

1-5-2009

The Beacon, January 5, 2009

Florida International University

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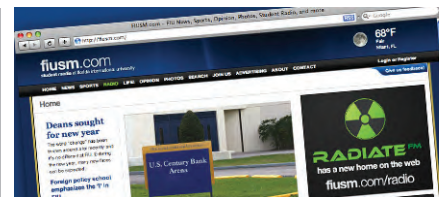
Recommended Citation

Florida International University, "The Beacon, January 5, 2009" (2009). *The Panther Press (formerly The Beacon)*. 140.
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Game marathons fun for charity, props
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SPOTLIGHT

AT THE BAY PAGE 4

Journalism school partners with three South Florida newspapers to share and publish students' articles.

SPORTS PAGE 12



Senior forward Alex Galindo is back on the court after dislocating his ankle four months ago. He feels ready to play.

OPINION PAGE 6



Wearing a plus-size may not prevent you from becoming a model as the definition of beauty is redefined.

AT THE BAY PAGE 4

Get the scoop on all the Welcome Week events being planned to help students usher in a new semester.

LIFE! PAGE 7



Take a look back at our top 10 movies of 2008 and see if your favorites made it. Don't worry, "The Dark Knight's" only listed once.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Welcome Back BBQ Bash, Today, noon - 2 p.m.: Kick off the new semester with a free meal at BBC's Panther Square. Student ID required.

Blue and Gold Breakfast, Jan. 6, 9:30 - 11 a.m.: Start your day off right with free breakfast in BBC's Panther Square. Student ID required.

Caricatures, Jan. 6, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.: Get your face drawn by a caricature artist for free at BBC's Panther Square.

SPC Karaoke, Jan. 6, 7 p.m. and 10 p.m.: Take your singing out of the shower and into UP's Gracie's Grill for the Student Programming Council's karaoke night.

Chamber Music Concert, Jan. 6, 8 p.m.: Enjoy a live performance by the Amernet String Quartet at UP's Wertheim Concert Hall.

For the complete calendar, please see page 7 or visit FIUSM.com.

WEATHER



MONDAY
Partly cloudy
LOW: 67 HIGH: 78



TUESDAY
Partly cloudy
LOW: 70 HIGH: 79



WEDNESDAY
Isolated t-storms
LOW: 59 HIGH: 77

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NEW YEAR, NEW TITLE

FIU Arena undergoes name change

JONATHAN DAVILA
Staff Writer

After a near six-month search for a donor, FIU Arena – home to the Golden Panther basketball and volleyball teams – has officially been renamed the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

The name change was approved by the Board of Directors of the FIU Foundation and the Board of Trustees on Nov. 4 and Nov. 14 respectively.

Both boards must approve any name changes that occur at the University.

The former donor and sponsor of the arena, Pharmed Group, filed for bankruptcy in October 2007.

The arena was named Pharmed Arena in 2004 after the group donated \$1 million to Athletics, but after the bankruptcy, Pharmed Group was unable to make the yearly payments necessary to keep the name.

The arena was subsequently named FIU Arena in June 2008 while a new donor was sought.

"U.S. Century Bank is a well-organized bank. They have been great supporters of this University for a



JOEY KOSANKE/THE BEACON

BANK ON IT: The U.S. Century Bank acquired the naming rights to the FIU Arena following University approval.

number of years," said Sandra Gonzalez-Levy, vice president of University and Community Relations and former executive director of the FIU Foundation.

According to Gonzalez-Levy, the donation met the minimum requirement of \$1 million and the agreement will last for five years.

"Every university has to

get creative and come up with new revenue streams, especially during the economic crisis, so we're very happy we were able to partner up with U.S. Century Bank and students should as well," said Athletics Director Pete Garcia.

Although the name change will be the most visible

ARENA, page 3

Deans sought for new year

CHARLIE GRAU
Staff Writer

The word "change" has been thrown around a lot recently and it's no different at FIU. Entering the new year, many new faces can be expected.

The University will have a new leader after President Modesto Maidique announced Nov. 14 he was stepping down and there are four deans who announced within the past year they will be stepping down: Deans Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Leonard P. Strickman of the College of Law, Juan Antonio Bueno of the College of Architecture and the Arts, Joyce Elam of the College of Business Administration and Luis Miron of the College of Education.

"It's more than the typical number but there is a pretty active life cycle of deans. The average in the United States is six to eight years in the terms of the average service in a dean," said Provost Ronald Berkman.

Although Florida public universities have been facing difficulty receiving funding from the Legislature, Berkman said that none of the deans have indicated that budget cuts were the reason for stepping down.

Berkman said that there are ongoing search committees working to replace three of the five deans.

"There are active searches going on for law, business and education. I'm still trying to determine whether or not we should do one or two more this semester, which would be for [the College of Architecture and the Arts] and Journalism or whether we're in overload in searches," Berkman said.

Charlie Grau can be reached at charlie.grau@fiusm.com

SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Foreign policy school emphasizes the 'I' in FIU

PAULO O'SWATH
Asst. News Director

A new semester always brings new students and faculty, but this semester also brings an entire new school dedicated to the discipline of global affairs and foreign policy.

The School of International and Public Affairs is set to open its doors Jan. 5 and house many of the University's "internationally oriented disciplines," according to an FIU press release.

"This [SIPA] is the place on our campus where social scientists will come together to work on some of the greatest challenges of our time and honor the middle name of our institution," said President Modesto A. Maidique in the press release.

SIPA will be the new home to both undergrad and graduate programs in political science, public administration, international relations, among others, while still being a part of the College of Arts and Sciences.

John Stack, a political science and law professor with 32 years of experience, has been named interim director of the new department.

"Bringing international and public affairs and related disciplines together is in line with FIU's international mission and its distinction as South Florida's only public research university," Stack said in an FIU press release.

As interim director, Stack will try to obtain the accreditation from the Associa-



COURTESY OF FIU MEDIA RELATIONS

VIRTUAL REALITY: Graphic display of new SIPA building.

tion of Professional Schools of International Affairs in order to ensure the school's success.

SCHOOL, page 2

NEWS FLASH

LOCAL

Letters urge leniency for former Pharmed owners

More than 180 letters of support from community leaders, friends and relatives of Carlos and Jorge de Cespedes, who are scheduled to face a sentencing hearing starting Jan. 5 for tax evasion, arrived on Judge Patricia Seitz's late last week.

The brothers, former owners of Pharmed, once the largest Hispanic-owned businesses in America, are asking for lighter sentences based on their years of philanthropy and community involvement.

The brothers pleaded guilty last fall to two counts, one of which was also fraud.

Federal prosecutors have countered that the brothers' good deeds helped disguise their 14 years of fraudulent activities in withholding money from Kendall Regional Medical Center.

NATIONAL

Pell Grant creator dies

Claiborne Pell, the U.S. Senator from Rhode Island that represented his state for 36 years and was the force behind a grant program that has helped tens of millions of Americans attend college, died on Jan. 1 after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. He was 90.

He was best remembered for his devotion to education, maritime and foreign affair issues.

Legislation creating the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants passed in 1972, providing direct aid to college students. The awards were renamed "Pell Grants" in 1980. By the time Senator Pell retired, they had aided more than 54 million low and middle income Americans.

– Compiled by Paulo O'Swath

COLLEGE OF NURSING & HEALTH SCIENCES

Design gets the 'green' thumbs up

CHERYL MALONE
Staff Writer

The new College of Nursing & Health Sciences building at University Park will be ready for students in just a few months and will offer something unique among other schools and current campus buildings.

The CNHS will be environmentally designed under Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design registration. LEED offers both environmental and financial benefits. According to its Web site, it will offer a healthier and safer environment for occupants, while qualifying for tax rebates and reducing waste sent to landfills, lowering operating costs.

In 2007, President Modesto A. Maidique signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, which works toward achieving environmental sustainability.

"Last year I, on behalf of the entire FIU community, made a public commitment to continue on a path of environmental responsibility and sustainable development," said Maidique, according to a press

release earlier this month.

LEED functions under the U.S. Green Building Council which is a non-profit organization composed of more than 15,000 organizations working toward healthy, profitable and environmentally friendly developments. LEED is not exclusive to schools and also services homes, banks, interiors, libraries and hotels, according to its Web site.

However, John Cal, associate vice president for Facilities Management, explained that the University as a whole will not be LEED certified, based on LEED rating. The construction for the nursing building will allow for a silver rating.

Construction of the building will be based on high construction premiums, according to Cal.

"The construction and documentation are the average of 1-2 percent of the construction cost of certification, 3-5 percent for silver, and 5-10 percent for gold or platinum," Cal said.

"Each level has a certain number of points that must be met," said Cal.

"A minimum of 26 points get certified rating, 33 points for silver, 39 points for gold and 52 points for platinum."

According to *FIU Magazine's* winter 2008 edition, President Maidique places great emphasis on his wife, Nancy Maidique, for contributing her own special touch to the campus.

efficiency lighting, occupancy sensor controls, variable air volume controls and energy recovery on the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning system.

Some other "green" features to the CNHS building include "eco-highlights" such as a grass roof over the second floor corridor. The purpose of the roof is to insulate the

LEED certified buildings ... contribute to enhanced health and comfort of faculty, students and staff ...

Divina Grossman, dean
College of Nursing & Health Sciences

"She has helped me to understand how small changes can make a difference," he said, explaining how he and his wife want to live healthy lives and bring a little green to the University.

Dean for the College of Nursing & Health Sciences Divina Grossman said, "Since the new building occupants are in nursing and the health professions, we definitely are committed to healthier work and study environments."

According to Cal, students can expect higher

corridor, absorb heat and block effects of damaging ultraviolet rays from the building making contact with the sun.

"LEED certified buildings are healthier work and living environments, which contribute to enhanced health and comfort of faculty, students and staff, and also lead to higher productivity," Grossman said.

"We stand to help save our environment and save on energy costs."

Building to provide solid foundation

SCHOOL, page 1

Some of the programs that will be housed in SIPA include geography, sociology and criminal justice, as well as the Latin American and Caribbean Center and the Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship Studies.

"The establishment of SIPA underscores our commitment to FIU's international mission and to our faculty's research and teaching interests in these areas," said Kenneth Furton, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, in a recent press release.

To celebrate the grand opening of the school's newest department, Maidique will be sponsoring a geopolitical summit, hosted by SIPA, called "America and the Rising Powers" on Feb. 24.

This one-day academic event will usher in an international listing of some of the most "influential and innovative thinkers on American foreign policy," according to press releases.

Some of the guests include foreign policy experts like Robert Kagan and Francis Fukuyama, and journalists such as Fareed Zakaria.

To go along with the

... SIPA underscores our commitment to FIU's international mission and to our faculty's research and teaching interests in these areas.

Kenneth Furton
dean, College of Arts and Sciences

new responsibilities, SIPA will also have its very own building.

The new \$40 million, five-story building will not only include state-of-the-art classrooms and an international café, but it will also include the largest auditorium on campus capable of seating 500 students.

According to the press release, the new SIPA building will be designed and built by Miami-based architect firm, Arquitectonica, and will be "an architectural showpiece for FIU and South Florida."

The ground-breaking ceremony took place Dec. 18 near the air traffic control tower located near the Wellness Center and the building should be ready by mid-2010.

"I love seeing our University grow every year," said

Geoffrey Merconchini, a history major. "This just goes to show you that FIU has every intention to be one of the greatest universities in Florida."

THE BEACON

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BW72

Budget cuts affect crucial research

KIMBERLY MILLER
AP Wire

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — When a lead Florida State University researcher needed five faculty members last year to start a landmark center dedicated to studying autism, state budget cuts prevented the school from hiring the additional professors.

The Ohio State University, however, had the money, recruited the researcher — and his more than \$1 million in federal grants — and in a few years could be reaping the benefits of an autism program that may bring \$10 million annually to the school.

Statewide, university officials fear more such exoduses as lawmakers prepare to meet in a special session next month to discuss another round of financial reductions.

The 11 Florida universities are expecting a \$97 million cut to their budgets for the current year.

But in addition to the surface-level slashing, university leaders fear the residual effect of pushing out top school researchers who will take their federal grants with them.

More than \$1.4 billion in grant money was brought into the state by public university researchers last year. About 84 percent of it was federal or private money that likely follows the researcher if he or she leaves the state.

That's money that also pumps up local economies by helping to hire graduate students and staff — people who pay taxes, eat at restaurants and otherwise fuel local businesses.

"I've been here for 40 years and we have worked our tails off to get a little bit of national and international recognition, and to see it destroyed in two years tears my guts out," said Kirby Kemper, FSU's vice president for research. "When you start losing your young hot shots, it takes so long to get them back and rebuild your reputation."

FSU's grant earnings in the 2007-08 school year totaled about \$196 million, up 1.5 percent from \$193 million the previous year.

Overall, the grant money earned

by Florida's public universities increased by less than 1 percent during the same period, and may decline this year.

Kemper said FSU has lost 19 "heavy hitter" researchers in the past year to other universities around the country. Several of them were in high-need areas such as computational biology, oceanography and

percent from 2006-07 to \$561.6 million last year.

Win Phillips, vice president for research at UF, said the Gainesville school's reputation as a prominent research university has helped it retain more top faculty.

But it is down 105 professors compared with a few years ago, 60 percent of whom Phillips said were

"I've been here for 40 years and we have worked our tails off to get ... national and international recognition, and to see it destroyed ... tears my guts out."

Kirby Kemper

FSU vice president for research

physics.

While other states also are suffering budget cutbacks, Kemper said many universities are willing to put out the money for rising stars because of the long-term benefits.

"It's the future generation that we lose when they go," Kemper said.

State lawmakers will be looking to make up for a \$2.1 billion shortfall in the current year's budget when they meet in Tallahassee for the special session beginning Jan. 5.

This year's total projected deficit so far is \$3.3 billion, a 12 percent reduction in what lawmakers originally planned to spend. Next year could be even worse, and universities are bracing for more bad news.

"Of much greater concern for us is 2009-2010," said Florida Atlantic University Vice President of Finance Ken Jessell, who is expecting a \$7 million cut to the school's current-year budget. "There's really nothing left to spare. We pulled the low-hanging fruit beginning in 2001. It's long gone."

According to the state Board of Governors, which oversees the state's public universities, FAU brought in \$33.8 million in research awards last year, down 26 percent from the 2006-07 school year.

The University of Florida also is down research dollars, dropping 3.5

bringing in grants and contracts.

"When you have a creative person doing well, filing patents, bringing in money, and you lose them, you've lost the whole future," Phillips said.

For top researchers, the salary paid by the state is minimal compared with what they bring in with grant funding, Phillips added.

"There is a tremendous amplification of loss to the education business and the economy when a person big in the research arena leaves," he said.

Research funding itself also is being cut, leaving important studies undone, said Richard Podemski, associate vice president for research at the University of West Florida in Pensacola.

He had a professor write a proposal recently to do a water quality analysis project for the state worth about \$50,000.

The study was to look at Escambia Bay, an area where fish have been found to have high levels of toxic chemicals known as polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs.

But the funding was eliminated.

"So the universities can't contribute to the local economy or the improvement of the local environment like they used to," Podemski said. "It's a downward spiral."

Bank partners with University

ARENA, page 1

aspect of the agreement between the University and U.S. Century Bank, Gonzalez-Levy said that the two will be working together on programs beneficial to students.

"They were willing to not only donate some dollars but also participate in a number of programs. This is sort of like a partnership. This is not only [about] the naming [of the arena] per se but actually a partnership between U.S. Century Bank and the University.

"They have participated in the College of Business as members of the advisory board and they are working with us to do other programs as we speak, in terms of lectures ... and we've been speaking with them about also [offering internships]," she said.

The University's football and baseball stadiums may be the next venues to attain new names;

donors are being sought for these two stadiums as well.

"We're looking at everything right now. For the football stadium, we're actually awaiting word on

President of U.S. Century Bank Octavio Hernandez, as well as other Bank executives, have been invited to the event.

"They'll be inviting not only

This is not only [about] the naming [of the arena] ... but a partnership between U.S. Century Bank and the University.

Sandra Gonzalez-Levy, vice president
University and Community Relations

the [Major League Soccer] deal," Garcia said.

The name change has been official since late November, but an inaugural event at the newly named arena has been set for Jan. 7 at 5 p.m., preceding a women's basketball game vs. Western Kentucky at 6 p.m.

University alumnus, CEO and

their board and executives, but they'll also be inviting their customers and clients," Gonzalez-Levy said.

The University's Board of Trustees and Board of Directors will also be present at the event and an invitation has been extended to Florida Governor Charlie Crist.

Study: Hospitals fail to comply with Civil Rights Act

OLGA VELEZ
Staff Writer

As part of a graduate level course called Health Demography in the Stempel School of Public Health, a group of students conducted research that led them to discover that many hospitals around the United States were not following Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Title IV requires hospitals receiving federal funding to take the necessary steps to make sure those whose first language is not English have access to hospital services in their own language.

It was found that this disparity was prominent among Hispanics when it came to accessing information regarding hospital services on the Internet.

"The worst part here is that the target population (Spanish speakers) pay taxes and their money should provide hospital services to the population.

These services are not being provided," said Jesus Medina, Stempel Public Health Association president and one of the researchers.

During research, the students looked at the Web sites of hospitals receiving federal funding located in counties that have a population that is at least 50 percent Hispanic. The hospitals that were looked at for this study were Critical Access Hospitals and Short-Term Acute Care Hospitals.

The research showed that of the 124 hospitals that met these criteria, only 25 (20.2 percent) offered Web sites in Spanish while 83 (66.9 percent) offered Web sites only in English and 16 (12.9 percent) did not have a Web site.

The research also stated that the hospitals that met the criterion in the states of Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, New York and Washington did not offer a Spanish Web site.

In Texas and California, only 13 and 14 percent of the

hospitals, respectively, offered an alternative Web site in Spanish. In Arizona, only one hospital offered a Spanish Web site. Florida was the state with the highest percentage of hospitals that offered this alternative Web site. The total percentage of hospitals was 53.85, all of which were in Miami-Dade, the only county in Florida with more than 50 percent Hispanic population.

The students involved in the research during the fall of 2008 were Jesus Medina, Grettel Castro, Jaisy George, Louis Perez, Marina Obispo, Mario Cendan, Marshanette Shaw, Mildrey Perez, Ping Xu, Rimsky Denis, Wendy Barillas and Claudio Micieli.

"It was an opportunity for the professor to give a final project instead of a final exam, so that the students can have a chance to publish research and add that research to their résumé," said Medina. "The professor showed different topics. I took leadership when it came to choosing the topic. I wanted to choose a topic that was really important so I did research to compare three different topics. I chose this one and then I talked to the rest of my group. We chose it based on which topic we thought was most important to the community. Since Miami is really diverse, we felt that this issue would be of interest to the community."

The research did not provide reasons behind the lack of Spanish Web sites offered.

When asked if more research would be conducted, Medina said, "I was thinking about it. I want to create a committee. I am the president of SPHA. The association is always looking to do something for the community. Our main goal is to build a healthier community ... that is one of my plans. I will create a committee to show that this problem exists."

A copy of the exploratory study that was conducted will be published in the *American Public Health Association*.

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SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

Partnership helps writers refine skills

PAMELA DUQUE
BBC Managing Editor

The media industry is changing, and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication is implementing new programs to help students adapt.

Beginning in January, SJMC will partner with *The Miami Herald*, *The Sun-Sentinel* and *The Palm Beach Post* to create The South Florida News Service, a print and digital news service in which each publication will share and publish articles written by SJMC students.

Earl Maucker, *Sun-Sentinel* senior vice president, John Bartosek, *Palm Beach Post* editor and Anders Gyllenhaal, *Miami Herald* editor - all members of the SJMC Leadership Council - will work with Allan Richards, SJMC interim associate dean, and Teresa Ponte, interim chair of the department of journalism and broadcasting, to oversee the University's participation.

"We have known the school for a long time, and we know the program and its quality and doing this seemed good," said Maucker. "We've had good luck with FIU interns at *The Sun-Sentinel* and we are very excited."

Joan Chrisos of *The Miami Herald*, David Cazares, assistant editor at *The Sun-Sentinel* and Emily Roach, assistant bureau

chief at *The Palm Beach Post*, are the assigned editors to work with students for the new service.

Students enrolled in advanced writing classes such as Feature Writing and Online News Reporting will work with their professors on their reporting and writing for different news articles, which will then be posted in the South Florida News Service Web site, created by the SJMC. The assigned editors from each publication will then choose the articles they want to use and publish them.

Not only will students have the opportunity to work closely with the editors, according to Richards, but they will also have the chance to work in newsrooms where there will be desks designated specifically for them.

"Students will have the benefit of working with editors. They will be the students' mentors," Richards said. "They will work with students on fundamental things like writing a lede and a nut graph."

Students whose articles are chosen and published on one or more of these three publications will get the bylines and the experience of working closely with the media industry.

"It's like a deeper internship," said Richards. "Students will register for classes and the newspapers will assign an editor to work in liaison with the class."

PORCELAIN PILEUP



PAMELA DUQUE/THE BEACON

BATHROOM RENOVATIONS: The restrooms in the Academic I building were being renovated during winter break. The old sinks, toilets and urinals were replaced with new ones by BI Tech Construction, Inc.

The shared content will not be limited to written articles. Students will also work with multimedia files and articles both in English and Spanish, which gives room for graduate students in the Spanish master's program to participate in the project.

"I think this is what we journalism majors need. It is hands-on experience from what we learn in the classrooms without the need to spend a lot of extra hours," said senior Melissa Vargas, a journalism major. "With this opportunity we can get the

most of our classroom time and get a great idea of what it is to do journalism."

The initiative comes as a result of the changing media industry, according to Richards. The service will initially run for six months, but it could be extended if successful.

"We are taking baby steps. We've never done anything like this before. This involves a lot of people and a lot of coordination."

Each publication will contribute \$10,000 to cover the different expenses, such as student travel,

gasoline and incidental expenses that the partnership will entail in its first six months, according to Richards. SJMC is also hoping to raise money from grants "so that students can get paid for their articles as well."

"I think that in the time we're living in, in terms of the media as an opportunity to develop new ideas, we are not going to just sit on our hands while the industry is changing. It's a time of great changes, but also a time of great opportunity to be entrepreneurial," Richards said.

Welcome Week events include iceless skating, barbecue

PARADISE AFSHAR
BBC Life! Editor

As the school year begins, students are letting go of the slow pace of winter break and trading it in once again for books and exams.

To bring in the excitement that comes with a new semester, Campus Life and Orientation is inviting students to participate in Welcome Week events, all free of charge.

"Every Fall and Spring, we put on Welcome Week for students to let them know what the campus has to offer and how to get involved," said Didier Georges, Student Organizations Council president and a junior management major.

Welcome Week begins the first day of the semester, Jan. 5, and ends Jan. 9, with each day having different activities for students to participate in.

This semester's Welcome Week is going to include traditional events, such as the Blue and Gold breakfast, which takes place Jan. 6 and consists of a free breakfast of eggs, pancakes, fruit and juices.

Old favorites such as the Late Day Latte and the SOC fair will also take place during the week, along with a few other non-traditional events.

"Students will be particularly surprised to find out that there will be ice skating in Panther Square," said SOC Vice President Jessica Señorin, senior public relations and marketing

major.

On Jan. 8, Panther Square is going to be transformed into an ice rink, where students can rent ice skates to use on plastic ice sheets.

"It is going to be a big peace of artificial ice in the middle of Panther Square," said Georges. "I believe they are going to provide the skates, because most people from Miami don't have ice skates."

The ice skating is going to take place the same day as the Late Day Latte event, where coffee, hot chocolate and other hot beverages and refreshments will be served to keep with the cold theme.

In addition to ice skating, students can participate in kayaking in Biscayne Bay on Jan. 9, and can get a burrito, chips and a soda at Moe's for \$5 on the same day.

"This year's peer advisers will be announced [during Welcome Week] so it is going to be exciting for those who signed up for that," said Georges. "And of course, we are going to have the SOC club fair with about 15-20 clubs."

Other Welcome Week activities include an artist drawing caricatures of students, a barbecue and other events that involve free food and provide information about the campus.

"Students should attend because there are many activities that they can enjoy," said Georges. "All students, especially transfer and first-year students, should come and see what the campus has to offer."

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • JANUARY 5

Spray Can Art: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., Panther Square
Welcome Back BBQ Bash: 12 p.m. - 2 p.m., Panther Square
Peer Advisor Announcement: 12:30 p.m., Panther Square

TUESDAY • JANUARY 6

Blue and Gold Breakfast: 9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m., Panther Square
Caricature Artist: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Panther Square

WEDNESDAY • JANUARY 7

Caricature Artist: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Panther Square
BBC Info Fair: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Panther Square
"Taste of the Bay" Restaurant Fair: 12 p.m. - 1 p.m., Panther Square

THURSDAY • JANUARY 8

Multifaith Open House: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Multifaith Office
Ice Skating in the Square: 2 p.m. - 6 p.m., Panther Square
Late Day Latte & SOC Club Fair: 4 p.m. - 6 p.m., Panther Square

FRIDAY • JANUARY 9

Fiesta Friday at Moe's: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Cafeteria
(Burrito with chips and soda - \$5)

Kayaking on the Bay: 12 p.m., Bay Area

- Compiled by ATB Staff

Removal of invasive trees paves way for restoration

SERGIO MONTEALEGRE
Staff Writer

The trees around the Biscayne Bay campus are disappearing as construction workers enter with heavy equipment. The results, however, may actually improve the campus.

The Port of Miami, in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Protection, Oleta River State Park and the Miami-Dade County Environmental Resources Management Department, is spearheading a 63-acre red mangrove enhancement program around seven areas of the Oleta River State Park.

The plot of land, located at N.E. 151st St. and Bay Vista Blvd., on the southwest side of the park, is covered with Australian pines, a species not native to Florida. These trees are identifiable by their reddish-brown or gray bark and branches covered in needles.

The restoration project, which is being jointly funded by the organizations listed above, consists of replacing the pines with red mangroves.

According to a flier from Steve Dale, director of Oleta River State Park, seven separate areas will be created throughout the park, forming a total of 43 acres of red mangrove swamp habitat with tidal streams, tidal ponds, mud flats and a deep-water pool.

The red mangroves are “easily distinguishable through their unique

pop root system,” according to the flier. This gives the tree stability and offers protection from erosion on low-lying coastal lands.

“My understanding is that area was infested with Australian pine trees, which are not indigenous to South Florida and were beginning to wreak havoc on the natural flora,” said Rebecca Dinar, outreach coordinator for the Office of the Vice Provost.

The pines were imported from Australia in the 1900s for their erosion control benefits. They once served as wind-breaking devices along beaches, but are now considered invasive exotic species. They are spreading in a manner that is harmful to the native plant life.

“Australian pines are one of the three to four most damaging exotic invasive plant species in South Florida,” said David Lee, professor in the department of biological sciences. “They grow rapidly and can take over an area by the sprouting of new shoots from the rapidly spreading shallow root systems. The thin stems (there are no real leaves on these plants), decompose slowly and inhibit the growth of other plants.”

According to the Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants at the University of Florida, the Australian pine’s needles contain a chemical that causes allelopathy, which is the inhibition of plant growth on a molecular level. The needles, after falling, litter the ground and release the chemical, slowly killing all other plant life in

the area.

The areas around Biscayne Bay are especially populated by these trees, though it’s not just limited to Southeast Florida. Problems with this species have been appearing statewide and in other parts of the nation, such as South Texas and coastal California, with similar clearing and restoration efforts occurring in these areas.

“You can see a really nice example of an ecological restoration after the removal of such trees at Bill Baggs State Park, at the southern end of Key Biscayne,” said Lee. “That would give you an idea of how nice the area could be. This would have a dramatic effect on BBC.”

The plan to restore South Florida’s native plants to the area isn’t entirely a positive thing in the eyes of some.

“We’re removing an exotic species that’s been detrimental to the area for quite a while, but at the same time, we’re also taking down quite a number of trees that are native to the area. Furthermore, who knows how long those trees have been there?” said junior Vince Laertt, an English major. “I’m also worried about the growth rate, how long it’ll take before the area starts looking like a forest again, and how protected it will be against future invasions by exotic species. I just don’t think it’s fair that they’re taking down such a large area, especially considering how long it’ll take for those trees to grow again.”

The project is estimated to be completed by September 2009, and



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

PULLING THE PINES: Exotic Australian pines on 151 St. were cut to make way for native red mangroves.

its effect on the campus will take time to be fully realized. According to Lee, the task will not be an easy one.

“It is not just a matter of killing the trees or cutting them down, because new shoots will quickly sprout and

re-establish the roots,” said Lee. “So, it takes a fair amount of labor-intensive follow-through. However, once a canopy of native vegetation is established in the area, the shade-intolerant Australian pines will not survive.”

Cost-conscious students find book bargains online

JAMELLE TUCKER
Contributing Writer

During her freshman year at Florida State University, graduate student Asal Rahbar spent \$570 on books by buying at the bookstore. Only after that did she find out about alternative textbook sources.

“Our teacher announced to a class that it may be cheaper to buy books online,” Rahbar said.

Ever since then, Rahbar has bought books online whenever possible.

“Buying online is half the price,” she said. “I will only buy from the bookstore if it’s a new edition or if it’s a lab manual and you cannot buy it online.”

With the country going through a recession, many students are looking to similar alternative sources for buying books in order to save a few dollars.

Although buying books online may come with a few setbacks, such as not being able to check the quality and condition of the book, many are willing to take the risk.

Receiving the correct books and getting them on time are some of the other issues that concern potential online textbook buyers.

“Last semester, I bought a Mass Media in Society book on eBay. The seller promised [it was in] perfect condition, but when it came there were watermarks and pages missing. It was already two weeks into classes so I had to keep the book,” said junior Melissa Desaramaux, a public relations major.

To avoid problems such as those, many sites, such as *half.com*, *amazon.com* and *collegebookstore.com*, provide students an online forum to trade new and used books.

The conditions of the textbooks are rated

online, then each book is priced according to its resale value and condition.

For example, a chemistry book that sells for more than \$100 in the FIU Bookstore could range anywhere from \$40 to \$80 online, depending on the condition of the book. With students from all over the country uploading pictures of their textbooks, there are a wide variety of choices.

These online mediums don’t just help students purchase textbooks, but can be used to sell used books as well.

“I had a horrible experience with the campus bookstore,” said senior Ricardo Navarro, a sociology and anthropology major. “I went to sell back my books and they were only going to give me \$8 for a \$150 book. Now I only buy and sell my books online.”

For those students who do not want to deal with online money transfers and the eternal wait for books to arrive from online sellers, there are still opportunities available by visiting stores.

There are several college textbook consignment shops around the Miami area that offer exchanges and cheaper prices on popular titles. Lemox College Book & Supply, Inc., located across 107th Avenue from the University Park campus, offers a wide selection of used textbooks, but most titles are for common undergraduate classes.

Still, some students prefer to buy their books the old-fashioned way. Senior criminal justice major Rachel Johnson said she would rather buy books in the bookstore than deal with the online hassle.

“Most of the time, I wait for my financial aid to cover my books and it’s easier with the book advance the school gives you,” Johnson said.

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THE BEACON | Editorial

New year, new challenges for University

It's 2009, and just because the ball has dropped doesn't mean FIU can drop the ball. The University's challenges abound; the most notable being the selection of the fifth University president. *The Beacon* believes that the search committee and advisory committee have huge shoes to fill. We do have some concerns about the composition of the advisory board.

With only one student sitting on the board, we feel that the interests of students may not be fairly represented in the selection process.

That lone student is Ana Maria Silva, president of the Student Government Council at BBC. While Silva is a distinguished citizen in the FIU community, it is concerning that only a single student out of almost 40,000 and none from the largest campus have any say.

Two of the most important qualities that we think the committee should look for are a president that will grow the University horizontally by nurturing the services and programs we already have as opposed to growing upward at a pace we cannot afford. Our

new president should be one who will be open and social with the students and one who you wouldn't be surprised to see walking through the atrium.

A new president will not be the only change in leadership. Recently, the deans of five colleges within the University have announced that they are stepping down. They represent some of the largest colleges on campus, including Architecture and the Arts and Business Administration. Though Provost Ronald M. Berkman has insisted that it is just the life cycle of deans at work, *The Beacon* believes that administration needs to isolate the issue that is causing such a sudden and massive turnover in academic leadership and work to fix it.

The administration needs to make haste in replacing the deans, since FIU is awaiting reaccreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and lack of solid, grounded leadership could prove embarrassing to a university under outside scrutiny.

With that in mind, here's to a successful year of progress for the University and all that depend on it.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Beacon, student media continue evolving

For most people, a new year brings with it the promise of new opportunities and new challenges. Student media, in all of its incarnations, can expect no different.

These are tumultuous times for traditional media. Newspapers nationwide are not only feeling the effects of the largest economic downturn in recent memory, but they are also going through an identity crisis, as more and more people turn to the internet for their news.

Well-known publications are increasingly announcing massive layoffs, discontinuing their print

version, or some unfortunate combination of both.

Though the going is tough, *The Beacon* and Student Media overall is dedicated to staying ahead of the curve by keeping a close eye on industry trends and realizing that we must evolve with it, instead of fighting change.

We will do this by experimenting with new ways of storytelling and by widening the ways in which we deliver news to our audiences.

It's a new year; and though there will be many challenges and hurdles, there will be an equal amount of opportunities.

COMMENTARY



CHRIS NECEZU

NEW THIN

Plus-sized models more profitable

JASMYN ELLIOTT
Contributing Writer

For a while it was "in" to be thin, but a new view of what is healthy and beautiful is emerging.

According to a November report from *The Daily Telegraph*, scientists in London showed a panel of 400 young women two sets of ads featuring a traditional skinny model and a plus-sized model. The majority of women in the panel expressed that they would feel better about buying the product promoted by the plus-sized model.

Furthermore, a survey by the UK publication, *The Daily Mail*, discovered that out of a pool of 3,000 women, those who are a U.S. size 10 reported the highest levels of satisfaction in their careers and their love lives.

This eye-opener has been long overdue. Since the early 1990s, the "waif" look has been preferred in advertising over women with more curvaceous bodies. People within the fashion industry have argued that thin models are better since they don't distort or interrupt the lines of their clothing. However, this is an unrealistic portrayal of how their clothes will look on the people who buy them, especially since the average dress size for a woman today is a size 12.

Such a preference for emaciated models as a poster child for beauty has wreaked havoc on the body images of women everywhere. According to the National Eating Disorders Association, 10 million women suffer from eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia. Furthermore, 40 percent of new cases are made up of girls ranging from the ages of 15 to 19 years old.

Donovan Dawson, a freshman and political science major, doesn't understand this narrow-minded standard of beauty.

"I find it absurd that women use fashion models as the model for how they think they should look. The fact that pop culture has technically purchased the term 'beautiful' and plastered it onto magazines and billboards with models almost as thin as tree branches is ridiculous," said Dawson.

What is really behind our obsession with being thin? According to *The Looks Book: A Whole New Approach to Beauty, Body Image, and Style*, historical evidence. The thin body in times of plenty was a way to show the availability of more than enough time and money to dedicate to staying in shape.

One can see the same pattern in female celebrities today. With a large amount of money at their disposal, they can afford to spend it on personal chefs and so-called fitness gurus to become thinner

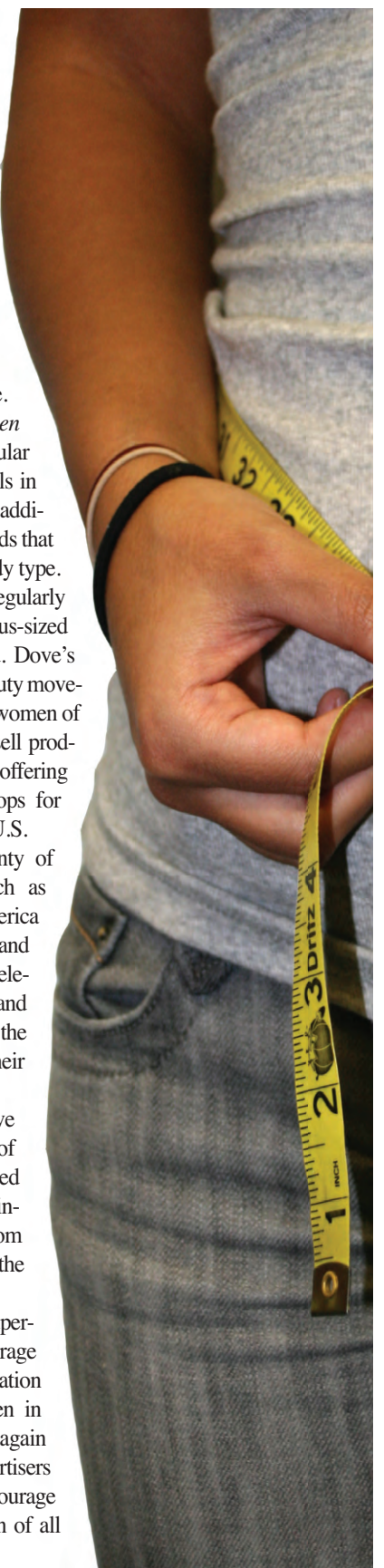
than the common person. Women in general have attempted to emulate the look of the typical emaciated starlet with disastrous results to their physical and mental health.

Thankfully, not all magazines, celebrities and advertisers have lived up to the hype. For example, *Seventeen* magazine makes regular use of plus-sized models in their fashion stories in addition to highlighting trends that are exclusive to this body type. This publication also regularly features ads from plus-sized retailers such as Torrid. Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty movement has also featured women of varying sizes; the ads sell products in addition to offering empowerment workshops for young girls across the U.S.

There are also plenty of female celebrities, such as Kate Winslet, America Ferrera, Jill Scott and Jordin Sparks, who celebrate their curves and vocally give women the courage to embrace their bodies as they are.

Although strides have been made in terms of how women are portrayed in fashion and entertainment, there is major room for improvement in the industry at large.

The discovery that super-skinny models discourage sales and the revelation that women have fallen in love with their curves again should help these advertisers open their eyes and encourage them to portray women of all sizes.



Campus involvement enriches college experience

KASSANDRA POOL
Staff Writer

Walking through the Graham Center can sometimes become a pain as students shuffle their way through passersby while fliers are being shoved in their hands. After about five seconds or so have passed, these students might either toss these fliers into a nearby garbage can, the floor or maybe keep reading them to make their fellow students feel lucky by actually glancing down at the ad: a future performance at the University soccer field by a band or artist.

Most students have no idea how hard some of their classmates work to get that comedian or musician to come to campus and perform. They don't see the last minute unanticipated situations that arise or the sometimes endless paperwork

that one must follow to comply with FIU's policies and procedures.

Some students think getting involved is a waste of time, but that couldn't be further from the truth. It entails drive and motivation to work hard, both academically and in extracurricular activities.

I wanted my college years to be different. I didn't want to drive to school only to go home later to sit in front of the television, fall asleep and wake up the next day to do the same thing. I became involved in the Student Programming Council and from there I joined other organizations – and haven't looked back since.

If I wouldn't have gotten involved, I wouldn't be sitting here typing this for *The Beacon*. I would still be the same shy girl whose eyes would water up when asked to speak in front of a class.

It's not a waste of time, it's about growing and pushing yourself to try things you have never pictured yourself doing.

Behind the scenes at SPC, students don't see the sleepless nights to meet deadlines, having to drive to a fraternity house to use the couch because the hired artist needs one as stated in his or her contract. Students miss having the set-up crew come the day of the event only to realize that the stage rented is broken, or the times that the artist coming to perform won't be paid on time because paperwork fell through.

Juggling school, work and campus involvement are not easy tasks. Most companies want their employees to be well-rounded. It's not all about a high GPA, but more about what one can contribute. Students who get involved will be better suited in their careers after graduation

because they will already know how to handle stress and manage a team while maintaining that high GPA.

So, the next time a flier is thrown your way or when you sit in those ballrooms laughing with your friends, consider how much work is put into the event, and how much running around it takes to make sure it all looks perfect – so you can walk out of those doors with a smile on your face.

It's not a waste of time, it's a way to better prepare yourself outside the classroom doors to get you out into the real world.

Kassandra Pool is the president of the Student Programming Council at the University Park campus.

Gamers find new reason to stay up all night

Hidden behind recent crazes for *Call of Duty*, *Wii Fit*, *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band*, marathon gaming is emerging as one of the developing trends in the video game world.

Marathon gaming can be done in teams, or on your own. It usually consists of completing a certain amount of games, or performing certain tasks in games, within a set time limit, usually over 24 hours.

Gamemarathons.com, a Web site dedicated to the developing trend, is the hub for marathon gamers and lists upcoming marathons and archives past marathon achievements and failures.

The trend started back in 2007, when online comedy troop LoadingReadyRun played *Desert Bus*, a game the team said is "the worst video game ever made," to raise money for Child's Play, a charity founded by gamers that donates games, toys and movies to hospitalized children. It was the first Internet-broadcasted game marathon, and it raised \$28,000 as LoadingReadyRun played *Desert Bus* for 109 hours. Yikes.

Since then, many of the marathons posted on *Gamemarathons.com* have been for the purpose of raising money for charities like Child's Play, St. Jude's and the EduCare Foundation. A *Metal Gear Solid* marathon that began Jan. 2 raised money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Non-charity marathons are usually played for bragging rights, but ultimately, they're all about the love for games.

GAMES GALORE



JONATHAN DAVILA

What makes these marathons so appealing, and probably what generates many of the donations, is the fact that most marathons are broadcasted on the Internet. Viewers cannot only catch a live stream of the room where all the participants play, but a live stream of gameplay is provided as well, so you can see exactly what game a team is playing at the moment.

So, if you're an avid gamer and you're a bit tired of calling in air strikes, striving for Star Power or doing your best Richard Simmons impersonation, I assign to you your 2009 gaming resolution: plan and complete your own game marathon. Do it for charity or do it to demonstrate your "leetness," but most of all, do it for the love of playing games.

Here are some ideas that'll steer you in the right direction.

FOR THE CASUAL

You'll want to start small so you don't overwhelm yourself with the length of the marathon or the difficulty of the games you'll be playing.

Why not try a four-player, 99-lives free-for-all brawl in *Super Smash Bros. Brawl*? This marathon has yet to be done, and it would probably draw a large audience due to the game's competitive nature. Princess Peach would be proud, if only she weren't trapped in another castle, unable to watch.

If Mario striking Luigi is a sibling rivalry you just can't deal with, how about going through *Rock Band*'s infinite playlist mode? No breaks – just you, your greasy, plastic instrument and hours of rock-and-roll's greatest (or not so greatest). These will prepare you for the lengthier, more tedious

marathons to come.

FOR THE HARDCORE

The question for you would be, "What hasn't been done already?"

Scratch marathons that have already been done, unless of course you want to beat the times and brag about it. One record worth chasing would be The Speed Gamers' record of catching all 493 Pokémon in 72 hours. Can you and your team catch 'em all faster?

Or maybe a frustratingly-difficult-game-that-makes-me-break-controllers-in-anger marathon would better suit you? Try this: play *Ninja Gaiden*, *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, *Metroid Prime*, *Gears of War*, *Devil May Cry 3*, *God of War* and *Halo* all on the highest possible difficulty setting. That sounds like a marathon so frustratingly difficult, that you and your teammates might break some controllers in anger while playing

through it – over each others heads. Good luck.

Zeldathon, a team consisting of mostly University students, were one of the recent pioneers for the first team-versus-team game marathon in which they competed against the Wily Whompers, a team known for completing a Mega Man marathon. Maybe you'd like to put your hardcore title on the line and challenge another team of players to play at the same time, competing to finish the list of games first.

So stock up on your favorite carbonated beverage, pre-order some boxes of pizza and prepare yourself for a new type of marathon.

For further inspiration for your marathon and instructions on how to get your marathon up, running and noticed, visit *Gamemarathons.com*.

Happy gaming!



The top ten box office hits of '08

STEVEN MESA
Staff Writer

The year 2008 was an interesting one for movies. Last year has given moviegoers men dressed in suits fighting crime, assassins with superhuman abilities and broken old men looking for redemption. Here is my top ten list of the best movies of 2008.

10. WANTED

Wanted is loosely based on a graphic novel by Mark Miller and J.G. Jones. This becomes Russian director Timur Bekmambetov's (*Day Watch*) first American film with an all-star cast and amazing action combined with outstanding visual effects. A femme fatale assassin named Fox (Angelina

Jolie) asserts herself into the life of a man with a miserable life, Wesley Gibson (James McAvoy).

She introduces him to The Fraternity, a secret society of assassins led by Sloan (Morgan Freeman), that trains Wesley to kill a rogue member of The Fraternity. The movie is funny and action-packed, with Oscar-winner Freeman delivering one of the best lines in the movie, if not the best quote of the decade.

9. IRON MAN

Iron Man became the first big summer blockbuster of the year and deservedly so. Stark is a greedy, multimillionaire weapon designer who happens to get

MESA, page 9

diversions



Hey readers,
If you liked today's *Stop the Presses*, you'll be happy to know it runs every Monday and Friday. In fact, you can catch a new *Diversions* comic every Monday, Wednesday and Friday this semester! You're welcome.



How-to Web site helps you accomplish New Year's goals

EDDITH SEVILLA
Asst. Life! Editor

On New Year's Eve, a lot of people declare their resolutions for the upcoming year. Starting them is one thing, following through until the goal is reached is another.

For Angelica Bracho, a Miami-Dade College student studying art, the problem with meeting her goal to get in shape last year was that she didn't focus on it.

"I was not into it. I was more concerned about getting more work contracts and I just didn't focus on getting in shape," said Bracho, who owns a graphic design business.

But the year has only just begun, so if you have not started working on those love handles that you've been dying to get rid of, fear not. Help is here.

Ehow.com, a Web site dedicated to "how to do just about anything," recently compiled a list of instructions to help you achieve your goals in 2009.

Be realistic: Nothing screams failure more than

setting goals that you know you cannot accomplish. For example, if you say you are going to quit smoking or eating chocolate – as I myself have mulled over – consider doing it in small steps as opposed to quitting cold turkey.

Want it: Own your goals. In other words, don't start a weight loss program or register for German 101 to impress someone else. Instead, choose your goals for you.

"If you are not doing this for yourself, you won't succeed because your heart won't be in it," according to ehow.com.

Do your homework: Some goals require lifestyle changes and sometimes you will need professional help to achieve them. You may want to consider the advice of a financial planner if you are looking to get out of debt. Learning to play tennis may require the skills of an instructor or someone who knows the techniques.

Focus: You will come across many distractions: text messages, phone calls, parties

and so on. But keeping your goals in mind will help you stay on track. You may want to write your goals on a piece of paper and tape that paper to your mirror. That way you will be constantly reminded of the goals you have set for yourself.

Support system: Working with a friend or a group of friends with similar goals will help you stay motivated.

"You will also be more likely to stick to your plan if there are others helping you hold yourself accountable," according to ehow.com.

Don't let setbacks become permanent: If you fail, cheat or get off track for a day, don't beat yourself up over it; get back on the horse right away. The longer you wait, the more difficult it will become to get started again.

Ana Brito, a graduate student working on her master's in business administration, said that last year she made it a goal to get into FIU's MBA program.

And that she did. Her secret?

"Usually, if I put my mind to it, I do it," Brito said.

ROCK BAND



TIFFANY GARCIA/THE BEACON

MUSICAL HEROES: At the Relay for Life "Music Saves Lives" fund raiser Dec. 12, City In Fiction performed acoustically outside of Starbucks.

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Machines rising: Robots take over the world one song at a time

“Listen and understand. That terminator is out there. It can’t be bargained with. It can’t be reasoned with. It doesn’t feel pity, or remorse, or fear.”

This line, spoken by time travelling robotic genocide survivor Kyle Reese from *The Terminator*, awoke our citizenry to a very real and terrifying threat: a mass, coordinated robotic uprising.

The Terminator, a 6-foot metallic Austrian, was terrifying and intimidating and was an easy target to get us to pay attention to our potential future and, for a time, it seemed we would be ready to fight when our toasters and remote controlled cars turned on us.

But we’ve begun sleeping on this threat once again, and now the robots are smarter. They know better than to make a frontal attack.

They’ve devised a new,

more sinister way to begin their uprising, and most of us don’t suspect a thing: They are coming through our radios.

All throughout the world, robotic, synthesized voices are taking control of our music.

What once was our most naturally uplifting and human form of expression has been replaced by cold, electronically manipulated

voices, lulling us into a false sense of security with songs about apple-bottom jeans and lollipops.

If you don’t believe me, just look at the best selling album of the year: *Tha Carter III*.

The album cover depicts a young boy, presumably Dwayne Carter, with rings on his fingers, tattoos on his face and a finely tailored suit. The cherubic face depicted is one of innocence and purity despite his obviously tough life as some sort of *mafioso*, or possibly a drug dealer.

This sweet, young, street

wise child no longer exists, however, having been replaced by Lil’ Wayne. On his hit single “Lollipop”, liberal usage of auto-tune manages to erase any resemblance of humanity from his voice, giving a key clue to let us know he is already working for the other side.

His success isn’t an anomaly, however. Hordes of musicians from around the world have seen similar success with this type of sound.

Are they themselves the machines, using our own technology against us? Or have they simply sold their souls to our future overlords in hopes of a place at their side once the revolution comes?

It is time we stand up to this musical underground movement, designed to pacify us so we don’t pay attention to the uprising before it’s too late.

Sure, Daft Punk has some good stuff, and Kanye’s usage of the technology probably wasn’t sinister at heart;

but for the most part, it is terribly tacky and boring music anyway.

It’s not like we are sacrificing Beethoven or The Beatles for our survival; it’s T-Pain and Akon.

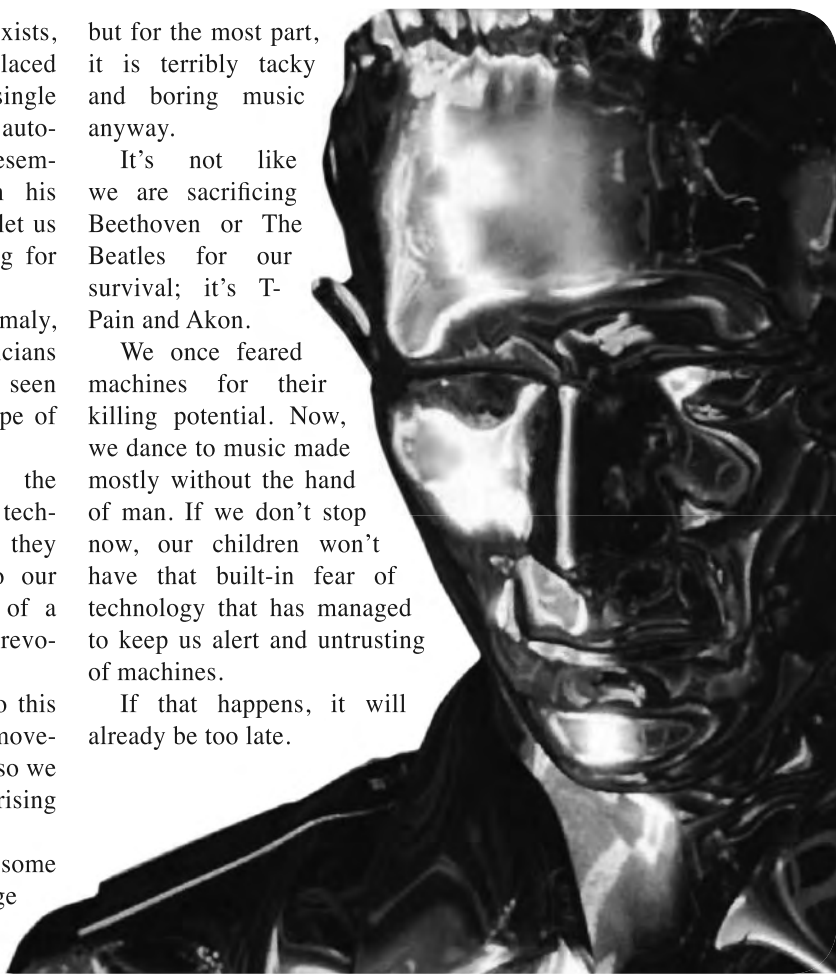
We once feared machines for their killing potential. Now, we dance to music made mostly without the hand of man. If we don’t stop now, our children won’t have that built-in fear of technology that has managed to keep us alert and untrusting of machines.

If that happens, it will already be too late.

POP & CIRCUMSTANCE



CHRIS TOWERS



THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • JANUARY 5

WHAT: South Beach Comedy Festival’s Talent Search
WHERE: Miami Improv
WHEN: 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
CONTACT: (305) 441-8200

WHAT: Panther Rage General Meeting
WHERE: GC 140
WHEN: 4:00 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: Monday Jazz Jam
WHERE: Churchill’s Pub
WHEN: 9 p.m.
CONTACT: (305) 757-1807

WHAT: Haitian Student Organization Meeting
WHERE: GC 150
WHEN: 6:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: Pop and Photography exhibit
WHERE: Opera Gallery
WHEN: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
CONTACT: (305) 868-3337

WHAT: Yoga Club Meeting
WHERE: GC 241
WHEN: 7:45 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: Ultimate Core
WHERE: FIU GYM Gold Room
WHEN: 7:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: Fountain Miami 2008 Art Exhibit
WHERE: Miami’s Radau 2505 N. Miami Ave.
WHEN: 8:00 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$5

TUESDAY • JANUARY 6

WHAT: SPC Karaoke
WHERE: Gracie’s Grill
WHEN: 7 and 10 p.m.
CONTACT: (305) 348-2138, GC 2304

WHAT: Animal Collective Weekend Comedy Explosion
WHERE: Sweat Records
WHEN: 9 p.m.
CONTACT: (305) 758-5862

WHAT: Chamber Music Concert: Amernet String Quartet, concert 2
WHERE: Wertheim Concert Hall
WHEN: 8 p.m.
CONTACT: (305) 348-0496

WHAT: Preksha Meditation Club Meeting
WHERE: GC 305
WHEN: 1:00 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

-Compiled by Beacon Staff

A look at last year’s best in film

MESA, page 7

attacked in Afghanistan by his own weapons and kidnapped.

Eventually, he makes his escape in a tin-man version of the Iron Man suit. After his escape, Stark realizes the error of his ways and decides to recreate the technology that helped him escape – along with some upgrades – and put it to good use. A great cast that features Oscar-nominee Terrence Howard (*Hustle & Flow*), Oscar-winner Gwyneth Paltrow (*Shakespeare in Love*) and Jeff Bridges (*The Big Lebowski*), awesome action mixed with great visual effects and a lot of humor makes *Iron Man* one of the best movies of last year.

8. TROPIC THUNDER

When three of Hollywood’s biggest stars (Ben Stiller, Jack Black and Robert Downey, Jr.) head into the jungles of Vietnam to shoot a war movie, they have no idea how real things can get.

Seeing the final results of *Tropic Thunder* puts any future concerns to rest, except when disability advocates came to the world premiere of the movie, opposing the use of the word “retard”.

7. WALL-E

Andrew Stanton, the highly acclaimed director of *Finding Nemo*, transports you to several hundred years into the future where a determined robot with emotions falls in love with another and follows her into space.

This becomes a first in animation as it sends the moviegoers a really deep message and ominous warning of what will happen if we do not take care of our planet.

6. THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON

This movie has humor, great visual effects and makeup, some action and dramatic elements and a love story that spans 80 years.

Brad Pitt plays Benjamin Button, a man who was born 80 years old in

1919 and is abandoned by his father (Jason Flyming), only to be adopted by a care worker (Taraji P. Henson) at a New Orleans retirement home.

As Benjamin ages, he grows younger each year. This truly is director David Fincher’s (*Fight Club*) masterpiece and reunites him with Pitt for the third time for a story about the joys of life and the sadness of death.

5. MILK

Director Gus Van Sant abandons his experimental days into a more suppressed, down-to-earth film about the first openly gay politician in the United States. *Milk* chronicles the rise of Harvey Milk (Sean Penn) who transforms from a storefront owner to an advocate for gay rights.

This has one of the best ensemble acting this year, featuring terrific performances by Penn, Josh Brolin as a rival city supervisor, James Franco as Milk’s lover and Emile Hirsch as a young activist. *Milk* is an important history lesson about where we as a country were and where we are now.

4. THE WRESTLER

Mickey Rourke is back and in fine form as he delivers one of the best performances of the year as a has-been professional wrestler who retires from the sport thanks to a severe heart attack.

Feeling like his life is worthless, he looks to reconcile with his estranged daughter (Evan Rachel Wood) and begins an enticing romance with a stripper (Marisa Tomei).

This is a departure from Darren Aronofsky’s earlier films, but it works as it becomes a film that marks an impressive comeback for Rourke and another remarkable performance by Tomei.

3. GRAN TORINO

Clint Eastwood makes his first acting appearance since 2004’s *Million Dollar Baby*, and also directs and produces this film. Eastwood plays Walt Kowalski, a retired auto worker and former Korean War veteran who is

the only white American occupant of his neighborhood.

He has recently become a widower and despises the Hmong immigrants from Southeast Asia, who are his new neighbors.

Eventually, he becomes the reluctant hero of the neighborhood and forms a relationship with the neighbors next door that changes their lives. There is one thing that I can guarantee: that Eastwood will definitely get an Oscar nomination for this role and a possible win.

2. SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE

The movie to beat for sure in the Oscar race for Best Picture is *Slumdog Millionaire*. The film is about a young man (Dev Patel) from the slums of Mumbai who is on the verge of winning 20 million rupees on India’s “Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?”

When he is suspected of cheating, he is taken to a police station and interrogated by a police inspector. He reveals how he got the answers and tells the inspector that each question that he answered on the show was a key element to his life story and a long-lost love he has been looking for.

1. THE DARK KNIGHT

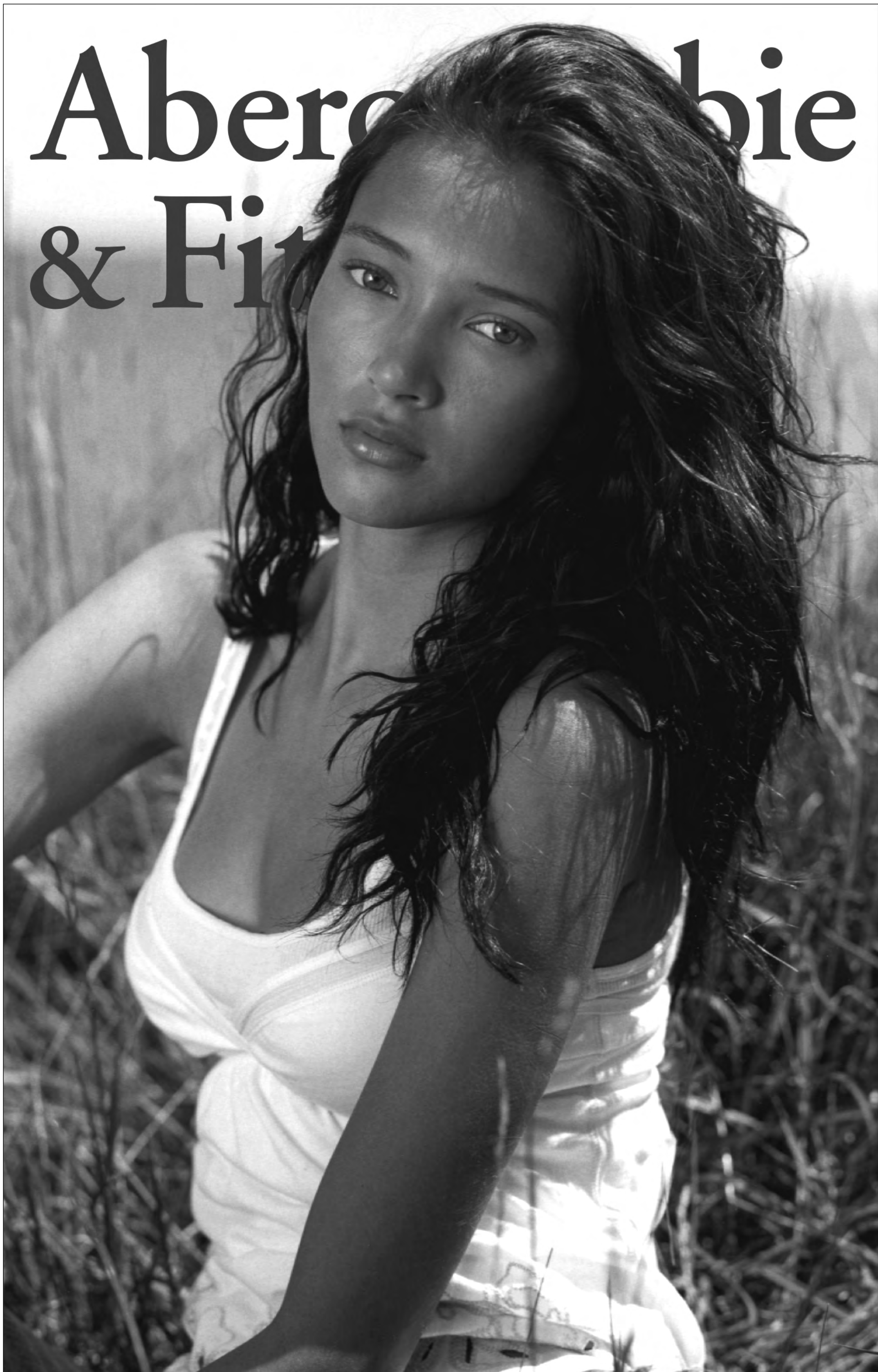
Christopher Nolan’s *The Dark Knight* works as a great crime thriller, making the viewer forget that the film is of comic-book origins.

The story takes place a year after the events of *Batman Begins*. Batman (Christian Bale) is continuing his war on crime with the help of Lt. Gordon (Gary Oldman) and District Attorney Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart) by destroying organized crime in Gotham City.

However, things turn topsy-turvy when the Joker (Heath Ledger) threatens to kill people each day if Batman does not unmask himself.

I can guarantee that Ledger will be honored with the Oscar for his performance and that *The Dark Knight* could win Best Picture, Best Director and handful of gold if *Slumdog Millionaire* does not.

Abercrombie & Fitch





VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON FILE PHOTO

RECOVERING: Forward Galindo suffered a dislocated ankle before the season. He returned nearly a month before scheduled.

Galindo takes pressure off teammates

GALINDO, page 12

increase, but he is pleased to see the team develop strong depth as the season reaches its mid-point.

"They have been a great asset to this team," Galindo said of the non-scholarship additions. "They make us better in practice and they kept us throughout this whole season and I think coach is happy about it."

PRESSURE RELIEF

Galindo's presence, on an ankle he calls about "85 percent" healed, immediately paid dividends in opening up the floor for Michael Dominguez, who has carried the perimeter load this season and attempted over 100 3-

pointers already.

In addition, the talented swingman provided more space on the court for freshman sensation Freddy Asprilla.

"He takes pressure off of me," Asprilla said. "Teams have to defend the both of us and it lets me play freely."

Galindo hopes he is the first healthy piece that can help the team make a run to win the conference championship and give Rouco his first winning season with FIU.

"I think going down the stretch if we get everybody healthy we should be a problem in the conference tournament," Galindo said. "It's my last year so being out there is a great feeling."

Freshman concentrates on rebounding

MEN'S, page 12

Golden Panthers.

"He's always been a big strong kid that rebounds the basketball. Now he's learning how to use his weight [and] strength to his advantage, knowing where to go and where to position himself," Rouco said. "He's a quick learner."

Rouco also mentioned

that the freshman has become better conditioned and is more physically prepared to play more minutes.

Asprilla is now comfortable with his role in the team, one of the more prominent roles that a first-year player has in the conference.

"I have to rebound. In the Sun Belt, there aren't

too many big men, so defending them won't be a problem," Asprilla said.

PESKY INJURY

Forward Cedric Essola has dealt with a groin issue most of the season; he has played through it to become one of the most consistent players on the roster, averaging six points per game.

But the junior suffered

a jammed finger on his shooting hand in the Golden Panthers win vs. Fordham on Dec. 29 that did not allow him to practice Dec. 31 after an off day.

Essola said he should be fine to play in the home contest vs. defending Sun Belt Conference Champion Western Kentucky on Jan. 8 at the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

Golden Panthers plagued by turnovers, missed field goals

WOMEN'S, page 12

The Golden Panthers (3-10) started the holiday season with a conference road win at Arkansas St.

Junior guard Monika Bosilj, the team's leading scorer, scored 19 points, but it was Gonzalez who surprised the Razorbacks with 16 points, six assists and three steals.

"I think Michelle is stepping up big time. Bless her heart, she's playing 40 minutes for us because we don't really have a back up point guard," said assistant head coach Inge Nissen after the South Alabama game.

Following the loss to South Alabama, Bosilj and Gonzalez led the team to a 64-56 victory against the South Carolina State Lady Bulldogs.

Things were looking up for the Golden Panthers, leading Georgia Southern

I think Michelle is stepping up big time. Bless her heart, she's playing 40 minutes for us ...

Inge Nissen, assistant head coach
Women's basketball team

Eagles 47-42 with 10:16 minutes left of the fourth game during winter break.

However, a 20-2 run by the Eagles ended the team's hopes of winning three of its last four games.

That loss carried over to the final game of December with a 19-point loss to the East Carolina Lady Pirates.

Turnovers and low field goal percentages plagued the Golden Panthers during the winter break.

Most notably, the team turned the ball over 26 and 31 times against Georgia Southern and East Carolina respectively.

Despite the team's 3-10 record, the Golden Panthers

hold an even 1-1 record against Sun Belt Conference teams, which puts them in the thick of the East Division race.

January and February contain 16 conference games with an even number of games on the road and at home.

The first and last time the Golden Panthers won the Sun Belt tournament was in 2002.

When asked about playing Sun Belt teams, Bosilj stressed the importance of conference games compared to out-of-conference games.

"This is when it counts," she said.

SUN BELT BASKETBALL STANDING (M) EAST DIVISION

TEAM	OVERALL	CONF	PCT
Western Kentucky	8-4	2-0	.667
Middle Tennessee	8-5	2-0	.615
South Alabama	9-5	2-1	.643
Troy	5-9	1-2	.357
Florida International	5-10	0-2	.333
Florida Atlantic	4-10	0-3	.286

*All records up to date as of Jan. 2

SUN BELT BASKETBALL SCORING (M)

	G	PTS	AVG/G
Troy	14	1090	77.9
North Texas	13	1005	77.3
South Alabama	14	1044	74.6
Middle Tennessee	13	953	73.3
Western Kentucky	12	843	70.2

*All records up to date as of Dec. 29

SUN BELT BASKETBALL STANDING (W) EAST DIVISION

TEAM	OVERALL	CONF	PCT
Middle Tennessee	10-4	2-0	.714
South Alabama	11-3	2-1	.786
Western Kentucky	7-5	1-1	.583
Florida Atlantic	4-8	1-1	.333
Florida International	3-10	1-1	.231
Troy	5-17	0-2	.417

*All records up to date as of Jan. 2

SUN BELT BASKETBALL SCORING (W)

	G	PTS	AVG/G
Western Kentucky	11	783	71.2
Middle Tennessee	13	921	70.8
South Alabama	12	839	69.9
North Texas	12	808	67.3

*All records up to date as of Dec. 29

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NOTEBOOK: MEN'S BASKETBALL

Big man preps for big role

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

When freshman center/forward Freddy Asprilla signed with the Golden Panthers out of Patterson (NC) prep school last Spring, head coach Sergio Rouco went as far as to call him arguably the most heralded incoming recruit in the history of the program.

Asked to play a role off the bench early in the season, Asprilla played significantly, but was behind senior and incumbent center Russell Hicks in points, who was averaging eight points per contest and was a member of the All-Sun Belt Conference preseason team.

When Hicks endured a stress fracture at UCLA on Nov. 29, Asprilla was thrust into the starting role. After missing a few games with an Achilles tendon, the freshman has provided a strong post presence the Golden Panthers have not had since Ivan Almonte.

"I've gained some good experience against teams like Georgetown and I've gotten more minutes," said Asprilla. "Coach [Rouco] told me to be more aggressive and stronger."

The 6-foot-10 Colombia native has averaged 14 points, 10.2 rebounds and 1.2 blocks per game over his last five contests, recording four double-doubles in the process.

In that stretch, Asprilla also scored a season-high 19 points in 33 minutes during a loss at UT-Martin.

Though Hicks displayed a sharp finesse on offense, Asprilla is a more physical and prototypical big man down low for the

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NOTEBOOK: WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Team seeks to build upon improvement

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Director

On a three-game losing streak, the women's basketball team entered winter break with a 1-7 record.

So finishing the break with a 2-3 record is an improvement, right? Sophomore point guard Michelle Gonzalez feels the team is capable of much more.

"We started the pre-season playing teams from the ACC and the Big East, really good teams. I know we can win. We have the potential to do it, we just have to work hard every single day," said Gonzalez about her team playing Sun Belt Conference opponents after a 65-47 loss to the University of South Alabama.

WOMEN'S, page 11

TRUCKING FORWARD



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON FILE PHOTO

BACK IN ACTION: Senior forward Alex Galindo drives to the basket vs. Arkansas St. last season. During the 2007-08 season he was the team's leading scorer and rebounder.

Recovered senior forward looks to lead

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

When senior forward Alex Galindo was cleared by team trainers to return to the court Dec. 29 for a home matchup against New York's Fordham University, head coach Sergio Rouco did not have much to say to the veteran forward.

Rouco just told the senior to play his game and be a leader. Galindo responded by doing exactly what was asked.

Galindo scored 19 points on 7-of-12 shooting from the field, including four 3-pointers that helped the Golden Panthers snap a losing skid.

He hit 51 3-pointers last season for the Golden Panthers and has averaged 13.6 points and 6.3 rebounds his previous two seasons.

His perimeter and veteran presence in a season that has seen every starter miss a game at some point was probably what the Golden Panthers missed the most.

"We needed a senior on the floor," Rouco said.

Galindo is looking to meet his coach's simple demands.

"I've been here the longest, so I feel like for this team to go forward I should be a better leader," Galindo said. "Talk to the young guys and give them advice and support them. Give them confidence. That's the main thing we need right now going into conference play."

FAST RECOVERY

For Galindo, a dislocated ankle before the start of the season was a setback, but the team training staff got him on the court roughly a month earlier than expected.

With an injury that some believed had a chance to end his college career, the former Kansas Jayhawk, who transferred to FIU following his freshman season, never seemed to doubt he would be back on the court.

Galindo's leadership was evident throughout his rehab process, even before he took the court for the first time this season and reclaimed his place among the best wing players in the conference.

In one of the last pre-season practices, long before yet another slew of key Golden Panthers endured extensive injuries, Galindo watched from the sideline with his ankle wrapped while receiving treatment.

The eager senior asked his trainer how much longer he had before he could play again while he clapped his hands and cheered on his teammates.

It was one of those moments Rouco is hoping will be a common occurrence, on and off the court.

"Alex is a man," Rouco said. "Alex is mature. His experience is tremendous."

Galindo has watched the team's injuries mount and the number of walk-ons

GALINDO, page 11