing by appointment. Walk-ins will be accommodated according to the day's appointment schedule. For more information, call (305) 919-5307.

– Compiled by Susana Rodriguez

Local band begins work on first album

MIKIALA C. TENNIE
Contributing Writer

Local band On a Square says its name doesn't need a meaning: the music they make creates it. A band created after a series of members came and went, On a Square is ready to show South Florida what they are all about.

Described by listeners as having a sound reminiscent of The Beatles, On a Square is influenced by other bands such as The Beach Boys, Talking Heads, Pink Floyd, John Bottom and even a little of Broadway. While flattered to have such a comparison, the members of On a Square don't believe their sound has an exact name.

"We're not trying to sound like The Beatles," explained Brandon Fulton, On a Square band mate in charge of percussion and background vocals. "We just want to sound like us."

When asked about the comparison to the legendary pop group, Andres Ramos, On a square piano player and background vocalist adds, "It beats being compared to Kenny G."

Classical music also influences the band's sound, as well as the necessity of earning money while doing what they love.

"We each teach our respective instruments either at clients' homes or in the studio," Ramos adds.

Ultimately, the band describes its sound as easy listening mixed with old school rock and roll.

"People will appreciate our music if they're looking to hear good quality shows with a lot of musicianship. We have a welcoming atmo-

sphere," said Aneil Maharaj, lead vocalist and the band's guitar player.

On a Square recently performed at the Student Organization Council club fair on June 26 at Biscayne Bay Campus, and will return in August during Welcome Week.

After working together for about a year, On a Square is currently recording its first album. They paired up with Devon Fraiser, their manager, and signed with Fullest Entertainment, a small privately owned label based in Miami. They recently finished recording the first song for their album, whose working title is "Ask Me The Question."

"We usually take about one week to record a song, so with editing and a bunch of other stuff, we hope to have the album done in six months," Ramos said.

The band has their own recording studio inside a warehouse owned by Mr. Fulton, Brandon's dad. Denny "Decatti" Ricatti, their sound manager, helps them lay down tracks and edit the music. Even though the studio is where all recording and the scheduled practices take place, song writing takes place elsewhere.

"All of us write the songs, like when we're at home, on the phone or at Dunkin Donuts at 2 a.m. Most of the time the writing is spontaneous," Maharaj said.

Maharaj, who went to LaGuardia School of Music, Art and the Performing Arts in New York, is not new to the stage.

"I played John the Baptist in the musical Godspell. That's what showed me that singing is what I want to do," he explained.

Ramos is a junior psychology major at

FIU. Maharaj and Fulton attend Broward College. Fulton has already become a certified emergency medical technician, and is currently in his fourth and last semester of paramedic school. Maharaj, on the other hand, plans to major in English, hoping that he can apply his studies to his music. He has also completed his first novel.

"Hopefully I will be able to start publishing, maybe by the end of the summer," Maharaj said.

Although they study different subjects, music will always bind them.

"I like making music, creating it and manipulating it," Fulton said.

Maharaj also points out that it's not always about making the audience happy.

"Little bits of the music have to make you feel good, you know," Maharaj said, as he and Ramos experiment with adding a harmonizing tag at the tail-end of a song.

According to On a Square, they are continuously adding different elements to their music to keep things interesting. It's not unusual to hear Ramos on the accordion or hear someone playing a ukulele in the background.

"I'm actually trying to pick up the mandolin," Maharaj said.

"The only thing we're missing is a bass player; we're auditioning if anyone is interested," Ramos said.

In spite of a missing bass player, On a Square continues on its path to fulfillment and success in the music industry. According to Maharaj, "Success for me would be to live off of social security and music."

THE BEACON | Editorial

Students must take initiative, change habits for conservation to be effective

As prices continue to rise at gas stations nationwide, everyone is feeling the crunch.

From the high prices at the pump to the hidden costs found in grocery stores, these are certainly trying times for our wallets.

For decades, Americans have taken the relatively cheap cost of fuel for granted, treating it as less of a luxury and more of a fact of everyday life.

But with the threat of oil production reaching a peak in the near future, we've been forced to face the old adage that you don't know what you've got until it's gone.

As students, we face additional costs because tuition costs continue to rise as well. Given that many of us struggle to find the time to juggle full-time jobs and a full class load, it isn't a stretch to say students are feeling the crunch more than anyone.

With the implementation of the new GreenRide initiative, which allows students to find students in their area that they can car pool with to school, University administration is showing it can at least empathize with the plight of students and is trying to take steps to minimize it.

One other option the University is giving students comes in the form of lowering the cost of online classes.

The \$300 extra fee for each three credit class, which many students may have found prohibitive, has been lowered to \$200.

This is only a feasible option for those students who live further away from campus, but those who do can certainly save themselves some money by taking advantage of this.

While GreenRide is a great option for commuter students, it's effects won't be felt by

all of the University's 37,000 students.

Those students who do live closer to the University would do better to reconsider the option of walking or biking to their classes, something not many have been willing to do.

The inconvenience of having to brave the elements would probably be outweighed by the inefficiencies of starting your car and facing the awful traffic that constantly encircles the campus.

While many skeptics doubted whether even high fuel prices would be able to curb American's enthusiasm for driving the biggest cars on the market, cars are getting smaller and smaller, and we are driving them less and less.

According to the Energy Information Agency, Americans consumed 3.3 percent less gasoline during the Fourth of July weekend than they did last year, a figure which also represented a 5 year low.

The whole point of this gas centric issue is to drive the point home that this isn't an isolated event that will clear out at the end of the summer.

Whether politicians pass some sort of tax relief holiday or allow drilling in the Gulf, Arctic, ANWR or some other short term fix, we are facing the very real possibility that we are looking at the end of our dependence on gas.

Take these suggestions for what they are, but remember, your own experience will shape your needs better than anything.

Talks of legislating changes to our infrastructure won't have any lasting impact unless individuals take it upon themselves to make changes to their day to day lives.

This will help ween us off of natural gas for good.

BE KIND, REFINE

Offshore drilling a viable option

OLGA VELEZ
Contributing Writer

President George Bush on July 14 lifted the executive ban on offshore oil drilling, and urged Congress to do the same, as rising crude oil prices have caused gas costs to be issue in the forefront of the upcoming election.

The ban will expire in October unless Congress acts, causing debate over the merit of the ban on drilling oil off of the coast of Florida and California placed under executive order by President George H.W. Bush in 1990.

A growing number of Republicans believe that the answer lies in allowing drilling in these areas. They are also looking at other methods, such as using nuclear power and oil shale, a rock that can be converted to oil under high temperatures.

"It's something we need to do because of the bigger picture," said Florida Sen. Burt L. Saunders, chairman of the Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee in a June 26 *New York Times* article.

In contrast, Democrats and independent analysts are saying that offshore drilling is not the answer to the rising cost of gasoline.

In the same *New York Times* piece, David Kirsch, an oil analyst at PFC, an energy consulting firm, said "if the most promising areas off Florida and California were opened for drilling, their peak production in a decade could be as little as 250,000 barrels a day — less than a quarter of what the gulf produces now."

"The Energy Information Administration said that even if we open the coasts to oil drilling, that won't have a significant impact on oil

prices," said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid in a June 19 *New York Times* story.

This statement was in contrast to President Bush's calls for ending the drilling ban.

It could take eight to ten years before any drilling off the coast of Florida or California would take place after both coasts have been explored.

No one will know for sure how much oil can be found in these shores until some more exploration is done, which has not yet been done due to the ban.

Considering this, when formulating policy, we need to know all the facts before any decision should be made.

Only exploratory drilling should be allowed until we get a solid estimate as to how much oil can be found.

The environmental effect of this decision should also be taken into account. There is always the risk of a large spill, but advanced technologies relegate this concern to a smaller category than in past decades.

Democrats are saying the answer lies in funding alternative sources of clean energy such as wind, solar and clean coal.

"By spending money on solar, wind, bio fuel and nuclear sources we increase competition among fuel producing companies and in the long term reduce the demand of oil while at the same time protecting our environment," said Dr. George Philippidis, associate director of FIU's Applied Research Center, co-director of the Energy Business Forum and director of the Center for Energy and Technology of the Americas at FIU.

According to Democratic presidential candidate Barack

Obama in the *The New York Times*, advancement in these areas could lead to the creation of up to five-million new jobs as well as lower prices of gasoline.

"Germany, a country as clouded as the Pacific Northwest, is now a world leader in the solar power industry and the quarter million new jobs it has created," said Sen. Obama.

More competition in the fuel market has a guaranteed chance of lowering prices; however, it may take some time before these companies can be properly established.

In the end a decision on whether or not to remove the ban on drilling oil off the coast of California and Florida should not be made until exploratory drilling can determine the amount of oil to be found off each shore.

If there is enough oil to drastically bring down prices then drilling should be considered as an option.

At the same time the government needs to take steps to ensure we have viable alternative fuel sources need to be explored so we do not continue to damage the environment.

When the amount of oil is known an estimate as to how it could impact the environment could also be known and steps to prevent such a disaster could be taken.

With different kinds of fuels equally competing in the market the demand of every kind of fuel will decrease and fuel prices can finally start to lower.

Only along with research and investment in other alternative fuels, and if it is determined that enough oil is present to have a significant impact on our economy should the drilling ban be lifted for good.

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor can be sent to opinion@fiusm.com. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words and include the writer's full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. *The Beacon* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints.

THE BEACON

A Forum for Free Student Expression at Florida International University

Apply in GC 210 or WUC 124

Effects of oil prices felt even when cars at home

KIMBERLY ENGELHARDT
Contributing Writer

As if college expenses weren't enough, we are now facing one more challenge in our lives: surviving today's rapidly changing economic environment.

Gas prices, as everybody has noticed, have been on the rise.

We're pinching our pockets and paying about \$4 a gallon. Mass transit is looking good just about now, but they are going in the red as well. According to the May 28 issue of *The Miami Herald*, mass transit would have to "boost revenues by raising fares, [and] cutting free rides for seniors and nudging up the local gas tax."

County commissioners are also considering another half-penny sales tax increase to keep funding mass transit. In times like this, none of these hikes look very appealing.

There are two factors that are affecting the prices at the pump: speculation and the law of supply and demand.

According to the January issue of *BBC News*, Indian and Chinese "manufacturers and consumers are sucking in energy at an ever-increasing rate."

Also, oil speculation has greatly affected our gas prices.

Speculators are essentially trying to make money by betting that prices will go even higher.

According to CNN on May 8, Senate Democrats are trying to prevent electronic traders from buying oil outside of the United States.

Alternative fuels are still a long way from being part of our everyday lives. So far, ethanol is the most invested upon alternative fuel. However, it's becoming a

burden.

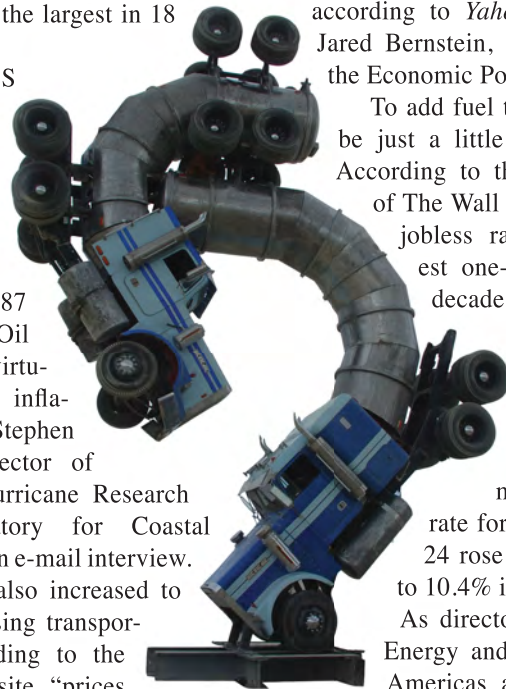
According to the April 30th issue of *Time* magazine some top international food scientists recommend halting the use of food-based biofuels, such as ethanol, so corn prices can be 20 percent cheaper.

A World Bank study has estimated that corn prices "rose by over 60 percent from 2005-07, largely because of the U.S. ethanol program."

The effect of corn can also be linked to movie ticket prices. According to CBS 4 News, Some AMC theaters already eliminated student discounts and raised the price for seniors by about a dollar for all showings.

Corn is not the only thing that has affected us. According to the May 28 edition of CNN.com, food prices climbed 5.1 percent over the past 12 months and April's 0.9 percent rise was the largest in 18 years.

According to CBS Evening News, food prices are expected to jump 5 percent this year, which means that your annual grocery bill will cost about \$87 more per person. "Oil is pushing up and virtually controlling our inflation rate," said Dr. Stephen P. Leatherman, director of the International Hurricane Research Center & Laboratory for Coastal Research at FIU, in an e-mail interview. Postage rates have also increased to keep up with the rising transportation costs. According to the Postal Service Web site, "prices



“So much can be done. It is time to change our habits. Dump gas guzzlers and start using mass transit or carpool.”

for mailing services will be adjusted annually each May.”

With prices increasing everywhere, including our tuition, don't be too surprised if our textbooks are going to become more expensive. It takes oil to get our textbooks in our bookstores.

On the other hand, Wages have actually fallen behind inflation for the past 7 months, according to *Yahoo's* interview with Jared Bernstein, senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute.

To add fuel to the fire, jobs may be just a little bit harder to find. According to the June 7th edition of *The Wall Street Journal*, "The jobless rate posted its largest one-month gain in two decades, rising to 5.5% in May from 5.0% in April."

However, our age group suffers the most: The jobless rate for workers aged 20 to 24 rose from 8.9% in April to 10.4% in May.

As director of the Center for Energy and Technology of the Americas at FIU, Dr. George

Philippidis suggests that "Conservation and better energy efficiency measures need to be implemented at the individual and corporate level."

With this dismal view of the world, so much can be done. It is time to change our habits. Dump the gas-guzzling machines and start using mass transit or carpool.

Not only do we have to change our habits, our government must pitch in as well.

"This is going to have to be a permanent change," said Dr. Leatherman. "Miami Dade County must get on the ball and extend the metro system – they have been stalling for years."

The best way to reduce significant oil demand is by mass producing and utilizing plug-in electric cars. The first ones will be commercial by 2010. If on top of the plug-in feature we make those vehicles flex fuel (capable of using ethanol), then our gasoline (and oil) use will be reduced drastically."

The increasing price (and pain) at the pump won't abate soon.

"[It] all depends on how seriously the US embarks on an energy conservation and better efficiency effort and on how fast we introduce into the market more alternative fuels, like sugarcane ethanol from Latin America and later cellulosic ethanol from

Positive environmental action a result of cuts at FIU

ODETTE BARRIENTOS
Contributing Writers

Through all the cutbacks we have endured as a University – as a result of the statewide budget crunch – an intuitive way to save energy and cut costs has emerged as proof that creative thinking can help alleviate problems in dire situations.

It's a four-day-a-week, 10-hours-a-day, summer modified schedule that started June 6 and will follow through until July 25.

This 49-day period is expected to save a minimum of \$250,000 in energy costs.

After taking the initiatives to battle global climate change, Governor Charlie Crist has not only considered energy efficiency in his politics but has also inspired the current alternatives that FIU is a part of today.

This is more than ideal for FIU, It's a win-win situation – for the school and for the planet.

As a result of budget cuts, the University has cut expenses in every possible corner.

From eliminating various programs, to letting employees go – it was done to cut costs. In addition to these penny-pinching methods, tuition was also raised to help make up for the cuts.

As damaging as these budget cuts have been to the institution, the modified summer schedule is actually the most strategic and productive move in a very long time.

"This is only one piece of a larger package, which should be FIU positioning itself as an environmental leader. In general, it has shown very little leadership about environmental issues," said Professor David Bray from the Department of Environmental Studies.

"It's been taking some steps, but they have a long way to go."

We also cannot disregard that individual gas consumption would be significantly less after eliminating one whole day of commuting to work and back home for employees abiding by the schedule.

It helps more than just one cause.

Not only does it help the school, but also students and select faculty members on an individual level; less money spent on gas, less traffic on the road, and less CO2 emissions polluting our atmosphere.

"It was a little challenging getting used to the new schedule, but I think we get more accomplished. And we save gas," said Yisell Cirion, a career coach at Career Services told *The Beacon*.

It doesn't seem like much money at a glance, but it must be looked at from a broader perspective.

One can imagine how much more could be saved if the schedule was extended for more than 49 days

If the minimum FIU expects to save during this period is a quar-



CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON ARCHIVE PHOTO

ter of a million dollars, then that would equal to about \$1 million in savings.

Not too shabby, considering the fact it also plays a role in the environment.

"We are headed into what climatologists describe as a planetary emergency," said Bray. "Emergencies require emergency[measures]. So in this context, FIU might want to consider going back to the Monday-Wednesday, Tuesday-Thursday class schedule."

Of course, many will oppose the idea to extending this to say, Fall and Spring semesters and making it a long-term change.

Some don't think the change will be as effective as expected.

"I believe that it will save some money, but not a lot of money – less than predicted. I think the savings are relatively small," said David Lee, a professor in the Biological Sciences department.

"One of the reasons for that is that although the administrative offices are closed on Fridays, many of the facilities are not closed," he said. "The Labs in the science department are open. We have sensitive equipment such as organisms - we have to have a handle on temperatures in there."

At the end of the day, a change as minor and temporary as this one

should not go without praise.

On the contrary, it should be recognized and encouraged so that more positive, environmental approaches are considered in the future.

Moreover, it is positive to see cost cutting measures that do not involve destroying degrees or purging professors.

The University has a long way to go, this can be regarded as a baby step.

With a bit of praise and hope, perhaps this institution can take some larger steps in the future.

Band pays tribute to influences on album

Trying to balance the line between creating your own unique voice and paying

COLUMN



THE REPORT CARD
CHRIS TOWERS

homage to your influences is a battle every artist of any sort has to deal with in some way, and the Hold Steady's lead singer and songwriter, Craig Finn, is no different

However, instead of shunning his influences like some, Finn has always managed to wear them proudly on his sleeve while still maintaining his status as a significant, singular voice.

Seamlessly blending the riff rock of Zeppelin or Aerosmith with the dense, story heavy lyrics of Bruce Springsteen - and a little of his gruff, powerful vocals - the Hold Steady's newest album, *Stay Positive*, doesn't often veer too far off the

For the most part Finn's songs allow the band to do what they do best: big, crunchy, power chords, riffs that ride a groove, and sing along choruses.

course charted on the band's three previous albums.

The songs are mostly still about kids getting drunk, getting into fights and getting into trouble.

This time around, though a few of them do delve into the realities of having to grow up and deal with leaving that life behind, or hopelessly clinging onto it, in some cases.

"Lord I'm Discouraged," in particular, is a bit of a departure for Finn in that it examines the effects of these themes from another point of view.

Continuing with the Catholic imagery found in his earlier work, the song is from the point of view of someone pleading with God as they watch a loved one's "new friends shatter her life."

The protagonist kneels at altars and lights candles but the girl "keeps insisting the sutures and bruises are none of my business," while the band plays somberly in the background until a big, over the top, 80's heavy metal ballad style guitar solo threatens to lift the song up to heaven.

But then everything comes crashing back down, ending with "I know it's unlikely she'll ever be mine so I mostly just pray she don't die."

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PHOTOS BY : NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

Tatiana DeMaria lead vocals/guitar of a British punk band called TAT performing on the skate ramp stage at Warped Tour '08 at Bicentennial Park.



Gabe Saporta, lead vocalist of Cobra Starship doing a jump split/kick and Vicky-T, keytar and backup vocals performing on the Highway 1 Main stage.



William Beckett - lead singer of The Academy Is - performing early in the day on the Route 66 Main stage.



Travis McCoy, lead singer of Gym Class Heroes, performing on the Route 66 Main stage.

No paramedics at this Heatstroke

KASSANDRA POOL
Staff Writer

They bleed and dress in blue and gold.

Their bodies and faces are covered in blue paint.

They are ready to cheer and stomp their feet to support their FIU teams.

Making it one of their signature events, Panther Rage is hosting Heatstroke on July 25.

According to Panther Rage President Michael Halpert, the event has taken place every summer since he was a freshman four years ago.

"It's a good way to encourage the student body to come together and support Athletics," Halpert said.

Planning for the event began a month ago at a retreat.

This year students should expect to have a good time near the pool with music, games - such as volleyball and water polo - and the company of their fellow students.

Sophomore Patty Rivera is excited for this year's Heatstroke.

"When I first heard about the event as a freshman, I thought it was a warning about the weather, but I later found out it was a pool party," Rivera said.

The event will take place in the housing quad at University Park

Starting at 1 p.m., students will be able to enjoy the food

provided by Quiznos and will have the opportunity to win free gear.

Students interested in becoming an official member of the organization must obtain seven points.

Points can be obtained by going to general meetings, sports games or helping out at Panther Rage events.

Each member must maintain their membership by acquiring at least three points each month.

The group works together with Athletics to promote school spirit and get students to come out and support FIU during home games.

Members are rewarded each month with special privileges.

In the past, members have had the opportunity to be at the sidelines for football games, travel with the team as well as meet and greet some of the players.

During the fall, meetings are held every Monday at 4:30 p.m. in Graham Center 140. Their next meeting for the summer will take place on July 21.

"All students should come out and get hyped up with school spirit for the upcoming athletic season," said sophomore Ruben Diaz-Neda, treasurer of Panther Rage.

The next event will take place in the fall. For more information, e-mail rage@fiu.edu or visit their Web site, www.fiu.edu/~rage.

Rock band refines its sound

THE HOLD STEADY, page 6

For the most part, however, Finn's songs allow the band to do what they do best - big, crunchy, power chords, riffs that ride a groove and sing along choruses.

The best examples of this are the two songs that kick off the album: "Constructive Summer" and "Sequestered in Memphis."

"Constructive Summer" echoes "Stuck Between Stations" from their last album, but instead of a biographical story about a suicidal poet, the kids in this one are planning on spending their summer getting hammered on water towers and raising toasts to "Saint Joe Strummer," their "only decent teacher."

"Sequestered in Memphis" begs obvious Springsteen comparisons, with layers of guitars, piano and even some saxophone.

Still, as the first single, it definitely has the most infectious chorus, playing like a shortened, delinquent version of "Rosalita."

In a recent *Uncut* magazine interview, Finn said that the album "captures a band hitting their creative peak, as well as enjoying each other's creativity and company," and it's hard to disagree with that analysis.

While it probably isn't their strongest album, it is the one that feels most like it was created by a proper band working together as a cohesive whole, rather than a bar band backing Finn's spoken/sung stories and, in this way, it is the most logical continuation of the band's evolution through their career.

B+

Chris Towers can be reached at Chris.Towers@fusm.com.

Herbal Relaxation

Kava helps South Floridians attain nirvana

NELSON HERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

In search of a relaxing state of mind, some people turn to yoga or meditation to clear their minds, while some look for a little help from nature. A plant native to the Pacific Islands may provide another avenue towards this end.

Kava is a tea that has been brewed using the roots of the aptly named kava plant. The plant has been used in various forms as a drink for thousands of years in the Pacific, and is starting to become more widely available in the United States.

Since 2002, Nakava has provided the locals of Boca Raton, as well as the curious from all parts of the area, with kava in a relaxed environment by channeling the roots of kava's Pacific ancestry and mixing it with the familiarity of your own backyard.

Ken Hoyumpa, Nakava's manager, discussed the drink and its place in North American culture.

"Kava is natural, it's relaxing, a great alternative to alcohol and its something you can do in the middle of the week without fearing a hangover," he said.

Nakava opened its doors in 2002, when Ken and owner Jeffrey Bowman, who attended Florida Atlantic University together, decided to open the bar and set his plans in motion with a little help from his friends. Though the bar may be the only establishment in the area thus far, expansion is on the horizon, according to Ken.

"The only issue is the capital and investment, which we're working on," he said.

Hoyumpa noted that the crowd that frequents through Nakava skews young, but he did say that most that stop by are be-

"Kava is natural, it's relaxing, a great alternative to alcohol and its something you can do in the middle of the week without fearing a hangover."

yond classification simply because of the buzz being generated.

"Most of our regulars order the Black Sand Kava, but we have such a variety of fresh drinks that it creates the perfect atmosphere for people to try what they want," he said.

Of course, as with any type of stimulant, there are health concerns, both with the plant itself and the method of production.

Most products based on the Kava plant are banned in the UK, as well as in France, Switzerland and even the Netherlands.

The United States Center for Disease Control released a report in 2002 specifically detailing the possibilities of severe liver toxicity, but does specify that the problems arose from supplements containing kava being mixed with alcohol.

The main thing to note with this is that it is the kava extract in supplements that has been linked to the liver damage, not kava prepared as a tea.

Another key to the potential hazard is that pharmaceutical companies don't limit themselves to the root of the plant for the kava extract; the supplements contain anything from the stems to the leaves of the plants.

Those concerns aside, the main thing people

will want to know is what effect kava has on the mind.

Euphoric is usually the first term regular drinkers will come up with.

Though rare, less than 1 percent of all who try the drink will experience allergies, generally similar to the types of reactions associated with pepper allergies. When it came to the safety concerns, Ken reassured that the FDA has even inspected the shop and left without raising a fuss.

"Even the FDA has inspected several times, and they've told us as long as we keep doing what we're doing, it's all good," said Ken.

Continuing the age old ritual of kava as a form of relaxation and well being doesn't come hard to Nakava because they represent a different approach to marketing the product, one that comes with a high level of respect for the past, and an eye on the future.

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ON SCHEDULE



VERONICA HERNANDEZ/THE BEACON

HEAVY METAL: Construction continues at the new FIU Football Stadium. Rudy Armenta, senior project manager for Odebrecht, gave FIU Student Media a tour on July 11. A photo gallery of the tour is available at FIUSM.com.

Athletics gives away tickets, reaches out to community

SERGIO BONILLA
Sports Editor

Children from the D.A.R.E. program filled the lower FIU Arena cheering for the Golden Panthers women's basketball team on Dec. 14. The Athletics department looks to build up on that game and have 15,000 kids attend all FIU intercollegiate sporting events at no cost this upcoming season.

FIU's plan called the Raymond James Kids Club Community Partners, hopes to build a positive relationship with the local community by bringing kids to games, and encouraging student-athletes to join mentorship programs.

"With all the budget cuts, the community needs help," assistant athletic director for student athlete development and community relations Liz Borrell said. "So we're giving kids the opportunity to come see a sporting event and have one-on-one interaction with our student-athletes."

Kids will be offered free tickets, transportation and T-shirts to all FIU intercollegiate games. Admission to every event is free, except football games. If the kids are going to a football game, donors have to pay for their tickets. Steve Cisco, assistant athletic director for ticket sales and operations, says he wants the kids to remember the first time they went to a Division I game.

"I remember the first time I went to a collegiate event," Cisco said. "I would hate for a kid to never have that experience."

For the most part, the program aims to help kids from financially deprived homes, but it is also including a variety of children from other backgrounds.

"We are giving free admission to youth programs, schools, church youth groups. All organizations that have to do with the youth and the community," project coordinator Mike Hernandez said.

In addition to the giveaways, the athletic department's plan is making student-athletes become

involved in the community by joining mentorship programs like the Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

"For us, it's about developing a relationship with those organizations and having our athletes either mentor their students or to give them presentations on how to make better decisions in life, how to persevere, how to stay focused," Borrell said.

The Raymond Jones Kids Club was incorporated into the Athletics department in 2004, but it did not have a titled sponsor. Raymond Jones was a frequent donor but in 2006, with help from season ticket holder and FIU alumn Frank Amigo, it bought the program's naming rights.

"Talk to your season ticket holders and then they donate to the program," Cisco said. "Without a titled sponsor, the program would not have blown up in the way it has. Raymond Jones has really afforded us this opportunity to really make this program big."

Admitting kids to games coupled with the mentorship programs are ways the Athletics department is establishing relationships with local kids from a young age.

"You try to build that bridge so that maybe when those kids have kids, they will take them to FIU sporting events," ticket consultant Ivan Marin said.

The program will also help FIU Athletics gain fan support from Miami, according to Borrell.

"We need to build better relationship with people in the community so that they come and support us. It's a win-win situation. We help them; they help us."

Only the Oct. 11 football home game against Middle State Tennessee is sold out. Once the fall semester starts, the Athletics department is eager to see how excited the kids coming out to the games will be.

"No one wants to sit there and make all the 100 calls a day," Marin said. "The day you see all the kids show up at the stadium, it'll be worth it."

TAPPING OUT

Linebacker wears shoulder pads during fall, trains in martial arts gym during summer

AUDRINA BIGOS
Staff Writer

From pounding players on the gridiron to knocking out an opponent in the ring, one Golden Panther linebacker is training to become a professional fighter after graduation.

Combining the physical intensity gained through football with forms of boxing, martial arts, kickboxing, wrestling and jiu-jitsu, sophomore Michael Dominguez uses the off-season to train at Thump Fight Gym in South Miami.

The 224-pound mixed martial artist wants to strengthen every muscle in his body before the start of the 2008 season.

"Dominguez is working the muscles that he wouldn't use in football while training for fighting, so it can only improve his performance on the field," FIU defensive line coach Bernard Clark.

His passion for wrestling and mixed martial arts developed at a young age when he started training with his father.

"My dad was a Navy Seal, so ever since I was a kid he had me up early in the morning running and training," Dominguez said. "I was wrestling and boxing with him as early as five years old."

Dominguez's mother, Debby Kardos, chuckled as she thought back to Michael's childhood.

"He did everything with his dad from football, to wrestling, to fishing," she said. "He has always been athletic, curious, and energetic."

Kardos says that although her son's passion for physical sports is important, it is Dominguez's discipline off the field

will determine how well he does as a professional fighter. Clark agreed that more than just what Dominguez does on the field will play a role in his success as he transitions into the ring.

"His demeanor is what will take him far," Clark said. "He is focused and always trying to get better at what he is doing and that is going to help him more than anything else"

late his fighting skills onto the football field to deal punishment to opposing offenses.

"I am going into next season hoping to shock the nation because in reality, as a team, we are not supposed to," he said. "I am personally striving towards being a better linebacker."

Signed by FIU in 2006, Dominguez was one of the county's leading tacklers

Evolving as a wrestler takes me from level to level. These levels take hours and hours, bring along sweat and blood, sometimes more blood than sweat.

Michael Dominguez, Linebacker

Using his skills that developed at such an early age, Dominguez explained that wrestling is the most physically and mentally demanding sport that he has ever played and it has prepared him for Division I football.

"Evolving as a wrestler takes me from level to level. These levels take hours and hours, bring along sweat and blood, sometimes more blood than sweat," he said.

Dominguez began training at the Thump Fight Gym this summer where he hopes to compete at the highest level possible, the professional ranks.

"I would love to have a few professional fights before the beginning of next season between football practice and training," Dominguez said.

As the Golden Panthers head into fall practice, Dominguez is looking to trans-

and played a large role in the North Miami Beach Senior High School Chargers winning their first district title with 70 tackles and two sacks.

He was also ranked in *The Miami Herald's* top 25 Miami-Dade Recruits at the time. During his first full season at linebacker in 2007, he ranked second on the team with 66 total tackles, two fumbles recovered and one interception.

Football is still his main priority as the Golden Panthers approach the 2008 season. Dominguez says the team is still trying to recover from two consecutive losing seasons with just one win in two years.

"There is a lot of scar tissue left on the team, and we are grinding to clean things up," he said. "You can just say we are going through rehab with a lot of potential."