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Florida International University

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SPOTLIGHT

AT THE BAY PAGE 3



Don't miss your opportunity to tour Europe, Africa or South America while earning up to six SJMC credits.

OPINION PAGE 4

Proposed taxes on soda aim to reduce obesity while raising the budget, but how will they affect alcohol's taste?

LIFE! PAGE 5



COLUMN: Blagojevich: A lot like Abraham Lincoln, but with less facial hair (and integrity).

SPORTS PAGE 8



Basketball teams face conference opponents at the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Body Combat, Today, 6:40 - 7:45 p.m.: The Recreation Center puts the body first during these fitness classes held at the Gold and Blue room.

SPC Concert: Black Violin, Today, 7:30 p.m.: Hip-hop act *Black Violin* will give a free concert in the Graham Center Ballrooms. Go out and support the Student Programming Council.

SPC Karaoke Night, Today, 8 - 11 p.m.: It's time to face your fear, grab some friends and head to Gracie's Grill. Classic rock ballads and 80's hits are just waiting to be relived – and slaughtered.

Dance Marathon Auditions, So You Think You Can Dance?, Jan. 8, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.: Prove your dancing skills at the Graham Center Pit. Don't worry, the break dancers won't be there to intimidate you.

Anything Goes Anime Club Movie Night, Jan. 8, 8 - 11 p.m.: Gracie's Grill turns into a megaplex, giving Anime lovers a whole night of their favorites.

For the complete calendar, please see page 6 or visit FIUSM.com/calendar.

WEATHER



THURSDAY
Mostly sunny
LOW: 57 HIGH: 72



FRIDAY
Mostly sunny
LOW: 61 HIGH: 73



SATURDAY
Partly cloudy
LOW: 62 HIGH: 75

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BUDGET CUTS ... AGAIN

State Legislature proposes further cuts to higher-ed

**JULIA CARDENUTO
PAULO O'SWATH**
Beacon Staff

The Florida Legislature met on Monday in a special session to cut a total of \$2.3 billion from the state's budget.

A two percent reduction for public schools and a four percent for higher education are being

considered by the state Senate and House.

This special session, set to last for two weeks, is the third time in the past 10 months that Florida lawmakers make major cuts to the state budget. These cuts are due to drops in tax revenues and the overall state of the national economy.

The House and Senate will be splitting into committees in order

to address the situation. Each committee will concentrate on a different issue, including health and human services, education and transportation, among others.

The bad news for Floridians doesn't stop there: In March, when the regular legislative session takes place, further budget cuts are likely to occur.

With \$6 billion less than one year ago, the state's budget of \$66.3 billion is likely to fall short by \$3.5 to \$4 billion next fiscal year.

Gov. Charlie Crist's proposal aims at both borrowing and saving money.

"Florida is among 12 states that has implemented or proposed cuts to public colleges and universities.

"Florida has already cut university budgets and community college funding, with further cuts expected," according to a report published by The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

In the last 10 months, Crist has already ordered \$561.5 million in hold-back cuts to education.

For FIU, this meant a six percent or \$11.9 million cut to its budget in 2008. Last summer, the University

BUDGET CUTS, page 2

OVERJOYED



CHRIS GREEN/THE BEACON

CONGRATULATIONS: Jennifer Gasca (right) was overwhelmed when her name was called announcing her as a 2009 Peer Advisor.

CUSTOMER SERVICE INITIATIVE: PART 1 OF 8

Student Media speaks out

CHRISTOPHER LAZAGA
Staff Writer

A customer service project was developed in a joint effort between Student Media and Student Government Association in order to address the students' concerns regarding the University's services.

The two entities worked together in developing questions that were addressed to the heads of various departments in the University. Eight departments were chosen and this joint project will be published on *FIUSM.com* every

Tuesday and printed in *The Beacon* every Wednesday.

Student Media comprises *The Beacon*, *FIUSM.com* and WRGP Radiate FM. Questions regarding students' concerns and doubts toward Student Media were developed and Charlie Grau, previous editor in chief of *The Beacon*, Robert Jaross, Student Media director and Alfred Soto, Student Media assistant director addressed these questions.

Q: What is the responsibility of Student Media to the students?

Grau: It is our respon-

sibility to the FIU community to be the watchdog for the University and to inform and entertain students to the best of our abilities. We also provide a forum for the freedom of expression for the University community.

Q: Why does *The Beacon* seem to have such a narrow scope with the topics/events covered?

Grau: Whenever we cover things, we try to relate it back to the University or its students as much as we can. We

Q&A, page 2

Scuba classes provide stress free alternative

DIANA JORDAN
Staff Writer

With the beginning of the Spring semester, some students may find themselves still trying to find classes to enroll in. One option for these students: scuba diving classes, an alternative to rigorous coursework.

"After hearing about these courses, I decided to enroll in PEN 2136 so I can have at least one class in my schedule I don't need to stress over," said sophomore Allison Alonso, an international business and finance major in the Basic Scuba Diving course.

Students who enroll in PEN 2136: Basic Scuba Diving, a two-credit introductory scuba course, will learn the basics about diving physiology, underwater skills, safety, preparation and equipment.

Students must also enroll for its one-credit co-requisite course, PEN 2132: Scuba Diving Lab.

In this lab, the information taught in the course will be reinforced and divers will acquire and refine the skills needed to dive independently. All students enrolled in Basic, Advanced, Rescue and Leadership Scuba Diving courses must take this lab.

Another diving course being offered this semester is PEN 2137: Advanced Scuba Diving – a three-credit course designed for students with experience and advanced knowledge in diving. Those who have taken PEN 2136 and have already had basic scuba training may enroll in this course. Advanced dive safety, underwater navigation and search and rescue techniques will be the central focus. In this course, students will complete a total of 16 dives as opposed to the six completed in its pre-requisite course, PEN 2136.

"I highly recommend this class to everyone. Not only did I become a certified diver but also found a new way to relax on the weekends," said Billy Gil, a senior and journalism

SCUBA, page 6

NEWS FLASH

LOCAL

Mystery bag blown up near School Board building

The Miami police bomb squad blew up a black duffel bag Jan.5 morning after the abandoned package was discovered on a ramp near the Miami-Dade County School Board building entrance.

The suspicious black duffel bag was discovered before dawn and the building was evacuated before 7:30 a.m. By 8:30 a.m., the Miami bomb squad had arrived and a Miami police officer dressed in a heavy Hazmat-like suit began examining the package.

According to Miami Fire Rescue spokesman Lt. Ignatius Carroll Jr., the bag was probably left by a homeless person overnight.

LOCAL

Gaza conflict spreads in South Florida

Curse words, jeers and taunts filled the air Sunday afternoon as supporters of both sides in the Gaza conflict waged dueling protests outside the Israeli consulate in downtown Miami.

The crowd swelled to more than 1,000 people – lining both sides of Biscayne Boulevard – brandishing Palestinian and Israeli flags. At times, rocks and mostly full water bottles sailed across the four-lane street as the protests intensified.

The Miami protests, which began at about 1 p.m. and continued for more than three hours, were among many weekend demonstrations around the world, some of which turned violent.

Twelve people were arrested, mostly for misdemeanors but a few face felony charges, according to police officials.

– Compiled by Paulo O’Swath

Students’ questions addressed

Q&A, page 1

try to focus on college and FIU-related news because we will probably provide the most in-depth coverage of these types of topics. *The Miami Herald* and other traditional media outlets may not give as much coverage to the events and topics that we focus on.

Q: When is it legally permissible or ethical to use a student’s name in an article?

Jaross: Legally, it’s almost always OK. It’s the same as a photograph: If you are taking a picture anywhere on campus, as long as you are in a public setting, you don’t need their permission to take that photograph. But if somebody says, “This is off the record,” then [a reporter has] an ethical obligation to stand by that.

Q: If a student were arrested, would it be permissible to publish his/her name and the circumstances of his or her arrest?

Jaross: It depends on

whether it’s in the police report. If it’s in the police report, it’s public record. [Public record] is protected by the Sunshine Laws and you can release anything that’s in the police report. But keep in mind,

“It is our responsibility to the FIU community to be the watchdog for the University and to inform and entertain students ...

Charlie Grau
former editor in chief, *The Beacon*

sometimes victims’ names are published. The state of Florida has a law that says you can’t print rape victims’ names, but it’s been proven unconstitutional twice already. That is an ethical dilemma.

Q: What are the Sunshine Laws?

Jaross: The state of Florida has the most liberal Sunshine Laws, which means the Sunshine Laws

cover almost everything as public record. Sunshine Laws also require people or entities to publicly announce meetings.

Any entity that is dictating any type of policy [is obligated to allow anybody

in]. [The Sunshine Laws] sometimes butt heads with [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act], the Buckley Amendment, which protects confidentiality on certain student issues—registration, grades and things like that.

Q: Where does *The Beacon* make its money? Where does that money go?

Jaross: [*The Beacon*]

gets an allotment from student fees, through Student Government Association and by advertising. We’ve been about 65 [percent] to 35 [percent] advertising to student fee allocation.

This year, [our allotment] was cut back to about \$115,000. Every year we bring in about \$145,000 to \$165,000 in advertising revenue. The way we like to put it is the advertising revenue pays the students’ salaries; the SGA allotment pays our printing bill.

Q: Why are there so many mistakes in the paper? How do you avoid them?

Soto: [Mistakes] happen because it’s a student publication. A lot of people forget that *The Beacon* is not run by professional journalists. These are people who, one day, hope to become professional journalists.

They’re learning here. Mistakes are going to happen. They are lamented, but to be expected; and I can say that each editor strives to make sure his/her sections are as clean as possible.

University recruits seasoned director

JULIA CARDENUTO
News Director

After a near three-month search, Barry Taylor was appointed director of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

The Search Committee, chaired by Francisco Valines, director of Financial Aid, concluded the national search in late October, according to Vice President for Enrollment Management Corinne M. Webb.

Taylor comes with over 23 years of experience in marketing, recruitment, admissions, financial aid, retention and new student orientation. He has worked at Cornell

University, Rider University and Tufts University. Before coming to FIU, he concluded his sixth year at Princeton University as the associate dean of the Office of Admissions.

Renee Peterson was acting as interim director, managing the Office of Undergraduate Admissions since July 2008, after Carmen Brown left her position as director. Brown went to New Mexico University and is working as the vice president of enrollment management.

Taylor officially started at the University on Jan. 5 and Peterson will serve as senior associate of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

More cuts are on the way

BUDGET CUTS, page 1

cut a total of 25 academic programs due to these budget cuts.

“I had a class dropped last semester and it’s a required class for my major. Hopefully, I’ll still graduate on time,” said Michael Bramblett, a computer science major.

Tuition was also increased by at least six percent and nearly 200 workers were laid off.


“I’m paying \$1,000 more this semester compared to last semester, and now I’m in debt \$40,000 because of that,” said Veronica Torres, an international business


major.

About half of Florida’s revenue from general taxes are directed to education.

Part of Crist’s plan is to cut nearly \$100 million from education spending; half from state universities and half from K-12 centers, work force training and community colleges.

“I have fewer options today. You have to take the punches and move on I suppose,” said political science major Jesus Valentino. “There are a lot less scholarship opportunities because of lack of money. My options, variety, and selections have dried up.”

**THE BEACON**



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INFORMATION

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BW73

POLICE NOTES

Dec. 16	Dec. 17
After losing his wallet Dec. 10 in the Law School’s first floor copy room, Joshua Mott became victim to fraud. Six days after the event, Mott reported that merchandise was attempted to be purchased under his debit card at <i>NBA.com</i> and <i>Ticketmaster.com</i> , totaling what would have been \$306.85.	A theft report was made by Mary Ayers after her FIU decal was stolen from her vehicle while parked on campus.
Dec. 16	Dec. 31
Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Aerial #29 came aid Toi Bennet after Bennet became ill in a University parking garage. She was found lying in the back seat of her car and was transported to Kendall Regional Hospital.	FIU construction worker Ramirez Florencio was transported to Jackson Memorial Hospital after falling approximately 30 feet to the ground, after trying to take apart a scaffold. Florencio suffered from injuries to his left elbow, along with facial lacerations.

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

Travel programs let students take their reporting abroad

ADA M. ÁLVAREZ
Contributing Writer

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication announced three new study abroad programs in Germany, Spain, Africa and Argentina for Summer 2009. Students can now earn up to six college credits while touring Europe, Africa or Argentina.

The programs – which are open to all public relations, advertising and journalism majors – all begin at FIU, where students receive multimedia training for a week.

Attendees undergo a crash course in Photoshop, Final Cut Pro, editing, writing skills and basic principles of public affairs, according to Fernando Figueredo, coordinator of the study abroad programs and SJMC professor.

“Germany and Spain were pilot projects last year and they were so successful, people from other universities wanted to learn more about them to see if they could come along too,” Figueredo said.

Classes in Berlin, Germany and Seville, Spain will be offered during Summer A and will focus on public relations and advertising.

The cost of the Berlin program is \$3,700, excluding tuition.

The fee will cover estimated airfare, room accommodations for 23 nights, breakfast, medical insurance, visits to advertising and public relations agencies, visits to client offices, ground transportation to

and from the airport and instructor fees.

Students who attend the Marketing Communications summer program will not only earn college credit, but will also receive a certificate from the Institut fur Marketing und Kommunikation, a recognized institution for marketing and communication in Berlin.

“I don’t want to miss out on the opportunity. I like either Spain or Germany, I just need to decide which one and start saving money,” said junior Linda Martinez, an advertising major.

The program in Seville will focus on public affairs and journalism, and costs \$3,750, not including tuition.

This fee includes estimated airfare, room accommodations for 22 nights, breakfast, medical insurance, a one-day visit to Madrid’s Prado museum and to different advertising and public relation agencies, one-day visits to historical Cordoba and Granada, and history and dance lessons at the Flamenco museum.

The program will work in conjunction with the University of Seville, which is the No. 1 ranked school of journalism and mass communications in Spain, and one of the top three in Europe.

“The programs in Africa and Argentina are pilot programs, but they sure will be very interesting. I’m coordinating the one in Argentina and it will be very exciting,” said Mario Diamant, SJMC professor of drama and journalism.

The complete programming, scheduling of classes, tourism activities and cost of the new pilot programs in Capetown, South Africa, and Buenos Aires, Argentina have not been determined, according to Figueredo.

Allan Richards, SJMC interim associate dean and journalism professor, is coordinating the program in South Africa. Richards also took students to Africa last year to create an AIDS documentary.

Though specific dates have not yet been determined, classes in Germany and Spain are scheduled for the Summer A semester.

To enroll in any of the programs, students must place a \$100 deposit, payable to the University, and a \$175 check must also be made to the Office of International Studies to cover the cost of the medical insurance package.

Students also need to submit a non-refundable deposit of \$1,800 to the University by Feb. 10.

The remaining fee must be paid 60 days prior to departure and reservations will be made on a first-come, first-serve basis.

“[While earning] my bachelor’s degree, I didn’t travel so that I could graduate fast and didn’t do anything abroad. This time, I won’t miss out on this great opportunity and experience,” said Lorraine Caceres, who is a first-year journalism master’s degree candidate.

For more information, contact Figueredo at fernando.figueredo@fiu.edu.

WITH OPEN ARMS



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

WELCOME WEEK: To reach out to returning students, the Office of Campus Life and Orientation hosted the “Welcome Back BBQ Bash” outside Panther Square, Jan. 5 (top). Spray can artists, Joe and “Lefty,” made free paintings for students (bottom).

Course teaches problem-solving skills, work ethics

PARADISE AFSHAR
BBC Life! Editor

Spending a day outside may sound like leisure to most people, but with the Team Ropes Adventure Challenge, a day outside is about building confidence and enhancing skills.

The TRAC course is a series of activities designed to improve the performance of individuals, teams, corporate groups and organizations in areas such as work ethics, listening skills and any other work-related areas.

The program, which is managed and operated by the Wolfe University Center, began about 10 years ago at the Biscayne Bay Campus, according to Zachary Trautenberg, IT and marketing specialist for the Wolfe University Center. It has attracted corporations such as Microsoft, on-campus clubs and organizations, and even groups of friends.

“Usually, it’s groups who need to build leadership skills and

teamwork who participate, such as fraternities, sororities, student organizations, Student Government Association and First Year Experience classes,” Trautenberg said.

The main goal of the program is to help team members work better together, according to Trautenberg, who experienced the benefits from participating in TRAC.

“I did this competition where we had to pass a ball from team member to team member without dropping it, in under 10 seconds,” Trautenberg said.

One of the areas that these team-building activities focus on are listening skills. After Trautenberg attended an activity day when he was a member of SGA, he noticed an improvement in the listening skills of his teammates.

Other activities like scavenger hunts and kayaking are custom designed for the groups’ skill levels.

Participants can choose between a half day or a full day of activities. Those interested also

have the option of adding a kayak course to their challenge.

“We have groups out there typically four days a week and teams must be 12 people or more,” Trautenberg said.

Groups must pay for 12 members, even if less than 12 attend an adventure.

Classes are taught by Greg Affleck, project manager who coordinates all of the activities based on a group’s needs.

Water is provided for the day of activities, but participants need to bring their own lunch.

The program takes place at the TRAC site, which is just south of the Kovens Conference Center and is open to everyone in the community. Students even get a discount.

For students, the TRAC costs \$30 for half a day and \$45 for a full day per person. Kayaking costs an additional \$35.

For more information, contact John Morris, TRAC manager, at (305) 919-5516.



COURTESY OF WUC

TEAMWORK: Students participate in a team-building activity on the Team Ropes Adventure Challenge at the Kovens Center at Biscayne Bay.

PLUGGED IN

Students lose touch with reality through Internet, electronic lives

IRIS A. FEBRES
Asst. Opinion Editor

Most of us are probably immersed in the world of the Internet. As a student at FIU, you've probably used the World Wide Web in order to do research for a paper or even complete a class.

The Internet has also granted us the opportunity to stay connected with friends and family via e-mail and instant messaging services. And with social networking sites including MySpace and Facebook – which, combined, have over 250 million users – it's easy to seamlessly enter the lives of your friends through sharing photos, more messages and even applications and games.

But I wonder if it is possible to be “too connected” to the Internet. I'm not talking about having an addiction; I mean having too many “e-nooks” scattered across the Web.

I myself have many online accounts that serve as facets of a possible online persona, an “e-me”: because of course I have a Facebook and MySpace, although I use the former much more often (read: every day); but I also hold accounts on



through the Graham Center; I could simply keep only one blog, and Facebook can host, to my knowledge, unlimited photos – so what's the point of having so many online profiles?

I can understand if there's a couple of possibly stubborn friends who are at one online place and not another, so you'd like to keep tabs on as many people as possible.

And I'm sure curiosity can be a factor, too; I remember when I first signed up for a Twitter account, having no idea what it was about.

COURTESY GRAPHIC

Yet the more I think about it, this over-connectivity to everything becomes more unnecessary and unappealing.

We have to remember that there's a world outside the computer screen, the pokes and the tweets.

Every once in a while we should take a breath and remember that “no”, the Internet isn't everything – in the grand scheme of things, what you do online is probably insignificant.

I don't mean to say the Internet isn't important; it has certainly allowed me to do and learn many great things, including how to write – but I think disconnects from the e-life are necessary, for they will only force us to realize how lucky we are to have the privilege of the Web in the first place.

When we take photos of events and travels to post on MySpace, do we step back and take time to relish the memory? I suppose we have to, since we can sit at our screens for up to 15 minutes, impatiently waiting for our photos to upload so that they could be shared.

Connectivity is a double-edged sword: You can find that one classmate in middle school you thought you'd never speak to again, discover a new hobby or even find love.

But there is life beyond the digital and what's online – we just have to give it a chance.

One benefit of Iris being too connected to the Web is that you can email your thoughts to one of her many email addresses: iris.febres@fiusm.com

New York's proposed soft drink tax fights obesity, ignores bars

MATTHEW RUCKMAN
Staff Writer

Last month, in an effort to balance New York's hemorrhaging state budget, Gov. David Paterson proposed an “obesity tax” – which has also been considered by other states – on all non-diet soft drinks.

Two aims were in mind with the proposal: to curb the epidemic of childhood obesity and to rake in an estimated \$404 million.

There is, however, a side effect from this tax that has been ignored. One quite nefarious that will hit millions of New Yorkers – and whoever else adopts this tax – right where it hurts: the bar scene.

The proposed tax hike will unfairly target those who dislike butt-flavored shots of Jager and instead prefer some semblance of taste with their alcohol. Gone will be the days of mixed drinks, of the Mexicola, the Beam Black Bulldog, the Banging On The Hardwood Floor and everybody's old pal Rum and Coke. Instead, they will have to be diet (yuck!), or more expensive than they already were.

The liquor industry, and by extension the very social fabric we live in, will be destroyed by such a tax. Instead of celebrating with a round of B-52s for every-

body, Bachelor/Bachelorette parties will have nothing to do, limited to plain ol' boring beer, or shots of tequila. Cheap soda is integral to how people interact.

So, I hope New York legislators rethink their positions on this tax proposal, because childhood obesity may be a problem – but anarchy can be one as well, and a trip to the gym can't solve that.

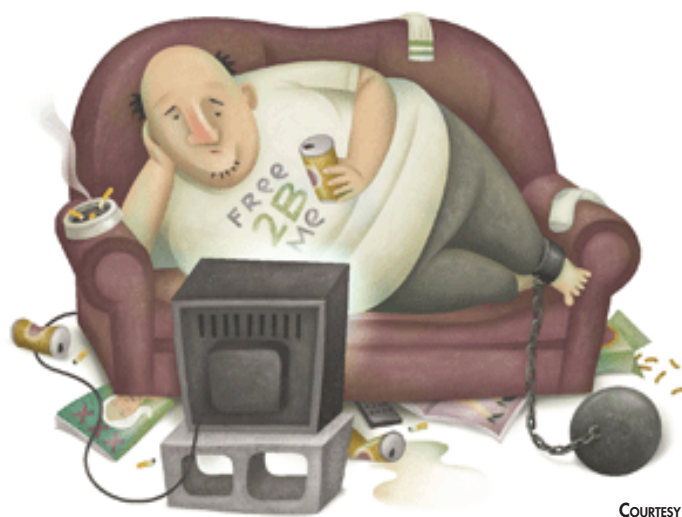
The timing of this tax proposal is also typically suspicious. It's been known for a long time that soda (or “pop”, if from the North) contributes to obesity. Why put this disincentive into effect now?

My theory is that only now is a tax such as this politically viable. Gov. Paterson was only recently made governor after the call-girl scandal that surrounded, and evicted, Eliot Spitzer.

Paterson probably won't survive the next election and sees this as a last ditch effort to add even more taxation to the most heavily taxed state in the U.S.

Maybe it takes a man brought into office by a prostitution scandal to really screw the citizenry. I just hope no more states follow suit.

Send your responses to opinion@fiusm.com or post them on fiusm.com/opinion.



COURTESY GRAPHIC

When we take photos of events and post it on Facebook, do we step back and relish the memory?

Twitter (think a Web site for just Facebook statuses), Flickr (a photo-sharing community) and I host numerous blogs (which, for my purposes, are more like e-journals).

On top of this, I have a total of at least five different e-mail accounts that I check at least once a day, which includes my University e-mail – and they also serve as log-in items for other Web sites that I frequent, including newspaper and news sites (*MiamiHerald.com*, *NYTimes.com*, *CNN.com* and others).

I know it probably isn't necessary to have more than one e-account of anything – I could always pick up a free issue of *The New York Times* while strolling

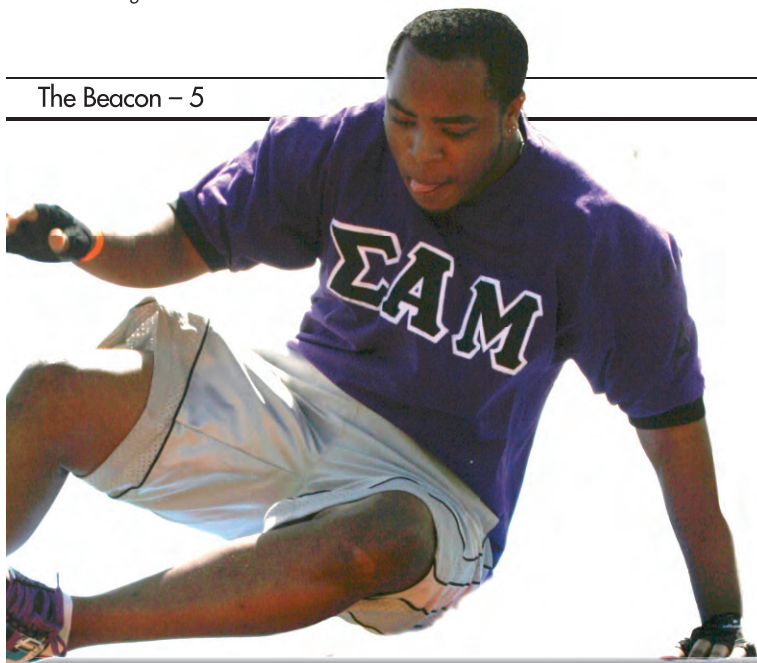
Now I can't stop “tweeting” to save my life.

Let's not forget that many of these e-nooks are made even more accessible with the use of cell phones. My Sidekick allows me to “tweet” via a mobile-friendly Web page and even send text messages of my whereabouts and random thoughts to a number, which automatically post online. And then there's Facebook Mobile, where I can “poke” my friends with the push of a button, without a computer or laptop – as if I needed the additional convenience.

With my cell phone, I am doubly connected to this e-universe, set in a place that has been described in the past as “a series of tubes.”

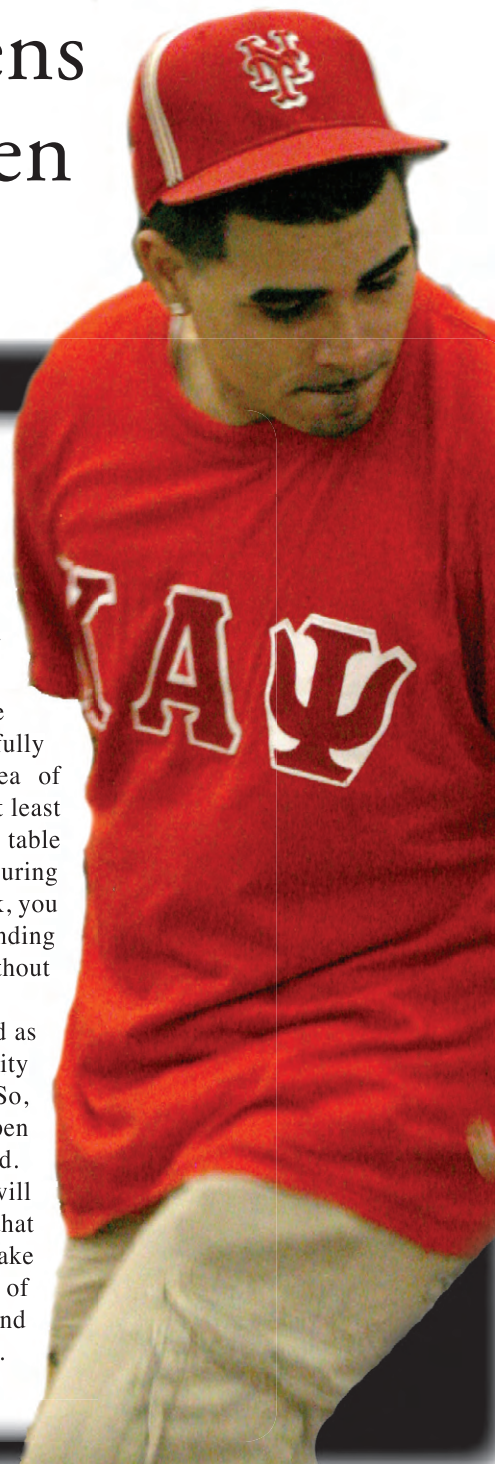
SEND US YOUR LETTERS

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.



RUSH WEEK

Going Greek opens new doors for men on campus



It's about that time again. School is starting up for Spring and with it comes fraternity Rush Week.

For all you guys out there who have always wondered how you can get involved on campus, this is the perfect way.

By going Greek, you will be able to take part in many exciting experiences such as hosting philanthropic events for your fraternity, having fun at Dance Marathon and attending mixers with the sorority ladies.

No matter what organization you join, Greek life allows for developing great leadership skills and even if you possess those already, joining a fraternity creates many opportunities for individuals to stand out and you will definitely grow as a person.

Rush Week starts next Monday, Jan. 12. If you are even the slightest bit inter-

GREEK LIFE



AMANDA BATHCELOS

ested in what the fraternities have to offer, they will all have tables set up in Graham Center this week and next week to give information about their particular organization as well as Rush Week in general and the whole process.

"I think Rush Week gives everybody a good opportunity to see what each fraternity is about, and it helps you to get to know the brothers on a more personal level," said Jaime Montalvan, a junior and member of Pi Kappa Phi.

You can sign up for Rush Week at any of the fraternity tables at no charge.

Also, be aware that just because you sign up at one fraternity's table does not mean that you are tied to that fraternity in any way.

When you sign up for rush, you are signing up for meeting

all the fraternities, not just that one table where you signed up.

The first night of the process is called "Meet the Fraternities," which takes place Monday, Jan. 12.

On this night, you will meet every fraternity involved in Rush Week and each fraternity will give you a presentation about the organization's core values, what they do on campus and whatever else they feel they have to offer you.

For the rest of the week, each fraternity will host a different event each night. These events provide a relaxed atmosphere where you meet the brothers of the fraternity as well as some of the sorority women on campus.

"I think this semester's rush will be even more beneficial for the guys interested in Greek life than Fall rush was because many [students] have already seen what all the fraternities [did] on campus

last semester, so they have a better understanding of what being in a fraternity is all about," said Alex Maltez, a sophomore and member of FIJI.

So, if what I've stated so far hasn't fully sold you on the idea of going Greek, attend at least one event or stop at a table and see for yourself. During anytime of Rush Week, you are free to stop attending any of the events without any obligations.

You can also attend as many different fraternity events as you wish. So, keep your options open and have an open mind.

I'm sure you will find an organization that appeals to you if you take a little bit of time out of your day to go and find out what it's all about.

COLUMN: CABRALITICS

The lies behind the truth surrounding 'Rod Something'

The year 2008 was long and eventful one in the world of politics; trails were blazed and barriers were broken.

Perhaps no man better fits the spirit of this epic time than a man from Illinois, a man whose audacity and innovative leadership style have set a new standard for American governance: Rod Blagojevich.

Whereas sensationalistic publications and sensitive individuals cast aspersions upon this towering figure as "corrupt" or "disgraceful" or "scumbaggish," it is worthwhile to look closer at this soon-to-be ex-governor.

You see, in many ways, Blagojevich is an inspirational figure with the all the qualities of a leader.

Blagojevich, who is currently accused of epic acts of corruption, is nothing if not a go-getter.

He is a person with numerous

political handicaps: a nearly unpronounceable name, a hideous toupee (made of genuine raccoon) and a purported lack of intelligence.

Despite this, he rose to the highest office in Illinois and was even re-elected.

Yet perhaps even more remarkable than Blagojevich's indomitable spirit is his keen business savvy.

For years, critics have said Washington and the halls of government in general needed to function more like the private sector, it needed more of an entrepreneurial spirit.

Well that spirit is alive and well in the governor from Illinois.

Like mobsters who saw a desert in Nevada and imagined 1,000 casinos, or the explorers who discovered the New World and imagined profitable colonies completely clear of their original and rightful inhabitants, it takes a visionary to see possibility in the most unlikely places.

Mere public servants might see a vacant senate seat as just another government position to be filled by the most worthy candidate.

Blagojevich saw opportunity.

A seat in the U.S. Congress, he said according to FBI tapes, is "a f---ing valuable thing, you just don't

has driven thousands of profitable business ventures in America.

Barack Obama may get more press with his intelligent speeches and oratory skills, but perhaps no person is more capable of truly connecting with people with his words on an emotional level than

the kind of poetry usually associated with sailors or members of the Wu-Tang Clan: "Give this motherf---er [Obama] his senator? F--- him. For nothing? F--- him." (*The Hill*, Dec. 9, 2008). If only President-elect Obama used such emotionally charged language.

In the end, Blagojevich may be removed from office, but he has left an indelible mark on American politics.

Other politicians may have aspired to profit unlawfully from public office, but none have ever done it with such style, grace, or with such daring eloquence.

In the years to come, certainly others will follow in his footsteps, attempting to replicate his unflappable determination and his shameless corruption.

All who do so will be dedicating a silent tribute to Rod Blagojevich, and all we citizens are left to do is utter Blagojevich's timeless declaration that sums up many an elected official's career: "F--k him!"

Blagojevich is a person who will let nothing stand in the way of his dreams ... not even federal laws or generally accepted standards of moral behavior.

give it away for nothing."

Blagojevich is a person who will let nothing stand in the way of his dreams.

Not his name, not his mental shortcomings, not even federal laws or generally accepted standards of moral behavior.

It is that kind of attitude that

Rod Blagojevich.

Like the great artists of our time, from Martin Scorsese to Quentin Tarantino, Blagojevich understands the power of the repeated use of expletives.

When told he should appoint the President-elect's choice for senator for free, Blagojevich let loose with

Pulse

Health conscious choices pave way to a better you

“Ugh, I hate eating healthy foods.” That’s what my boyfriend said Sunday morning when I called him. You see, my boyfriend, Charlie Grau, and I have decided to become health-conscious this year.

We have started watching food portions, becoming more aware of the foods we eat and even discussed signing up for a runner’s marathon at some point.

In pursuit of bettering ourselves, Charlie now nags me – well, it sounds like nagging as he warns me about too much sugar – when I announce a trip to the drugstore to get a chocolate fix.

I will encourage – yes, encourage, although it may sound like nagging to him – healthier, leaner options especially when we dine out.

And although we are not entirely happy to back off the edibles we are quite fond of, we know this is a must.

At 5 feet and 135 pounds, I’m walking around with unnecessary weight – OK, fat.

My body mass index is 26.4 and, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, a person with a BMI between 25 and 29.9 is overweight.

Overweight. The sound of that word makes me feel like my love handles are bulging from my sides.

Oh wait, they are bulging from my sides and my jeans are screaming, “I can’t cover all this, lose it or lose me!”

A few weeks ago I had the mind to drown out the screams by tossing them out and buying a new pair.

But neither my wallet nor my sense of reality allowed me to do it.

The sad truth is that since I started dating my boyfriend more than a year ago – now, there’s something that sounds nice – I have gained more weight than I’d like to admit.

But I’m not blaming it on our relationship. Rather, I am blaming it on my decision to eat the foods I know I’m not supposed to eat, and the lack of physical activity – another conscious decision I made.

But a few weeks ago, I made a different choice.

I decided that come the new year, I would lose the extra weight and get in shape.

I concluded that one way to become aware of my health and my progress would be to better educate myself and write about it.

And to motivate myself to stay on track, I decided to share my journey with you without reservations.

Perhaps some of you have felt the heavy weight of an unhealthy life when you find yourself short of breath after climbing only one flight of stairs. Or the disappointment when you go to the department store and discover that the size 5 you used to wear no longer fits.

I know I have, and I no longer wish to feel that way.

Once and for all I have decided to make a lifestyle change and become a healthier being.

And I hope those of you who have felt that way are making a decision to a healthier you.

I propose that we do this together. Join me today and every other Wednesday as I bring you health, wellness and fitness information from local vendors and health professionals.

And if you’d like to share some tips or discover a health-related something that would benefit us all, share it with us. Let’s help each other.

Oh, and if you know of a potion that would make someone fully enjoy broccoli and mangos, let me know. I will be grateful. And Charlie will thank you, too.



EDDITH SEVILLA

HOLIDAY BUFFET



WEN-JU CHIEN/THE BEACON

DIG IN: Asian Student Union officers serve food for members at “Christmas Jam” on Dec. 15.

diversions

HONEST ABE takes a Presidential vacation.

by michelle diaz

Hey readers! *Honest Abe* running every Wednesday, so make sure you keep an eye out for it.



Flippers required for class, swimming skills expected

SCUBA, page 1

major who took this course last semester. But before embarking on dives, students will learn basic safety information and how to solve problems that can occur underwater. These situations range from hypothermia, being stung by a jellyfish and “bends” syndrome – which is found in deep-sea divers who surface too quickly, resulting in the release of nitrogen from solution in their blood. The program, which has been running since 1995, has never encountered a single incident, according to Robert Weisman, FIU’s academic scuba program manager and dive and boat safety officer. The scientific diving courses also fulfill requirements for marine biology and biological sciences majors because students can perform field research while diving, according to Weisman. Students enrolled in these courses also may become certified divers after six supervised dives have been completed in the Florida

Keys, where all the dives will take place. All students should know how to swim and tread water and are expected to be able to swim in water as deep as 60 feet, although there is no time requirement. Students should ask advisers from their respective colleges to learn if the diving courses will be accepted to fulfill graduation requirements.

Classes

PEN 2136
Mondays, 6:25 - 9:05 p.m.
GC 279A
Instructor: Robert Weisman
PEN 2137
Tuesdays, 6:25 - 9:05 p.m.
No room necessary
Instructor: Robert Weisman
PEN 2132
Saturdays, 3 - 5:00 p.m.
BBC pool

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

WEDNESDAY • JANUARY 7

What: Wake Up & Spin
When: 7:00 - 8:00 a.m.
Where: Recreation Center, Blue Fitness Room
How much: Free

What: Dance Marathon General Meeting
When: 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Where: GC 305
How much: Free

What: Body Combat
When: 6:40 - 7:45 p.m.
Where: Recreation Center, Gold & Blue Fitness Room
How much: Free

What: Ultimate Core
When: 8:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Where: Recreation Center, Gold Fitness Room
How much: Free

What: SPC Concert: Black Violin
When: 8 p.m. (Doors Open 7:30 p.m.)
Where: GC Ballrooms
How much: Free

What: SPC-Karaoke Night
When: 8:00-11:00 p.m.
Where: Gracie’s Grill
How much: Free

THURSDAY • JANUARY 8

What: Wake Up & Spin
When: 7:00 - 8:00 a.m.
Where: Recreation Center, Blue Fitness Room
How much: Free

What: Super Step
When: 6:15 - 7:15 p.m.
Where: Recreation Center, Gold Fitness Room
How much: Free

What: Ultimate Core
When: 7:20 - 7:50 p.m.
Where: Recreation Center, Gold Fitness Room
How much: Free

What: Dance Marathon Auditions: So you think you can dance?
When: 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Where: GC Pit
How much: Free

What: Anything Goes Anime Club Movie Night: Sayonara Zetsub Sensei at 8:00 p.m., Akihabara @ DEEP at 9:00 p.m., Kaleido Star at 10:00 p.m.
When: 8:00 - 11:00 p.m.
Where: Gracie’s Grill
How much: Free



JONATHAN DAVILA/THE BEACON FILE PHOTO

LOCKDOWN: Junior guard Michael Dominguez protects the ball vs. Toledo. Dominguez is the team’s leading scorer averaging 11.3 points per game.

Men’s team misses free throws; Bosilj scores 22 in close loss

REPLAY, page 8

Panthers coughed up the ball 13 times.

TROY, 69, FIU 58 (W)

Despite putting together one of their best efforts over the last three games, the Golden Panthers (3-11, 1-2 Sun Belt) could not stop the Trojans (6-7, 1-2).

The win gave the Trojans their first conference game and put the Golden Panthers under .500 against the conference.

Entering the second half, the Golden Panthers held a tight 33-32 lead.

Yet a 30 percent second-half performance let the Trojans creep their way back into the game to eventually win by a double-digit margin.

For the game, the Trojans shot an efficient 54 percent compared to the Golden Panthers’

37 percent.

The Golden Panthers’ free-throw shooting and turnover problems have been the two consistent factors leading to losses.

They shot 8-of-15 from the free-throw line while allowing 19 turnovers.

Nineteen turnovers were a huge improvement from the team’s previous game vs. East Carolina, though, when they turned the ball over 31 times.

Junior guard Monika Bosilj led the team with 22 points, but shot just 4-of-16 from 3-point range.

Sophomore guard Michelle Gonzalez contributed with 12 points and six assists.

In just 22 minutes of play, Trojan freshman guard Kirsten Smith managed to lead her team with 18 points on 8-of-12 shooting.

Smith is averaging just six points per game this season.

Hilltopper athleticism will create issues for team

WOMEN’S, page 8

69.7 points per game.

The Hilltoppers have allowed seven 20-point scorers in their 13 games this year and have allowed 11 of their 13 opponents at least three double-digit scorers, and that’s something Bosilj looks to capitalize on.

The match-up will call for an efficient performance from Monika Bosilj; if Elisa Carey can be efficient, shooting

51 percent from the field and Gonzalez can be effectively aggressive, then Bosilj should have some space on the perimeter to operate.

If the Golden Panthers cannot handle the press, though, it may be a difficult evening for FIU, because the athleticism of Dominique Duck and Arnika Brown could end up taking over the game on the defensive end and sparking multiple fast break runs off FIU turnovers.

Russell to have X-rays; Galindo finding groove

MEN’S, page 8

“We always play them tough. We just have to play smarter and not turn the ball over,” said forward Alex Galindo. “We have to make our shots, because every time we play them we don’t knock down our shots.”

The Golden Panthers are hoping guard Tremayne Russell will be available to play against WKU.

HOPEFUL

“I have an X-ray on Wednesday and the game is Thursday, so I will know by then,” Russell said of his status. “I’ve been dribbling with my left hand, left hand layups,

getting my left hand ready.”

Russell has been out of action since a Dec. 6 matchup with Buffalo, recovering from a broken bone in his right hand.

The sophomore is fifth on the team in scoring, at 9.2 points per game.

RHYTHM

Galindo, who has averaged 17 points per game since returning from an ankle injury, says he will be back to tip-top shape soon.

“Feels good. I still have to get back in shape, but a few more games and I will be 100 percent,” he said. “I still need rhythm. My shot is falling but other parts of my game haven’t got back yet because I’ve been out so long.”

CLASSIFIEDS

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MISCELLANIOUS

HONOR STUDENTS: Phi Sigma Theta National Honor Society is seeking motivated students to establish a campus chapter. Contact: Director@PhiSigmaTheta.org

AMIGAS

AMIGAS is a health program that creates a comfortable setting for women to discuss topics related with health, in particular the risks dealing with VIH/SIDA.

Who can participate in AMIGAS?
Single Hispanic women from
20 to 44 years of age

How can you participate in AMIGAS?

You can call Ruth or Ana at:
305-513-3202
or at 305-219-9367

For your participation you can receive certificates with a value up to \$270.00

PREVIEW: MEN'S BASKETBALL

FACING THE CHAMPS



WESTERN KENTUCKY MEDIA RELATIONS/ JS ROBINSON



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON FILE PHOTO

STILL STRONG: With former Hilltopper Courtney Lee now playing for the Orlando Magic, junior guard A.J. Slaughter (left) has taken his place as Western Kentucky's main offensive threat. Senior forward Alex Galindo is returning for his third game of the season.

Team matches up against outside shooters

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

The Western Kentucky Hilltoppers have relied on Courtney Lee en route to conference championships the last two seasons, so his departure to the NBA has alleviated some of the pressure on WKU opponents.

Like they have most of the decade, the Hilltoppers have continued their winning ways, this time behind the scoring of A.J. Slaughter.

The junior guard has broken out this season with 16.2 points per game and 25 3-point field goals as of Jan. 5, both on pace to be career highs for the WKU slasher.

But as they are usually built, WKU (9-4) is not a one-man show, and FIU (5-11), will have their hands full guarding a few of the Sun Belt Conferences premier players Jan. 8 at the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

"A.J. is having a great year. It's going to have to be a team effort," said assistant coach Dwight Evans.

They also have [Orlando] Mendez-Valdez. Their perimeter is their strength.

The Hilltoppers have four double-digit scorers, with Steffphon Pettigrew (11.8) and Sergio Kersch (10.4) joining Slaughter and Mendez-Valdez.

The Hilltoppers have come to South Florida in recent history and have won four of the last five matchups and every contest in FIU's home gym since the 2005-06 season.

MEN'S, page 7

BASKETBALL

Golden Panthers swept

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Director

The Golden Panthers' men's and women's basketball teams began their first of 16 Sun Belt Conference games with losses on Jan. 3.

While on the road, Troy University swept the Golden Panthers teams at Trojan Arena.

TROY 69, FIU 62 (M)

The Golden Panthers (5-11, 0-3 Sun Belt) played a close game for the entire 40 minutes of play, but the Trojans (6-9, 2-2) outlasted the visiting team in the final minutes.

With a minute left in the game, the Golden Panthers reached within three points.

However, a jumper from junior guard Brandon Hazzard sealed the victory for the Trojans.

In his second game back, senior forward Alex Galindo led his team with 14 points on 5-of-12 shooting.

Recording his sixth double-double of the season was freshman forward/center Freddy Asprilla, who scored 13 points and grabbed a game-high 15 rebounds.

Both teams displayed a balanced attack and had four players reach double-digit scoring.

The biggest discrepancy between the two teams was the free-throw percentage.

Throughout the season, the Golden Panthers have had trouble shooting free throws and it hurt them as they shot just 5-of-15 from the charity stripe.

The Trojans made the most of their trips to the line by shooting 18-of-19, which set a school record for free-throw percentage in a game. They also turned the ball over just seven times for the game while the Golden

REPLAY, page 7

PREVIEW: WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Golden Panthers look to halt three-game skid vs. WKU

ANDREW JULIAN
Sports Director

To begin the season, the Golden Panthers knew junior guard Monika Bosilj would be counted on for the heavy lifting on the offensive end, and her 17.8 points per game – which rank second in the Sun Belt Conference – are indicative of her offensive output this season.

The Golden Panthers, however, have had trouble scoring outside of Bosilj, who has faced double teams all season.

FIU, on the season, is shooting just 37 percent from the floor and averages just 55 points per game, which ranks at the bottom of the Sun Belt.

Michelle Gonzalez has had to shoulder much of the scoring

load and she has done so, as of late, upping her scoring average to 9.4 points per contest, with double digits in four of her last six games.

The turnovers are still a major issue for the team, which are a hold over from a season ago.

At nearly 23 turnovers per game, FIU ranks last in the Sun Belt and this leads to fast break points for FIU opponents. These have been the rallies that have buried the Golden Panthers over the course of the season.

There is some good news – and it starts on FIU's defensive end, where they allow just 41 percent from the floor.

FIU also ranks second as a team in blocked shots per game in the league and the interior defense has been excellent.

Led by the tandem of Elisa Carey (1.6 bpg) and Jasmine Jenkins (1.4 bpg), FIU will attempt to neutralize the Western Kentucky attack, starting on the defensive end.

The Hilltoppers (7-6, 1-2 SBC) have had a tough start, playing five of the first 13 games against teams that played in the NCAA tournament last season.

Kenzie Rich leads the way for WKU, averaging over 14 points per game. She has attempted 102 of Western Kentucky's total 159 3-pointers.

Arnika Brown (14.6 ppg) and Amy McNear (10.7 ppg) are also averaging double figures.

WKU finds most of its issues on the defensive end, allowing

REPLAY, page 7



MIKE COSTA/THE BEACON FILE PHOTO

HANDLING THE ROCK: Sophomore guard Michelle Gonzalez totes the ball against the University of Miami this season.