

2-23-2009

## The Beacon, February 23, 2009

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## SPOTLIGHT

**EDITORIAL** PAGE 9  
With on-campus thievery on the rise, the University should consider making Public Safety more of a priority.

**AT THE BAY** PAGE 4



Find out why BBC stinks and students' noses suffer as they drive to campus.

**LIFE!** PAGE 11  
Column: Chris Towers rethinks Pop & Circumstance's direction, breaks down in text

**OPINION** PAGE 9



Homelessness in South Florida has been steadily increasing – and as it does so, our perception of the homeless changes too.

**LIFE!** PAGE 11



Students & STD's: Chlamydia is #1 at FIU

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Students WRITE Meeting**, Feb. 23, 2:00-4:00 p.m.: Grab your pen, moleskine notebook & favorite beret to join the Students WRITE scribes for some textual healing.

**Philosophy Club Meeting**, Feb. 23, 3:00-5:00 p.m.: Do you have thoughts? Theories? Deconstructions? Share them at today's Philosophy club meeting and wax platonically with your new best friends!

**Haitian Students Organization Meeting**, Feb. 23, 6:30-8:00 p.m.: Come join the Haitian Students Organization for an afternoon and spend some time getting in touch with your Caribbean roots!

**FIU Yoga Club**, Feb. 23, 7:45-9:45 p.m.: Stretch yourself to stress freedom with the FIU Yoga club. Bring your knotty self to hang with the stretchiest kids on campus!

For the complete calendar, please see page 11 or visit [FIUSM.com/calendar](http://FIUSM.com/calendar).

## WEATHER

**MONDAY**  
Scattered showers  
LOW: 56 HIGH: 75

**TUESDAY**  
Scattered showers  
LOW: 59 HIGH: 75

**WEDNESDAY**  
Scattered showers  
LOW: 61 HIGH: 77

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**owned**

### Facebook protests prompt revision

**JORGE VALENS**  
Staff Writer

After extensive media coverage and protests, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced the Web site will return to its previous terms of service – but only for a while.

Over 175 million people use Facebook and a recent change in the social networking giant's terms of service could give the company perpetual rights to everything users uploaded to the Web site.

The change was first noticed by a consumer advocate blog, *The Consumerist*, who detailed them for its readers.

Facebook removed a sentence from its old terms of service, which stated that the company could not claim any rights to original content that is uploaded by a user once their account has been deleted.

Facebook's original terms of service stated: "You may remove your user content from the site at any time. If you choose to remove your user content, the license granted above will automatically

expire, however you acknowledge that the Company may retain archived copies of your user content."

Facebook amended the terms of service with a statement that gave them the full, perpetual rights to user content, whether that account was deleted.

"You hereby grant Facebook an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, transferable, fully paid, information in any format they deem fit and allow them "to use your name, likeness and image for any purpose, including commercial or advertising ...."

"I am always concerned with people taking my [personal] information and retaining it after I stop using the service," said Adam Schucher, an attorney practicing in Miami.

The scope of this policy change affects all aspects of user-contributed information on Facebook including uploaded photos, wall posts, videos and profile information.

"Make sure you never upload anything you don't feel comfortable giving away forever, because

**FACEBOOK, page 2**

**Terms of Service**  
[Facebook.com](http://Facebook.com)

**“You hereby grant Facebook an irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive... worldwide license**

## Provost announces candidacy removal

**JULIO MENACHE**  
Staff Writer

Executive Vice President and Provost Ronald Berkman has withdrawn his candidacy for the University at Albany's presidential search, according to the Office of the Provost.

The announcement comes on the eve of a *Times Union* article that leaked information on the top-five candidates for the University at Albany, New York, in what was supposed to be a covert and confidential process to pick a new president.

Two sources close to the proceedings leaked the names of Berkman, along with the other four finalists, to the Albany paper after members of the search committee signed a confidentiality agreement, promising not to divulge names of candidates.

Berkman, along with the other candidates, would not speak to reporters after the story broke.

According to an online update by the University at Albany's search committee, the race has been narrowed down to three candidates and they promise a new president will be named "as quickly as possible."

Aside from Berkman, the other finalists were also current presidents and chancellors from different universities.

As a finalist, Berkman met with members of the University at Albany community for off-campus interviews.

According to the University, all the travel expenses were covered by the University of Albany.

The *Times Union* article stated the likelihood that some of the finalists may consider withdrawing their candidacies after their confidentiality agreement was breached but, according to a search update posted on the school's Web site on Feb. 17, all candidates recommended by the presidential search have remained in the race despite the leaked information.

"While the desired confidentiality of the process was not preserved due to an unfortunate breach, we were successful in persuading our candidates to remain in the process - no small feat and a tribute to the conviction and the integrity of all directly involved," said David C. Tomson,

**BERKMAN, page 3**

## SGC-UP SENATE

# New bill considers political parties

**DAVID BARRIOS**  
Senior Staff Writer

A bill to add a political party system to the University Park Student Government Council's elections code was introduced last Fall and is currently awaiting debate and votes to be implemented.

The Election Code Revision Bill asks for the establishment of political parties within student government and was sponsored by Senators Chris Cabral, David Dial and Altanese Phenelus.

"The way it is now, a senator has individual ideas on the issues. With political parties, however, candidates can maintain these ideas but align with others with similar ideas, instead of it being every man for himself," said Jean Roseme, SGC-UP senate speaker.

"The Student Government Association elections code is a well written guiding document, but it is not without its flaws or loopholes. The purpose of this bill is to clarify in no uncertain terms what rules would govern candidates should

they choose to form political parties or run under a common party platform," states the introduction of the bill.

Political parties would be allowed to advocate for any candidate, cause or policy that they support and would have to register with student government for approval.

According to the bill, parties would only be allowed to spend a maximum of \$10,000 of their funds toward all SGC-UP elections

**PARTIES, page 3**

**NEWS FLASH**

FIU

**SJMC dean's husband passed away**

David Kopenhaver, husband of Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver, School of Journalism and Mass Communication dean, died Feb. 18 from complications due to type I diabetes.

David Kopenhaver, Ph.D., who wrote several books, was a professor in the Department of Language, Exceptionalities and Reading at the Appalachian State University in North Carolina.

Visitations were scheduled for Feb. 20, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Fred Hunter Funeral Home in 6301 Taft Street, Hollywood.

Funeral services were scheduled for Feb. 21 at 9 a.m. at St. James-in-the-Hills Episcopal Church at 3329 Wilson St., Hollywood, followed by his burial at Hollywood Memorial Gardens North Cemetery in 3001 North 72nd St., Hollywood.

"We are all devastated," said Meira Langsam, SJMC program assistant. "He was a lovely man."

FIU

**University to honor distinguished alumni**

The eighth annual Torch Awards Gala will be honoring and paying tribute to distinguished alumni and members of the FIU community on Feb. 28.

The ceremony will also include a performance by University alumna and American Idol finalist Syesha Mercado.

The cocktail reception will start at 6:30 p.m. inside the Graham Center Ballrooms.

NATIONAL

**Facebook deletes sex offenders' accounts**

Facebook announced Feb. 20 that it has removed more than 5,500 convicted sex offenders from its social networking Web site since May.

Earlier in February, MySpace, Facebook's rival networking site, removed 90,000 sex offenders from its site during a two-year period.

-Compiled by Paulo O'Swath and Pamela Duque

**REAL-LIFE LEARNING**



NATALIE LEVY/THE BEACON

**EXPERIENCING:** Trevor Nicholson, a junior international business major, was challenged to eat spaghetti while blindfolded during the Resident Hall's Disability Dinner on Feb. 5. The dinner attempted to show students what life would be if they had a disability.

**Facebook to create 'Bill of Rights'**

**FACEBOOK, page 1**

it's Facebook's now," said senior editor of *The Consumerist*, Chris Walters, on his blog.

Various media outlets and online news sources also started publishing articles about Facebook's terms of service change, causing widespread backlash from subscribers.

Over 120,000 Facebook users joined a group on Facebook in order to protest the change and the number is still growing.

An online privacy research group called the Electronic Privacy Information Center was ready to file a complaint with the Federal

Trade Commission over the civil liberties violations contained within the new terms of service.

"Given the level of exposure Facebook has to the entire world, I don't agree with them using my name and face to do as they wish," said Chris Sierra, business major and Facebook user.

And eventually, after extensive media coverage and threats from the EPIC, Facebook reverted to the previous terms of service.

"We've decided to take a new approach toward developing our terms. We concluded that returning to our previous terms was the right thing to do for now ... we think that a lot of the language in our terms is overly formal and protective so we don't plan to leave it there for long," Zuckerberg said in a

Feb. 18 Facebook post.

Zuckerberg said in a previous blog post that the company's philosophy is that "people own their information and control who they share it with."

Facebook is asking for its community of users to help contribute in the creation of a new, user-friendly term of service by asking them to give feedback on a newly formed Facebook group called "Facebook Bill of Rights and Responsibilities".

"The thought or idea that someone can claim a random post or photo of you and claim it's now their property is just wrong," said Adrian Valladres, marketing major and Facebook user. "But still, if you want something to really remain private, you shouldn't be posting it online."

**THE BEACON**

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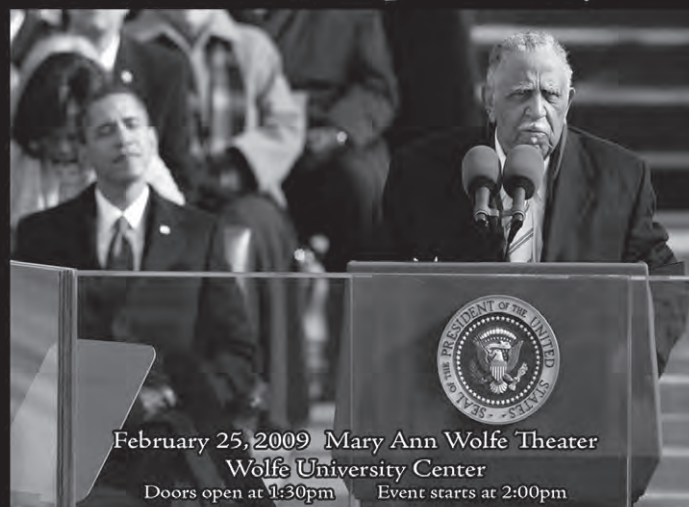
**CORRECTIONS**

The author's year and major were incorrectly represented in the Feb. 20 Soapbox column. William-Jose Velez Gonzalez is a sophomore studying biomedical engineering.

*The Beacon* will gladly change any errors. Call our UP office at 305-348-2709 or BBC at 305-919-4722.

Florida International University Biscayne Bay Campus SGA Lecture Series presents...

**Reverend Joseph Lowery**



February 25, 2009 Mary Ann Wolfe Theater  
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# Exxon Mobil presentation to discuss alternative fuels

**JORGE VALENS**  
Staff Writer

At a time when gas prices are constantly changing, experts are looking to new types of affordable energy to power our day-to-day lives.

The Energy Business Forum, a collaboration between the University's Applied Research Center, The Knight Ridder Center for Excellence in Management of the College of Business Administration and the Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship Studies is sponsoring Exxon Mobil's presentation "The Global Energy Outlook to 2030."

Scott Nauman, manager for economics and energy in the Corporate Planning Department of Exxon Mobil, will be giving the presentation which will consist of a detailed outlook of the global energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions as they relate to population growth and economic expansion.

This event has been presented around the country for decades. However, it has been held at FIU for only the past two years.

"['The Global Energy Outlook'] is widely viewed as one of the best in the world," said Edward Glab, executive director of the Knight Center for Excellence in Management and co-director of EBF.

The reason for this, Glab said, is that any sort of political pressure does not influence Exxon Mobil's presentation. This leads to an unbiased, extremely accurate report on the status of the world's energy consumption.

The purpose of the event is to promote awareness of the energy crisis that the world faces and what it stands to face in the near future, where countries like China and India are constantly developing and their demand for fossil fuels is rising.

This year, the presentation will incorporate the need for affordable, alternative energy sources and ways to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

"What we are trying to do is really raise awareness of the importance of developing alternative fuels, clean alternative fuels," said George Philippidis, associate director

of ARC and co-director of EBF.

The world will look to new, innovative types of technologies to ease the dependence on oil, coal and natural gas, which will continue to satisfy a majority of the world's energy needs well into 2030.

According to Philippidis, Florida is a perfect place for certain types of renewable energy solutions, such as solar energy, to thrive.

Florida can also take advantage of gasification: The conversion of waste materials that normally occupy landfills into a gas that can be used to create energy.

Another possibility in the future is ocean energy.

Underwater turbines can harness the limitless energy of deep underwater currents that flow between Florida and the Bahamas.

However, Philippidis stresses that this technology is still in development and needs to be commercialized.

ARC is currently working on various alternative energy projects, such as cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel created from algae farms.

Both Glab and Philippidis say that University students can do their part by taking an interest and getting involved in the green energy industry.

"We need a lot of people to staff these new technologies. We're talking about business people, scientists, engineers, policy makers," Philippidis said.

Philippidis went on to say that students should request courses on green energy and global energy demand so that ARC can create these courses and start developing a workforce.

"I think it's very important for people to understand that energy and talking about energy is the crux of global warming and climate change," Glab said. "It's so important that they understand the more we can conserve energy, the more we are addressing this problem."

Exxon Mobil's presentation will be held on Feb. 27 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the College of Business Administration Complex Special Events Center, Room 233. The event is open to the public, though EBF asks that attendees RSVP, as a free lunch will be provided.

# Retention bonus, salary hike keeps provost on staff

**BERKMAN, page 1**

chair of the Presidential Search Committee for the University at Albany in the search update.

The FIU Office of the Provost did not specify why Berkman rescinded his candidacy.

This is the third time Berkman has withdrawn his name from a university presidential search. According to a Feb. 8 article in *The Miami Herald*, the provost was a finalist for the New Mexico State University presidential search, but dropped out of the search in October.

In an effort to retain the highly sought-after provost, outgoing President Modesto A. Maidique reworked Berkman's contract.

According to *The Miami Herald*, Berkman will get a \$3,000 "retention" bonus, as well as a \$3,000 annual raise to his \$334,560 salary. If Maidique's successor chooses another provost, Berkman is entitled to a one-year paid sabbatical.

The University at Albany presidential search mirrors the search currently in place by FIU, where a search committee has been assembled with various faculty, staff and even business leaders from the local community.

The University at Albany has hired a search firm, Parker Executive Search, to recruit candidates for the position. The search committee later creates a pool of candidates that will be shortened and, then, creates a shortlist of finalists. The finalists will then speak with members of the University community.

Parker Executive Search was one of the firms considered by FIU's own presidential search committee.

Berkman has been repeatedly rumored to be a potential candidate for the University's presidency, but he has yet to confirm or deny his interest in the position.

"Berkman has not made a decision regarding the FIU presidential search," said head of FIU Media Relations, Maydel Santana-Bravo, in an e-mail to *The Beacon*.

# Revision to elections code creates SGA accessibility

**PARTIES, page 1**

throughout one year. The bill also specifies that a party cannot spend more than \$2,000 on any individual race.

At the moment, a presidential candidate can raise up to \$3,000, while a representative at large can raise \$800 toward their campaign.

All other senators can currently spend \$400 on their campaigns.

"We want to make SGA more accessible to those who want to run. The way it is now, it seems to be set up for those who have a greater amount of money who can afford to run," Cabral said. "I feel that elections should be determined by those who have the best set of ideas rather than those with the greatest amount of money."

If implemented, the bill states that each party would be required to list at least four candidates for every general election.

"You wouldn't want a party to be created solely for the purpose of electing one candidate," Cabral said. "That would be a way for a candidate to circumvent the spending

limits established in the elections code."

Other revisions to the elections code would require the elections board to publish and post the records of candidates before elections including their roll call votes, how much money they've spent on their campaign and their campaign literature so that voters can access this information.

A chairman would lead a party and be responsible for registering and creating a name for such party.

The chairman would be required to have a minimum of six credits during the semester they serve their term. However, a chairman cannot be a member of SGC.

The proposed bill would also require members of the elections board of SGC to not state a specific party affiliation or support a given candidate.

"These revisions can make a significant impact and change how SGA elections are conducted for the better," Cabral said. "By passing these reforms, the 2008-2009 Senate can distinguish itself as a group of legislators willing to take risks and make bold decisions to protect and enhance the rights of students to get involved in their government."

**I feel that elections should be determined by those who have the best set of ideas rather than those with the greatest amount of money.**

Chris Cabral, senator  
College of Arts and Sciences

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## Civil rights icon to talk about Obama

**LORENA ESTRADA**  
Contributing Writer

He was a highlight at President Barack Obama's inauguration and a civil rights icon who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Rev. Joseph Lowery will speak at the Biscayne Bay Campus Feb. 25 at 2 p.m. in the Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre. The event is free and open to the public, with a suggested donation of \$10 to benefit the BBC Excellence Fund — a foundation generally used to cover the University's needs, including scholarships and leadership activities.

"This is a great opportunity for our students to see a historical figure up close and personal," said Janice Spann-Givens, associate director of Multicultural Programs and Services. "He will probably talk about a combination of things, from his long history in the civil rights movement to his experience and role at the inauguration ceremony."

Lowery will also discuss his part in the civil rights movement and where America is as a country today, according to Craig Cunningham, director of Campus

Life & Orientation.

The conference, sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Programs and Services, BBC Campus Life & Orientation and BBC's Student Government Council Lecture Series, will be paid for by SGC-BBC's lecture fund.

The money, 25 percent of which comes from Multicultural Programs and Services, goes to the agency representing Lowery.

"Student portions is really \$12,000," Cunningham said. "The lectures committee submits ideas and we try to bring people that would be interesting and bring value to the student population at BBC and community members."

"After watching the great benediction Rev. Lowery gave at the inauguration of President Obama, we thought it would be perfect timing to have him come in and speak during Black History Month," said Brittany Brewster, member of the SGC-BBC Lectures Bureau. "It will be exciting to see someone who has been so instrumental in the civil rights movement at FIU."

Lowery, a longtime Methodist minister, has been at the forefront

## ROWING CLUB – SOC CLUB FAIR



CYNTHIA FRANCISQUINI/THE BEACON

**LOOKING FOR GREENHORNS:** Angelica Gacayan, a junior nursing major, signs up for more information on the Rowing Club while Norme Asseus, member, and Syd Mckay, coach, watch.

of the civil rights movement for more than half a century and was named by *Ebony Magazine* as one of the nation's "15 Greatest Black Preachers."

His advocacy for civil rights began with the arrest of Rosa Parks in the 1950s, when he led the desegregation of buses and other public accommodations in Mobile, Ala.

Along with King, Lowery co-founded and was president from 1977 to 1998 of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which eventually became one of the most influential groups in the civil rights movement.

Throughout his career, Lowery received several prominent awards, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Center Peace Award and the

National Urban League's 2004 Whitney M. Young, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award. Lowery also received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the NAACP at its 1997 convention and was hailed the "dean of the civil rights moment."

Doors open at 1:30 p.m. and students are advised to have their IDs with them.

## Smell something fishy? Must be former dump

**SERGIO MONTEALEGRE**  
Staff Writer

The Biscayne Bay Campus promotes its waterfront view to attract students, but an invisible problem has had students' noses burning for a while now.

It can be described as a very strong and unpleasant scent that permeates around the campus from time to time. Simply put, according to sophomore English major David Silberberg, "It stinks."

The foul odor invades the air around BBC enough that plenty of students driving by Bay Vista Blvd. and NE 151 St. have noticed it.

"It's like a ghostly hand that penetrates my lungs as I drive by almost every day, to and from class," said Carl Vitente, a junior English major.

The source of the odor could be traced to three different sources surrounding the campus.

BBC shares its land with the North Miami Water Treatment Plant and a mangrove preserve in Oleta River State Park. It also shares it with the Biscayne Landings condominium complex, previously a Superfund landfill, part of a government program to clean up the nation's hazardous waste sites, maintained by Munisport Inc.

"The smell is nothing new," said Joyce Peterson, associate dean for the College of Arts and Sciences. "It's been around for a while. Back when the campus just opened, people were concerned the smell was due to the Superfund site."

The BBC stink is actually caused by a combination of these locations, said Thomas Pliske, senior lecturer emeritus in the Department of Environmental Studies.

"To a lesser extent, it is also a product of

anaerobic surface soils in mangrove swamps, which surround the campus," Pliske said.

The way the process works, according to Pliske, is that organic solids, which can include leaves from trees or human waste, fall into a large volume of water and remain suspended in pipes or tanks, an example of anaerobic processes where no oxygen is present to break down the material.

Instead, it's broken down naturally by bacteria, metabolizing or converting sulfur into hydrogen sulfide gas. That gas is the source of the infamous stench.

But is the hydrogen sulfide gas toxic?

"While toxic if inhaled in concentration and over protracted periods, the whiffs that periodically are detectable on campus are of little, if any, risk to anyone," Pliske said.

The water treatment plant plays a much larger role for BBC than just being a neighbor. According to a 2007 Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department document titled "Alternative Water Supply Plan and Reuse Feasibility Plan Annual Progress Report," the North District Wastewater Treatment Plant provides the water used to irrigate the lawns on campus, thanks to a distribution line to BBC.

"The capacity of the existing reuse system for FIU irrigation is 1.5 millions of gallons per day. MDWASD currently delivers an annual average flow of 0.09 MGD for irrigating 40 acres of landscape," the report said.

This is the primary reason why signs around the campus urge students not to use the water being sprayed around the lawns.

There may be another factor: The former Munisport landfill, though reportedly cleaned, is still a concern in aquatic contamination.

"Although there are doubtless organics buried in the Superfund dump site to the south



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

**STINKS LIKE BAY SPIRIT:** Lakes surrounding the Biscayne Bay Campus, irrigated by water from the neighboring treatment plant.

of the entrance road, we are more worried about water pollution and the possible release of synthetic toxins than of the [hydrogen sulfide] from that source," Pliske said.

Though the site has fundamentally been cleaned and was removed from the Environmental Protection Agency Superfund National Priorities List in 1999, according to an EPA document titled, "Sites in Reuse: Munisport Landfill Superfund Site," the contaminants once posed "an unacceptable risk to wetlands and aquatic wildlife," according to a 1988-1989 remedial investigation by the agency.

Although the possibility exists that the landfill could still have trace contaminants seeping into the ground and bay waters, the hydrogen

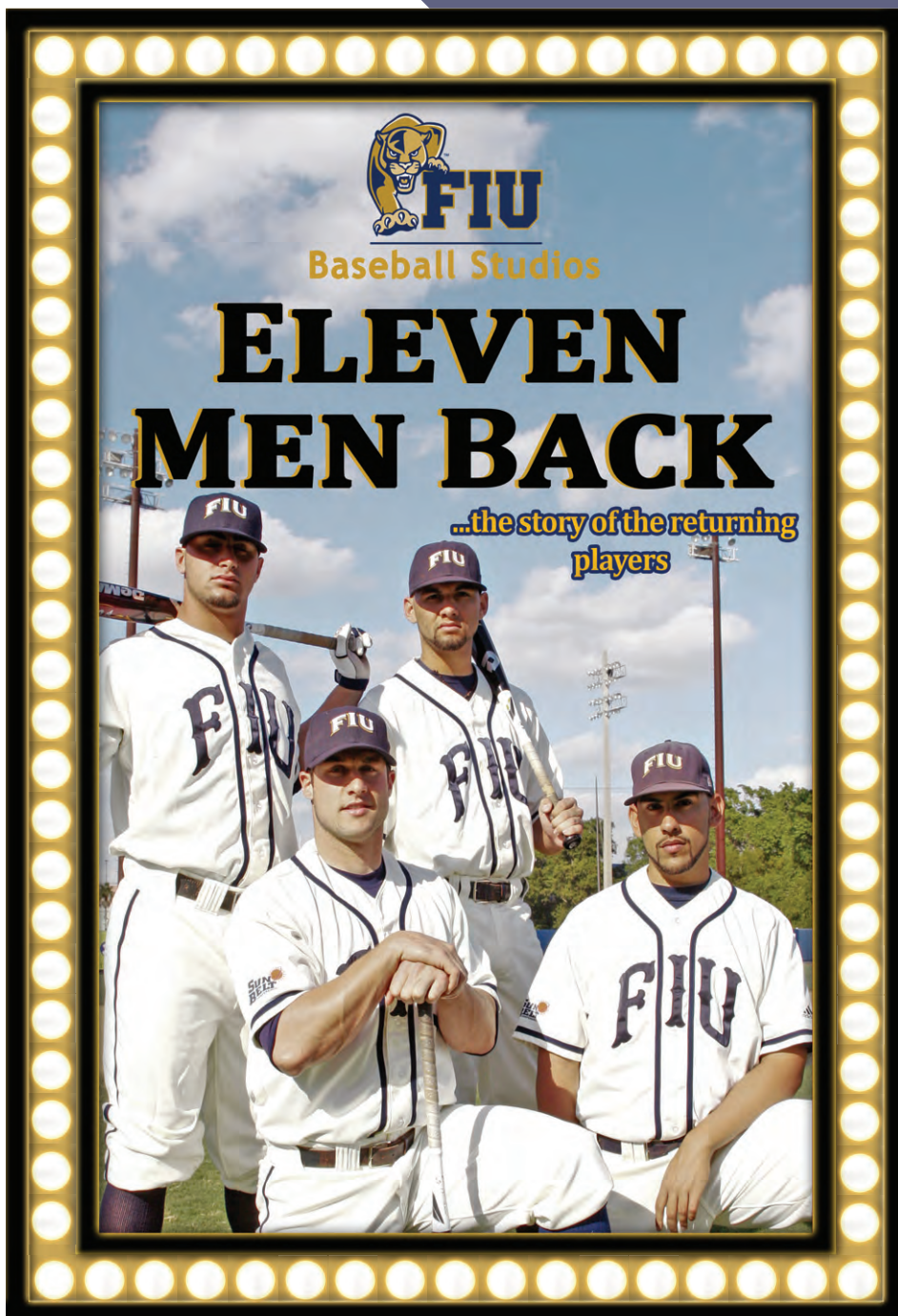
sulfide gas from the wastewater treatment plant and the mangroves can be neither eliminated nor minimized.

"Hydrogen sulfide is released into the atmosphere in small quantities by nearly all wastewater treatment plants and is a natural product of damp anaerobic soils," said Pliske. "Especially mangrove communities."

Senior business and sociology major Kertus Toussaint doesn't mind the smell — as long as it's not dangerous.

"I never truly paid attention to it. I always thought it was something natural," Toussaint said. "I don't want the school trying to spend money to find a solution and [prefer they] just let nature run its course."

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## Golden Panthers open season with two victories

**SERGIO BONILLA**  
Asst. Sports Director

With the No. 15 ranked recruiting class, according to *perfectgame.org*, high expectations followed the Golden Panthers into the 2009 season. So far the team has lived up to some of the hype as it outscored its first two opponents of the season 24-4.

### FIU 4, JACKSONVILLE 3

When the FIU baseball team made three errors in the top of the seventh to lose its lead, Junior Arrojo called a meeting on a mound to deliver a message to his teammates.

"I told everyone to calm down," Arrojo said. "I just had that feeling that we were going to win the game no matter what."

One out away from heading into extra innings, Arrojo delivered one more message on

opening night, a bunt single to drive in the game-winning run.

The Golden Panthers (1-0) defeated the Jacksonville University Dolphins (0-1) 4-3 as Tyler Townsend redeemed himself with a game-tying home run in the eighth inning after an errant throw error in the previous inning.

"That was the drive to do anything I can to make up for that shaky inning," Townsend said. "It's a team thing but I felt responsible and I felt like I had to do something to make up for it."

Pitcher Scott Rembisz pitched six innings of shut out baseball and exited the game with a 1-0 lead. But once he left, the Golden Panthers began to fall apart at the seams. During the seventh inning, the Dolphins scored three runs without obtaining a hit. Townsend committed the first of three Golden Panthers' errors, which cost Rembisz his first FIU career win.

An inning later, Arrojo sparked the comeback with a line drive base hit to right field. With

two outs and down 0-2 on the count, Townsend turned on a fastball and sent it over the right field wall to tie the game 3-3.

The Golden Panthers had runners on second and third with two outs, then Arrojo stepped up to the plate. Head coach Turtle Thomas signaled Arrojo to drop down a bunt and Arrojo complied. As he sprinted to first, he had one thought going through his mind.

"Right when I bunted it, I knew it was over," he said.

Arrojo said this type of win was something missing from the 2008 season.

"We didn't get one of these wins last year," he said. "We would lose late."

### FIU 20, JACKSONVILLE 1

After a thrilling game decided in the Golden Panthers' final at bat, FIU cut the dramatics in the next game and routed the Jacksonville

Dolphins 20-1 on Feb. 21 at University Park Stadium. Whereas in the last contest the winner emerged in the final inning, the Golden Panthers put this game out of reach in the third by scoring 10 runs. At that point, the score was 14-0, but head coach Turtle Thomas didn't want his team to become complacent.

"College baseball with aluminum bats and the wind blowing out, it's never a sure thing," Thomas said. "Until the 27th out is made on defense, you can't relax."

Outfielder Lammar Guy provided the first batch of runs by belting a three-run home run over the left field wall in the second inning. Just those four runs were enough for the Golden Panthers' starting pitcher Tom Ebert, who dominated Jacksonville's batters with his fastball.

The 6-foot-6 right hander finished the night holding the Dolphins to no runs, two hits through 6 2/3 innings. He also struck out nine batters and did not walk a batter.

# 2009 POSITION BREAKDOWN

THIS PREVIEW HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR ALL AUDIENCES



## PITCHING

New arms solidify starting rotation, strengthen bullpen

**ANDREW JULIAN**  
Sports Director

A youth movement will be at both the front and back of the 2009 FIU pitching staff.

The top two starters will be junior college transfers Scott Rembisz and Tom Ebert, who turned in excellent outings in their first starts, combining for 12.2 innings pitched and 18 strikeouts while walking just two and scattering just four hits in the two games.

Ebert, a junior, hails from Fargo, N.D., by way of Iowa Western Community College. Rembisz is a sophomore from Manatee CC in Florida and was the Florida JUCO Pitcher of the Year in 2008.

Corey Polizzano, who led the

Golden Panthers with 14 starts last season and posted a 5-7 record, is the only returning starting pitcher for FIU. He brings two years of experience, which could be a stabilizing force for the rotation. Polizzano also brings a career 6.11 ERA and .311 opponents batting average. If he can bring those numbers up, he should fit nicely as the No. 3 starter for FIU.

Long relief and mid-week starts will be done by committee and begin with two freshmen, R.J. Fondon and Justin Leith, getting the first cracks.

Fondon was 2007 Broward County Pitcher of the Year and Leith was a 31st round draft choice for the St. Louis Cardinals. The pair will also provide long relief on weekend games and could also make weekend spot

starts if they are effective.

The bullpen will need to be sured up from a year ago; that responsibility will rest on the arms and shoulders of newcomers Mason McVay and Eric Berkowitz and returners Daniel DeSimone and Jorge Marban.

At 6-foot-7, McVay can dominate from up high and throws a good fastball. Berkowitz will be featured in a shorter relief role, but if he shines and either of the veterans falter, he could see more innings.

Marban was among the most consistent relievers for FIU last year, collecting a pair of saves while posting a 4.84 ERA, the best among FIU regulars and holding opponents to a .212 batting average.

Chris Allen will take over as the pitching coach for a departed Filipe Suarez, who guided the Golden Panthers in a season where FIU set a new season high for team ERA at 7.16.

## INFIELD

Captains' leadership helps pitching staff, team's defense

**SERGIO BONILLA**  
Asst. Sports Director

The Golden Panthers' infield is manned by the veteran presence of second baseman Ryan Mollica and catcher Steven Stropp. Head coach Turtle Thomas says the rest of the team respects the two leaders.

"They are great team leaders," Thomas said. "When we voted for team captains, they got all the votes."

This is Stropp's second year with the team. The pitching staff last season posted a 7.12 earned run average (ERA), one of the worst ERAs in the program's history. With just one starter pitcher returning to the team, the Golden Panthers' catcher has to adapt

to a completely different rotation.

Stropp has done a good job with the pitching staff thus far this season. In the first two games, the pitching staff has not allowed an earned run and has scattered just seven hits. From a defensive perspective Mollica says he is trying to make sure the team's defense improves upon its .957 fielding percentage and 1.7 errors per game to boost the pitchers' confidence.

"We worked hard in the fall. Junior has done a great job at short. We're making our plays and we have a lot of groundball pitchers," Mollica said.

The infield's offense will also hope to provide support for the pitching staff. Tyler Townsend will be splitting his time between first base and right field, but will mainly be playing first

base. Last season he led the Golden Panthers in home runs (14), slugging percentage (.615) and was second in RBI.

Mollica was second on the team with a .612 slugging percentage and third on the team with 49 RBI. Short-stop Junior Arrojo got off to a strong start by scoring four runs and going 3-for-6.

Freshman Garrett Wittels will be starting at third base. *The Miami Herald* Second Team All-Miami-Dade player displayed a rocket arm in his first game of the season. Nine of the team's 11 returning players are members of the infield. This has resulted in developed chemistry on defense, Mollica says.

"Junior and I have been playing together up the middle for three years," he said. "Garrett Wittels has stepped in nicely. All three of us have great chemistry; we're working together all the time."

## OUTFIELD

Recruits to shake up lineup, compete for outfield positions

**CHRIS TOWERS**  
Asst. Life Editor

During the 2008 season, much of FIU's offense was generated through a strong infield that combined for 34 of the team's 51 home runs.

The outfield featured a revolving door throughout all three positions, with no one player able to take command of a starting role. Each outfield position featured as many as four players who started at least one game, and none of them were able to start more than half of the games at any one position.

The Golden Panthers are hoping that a mix of heralded young recruits and a few returning players will be able to stabilize and work with the

infield to establish a potent offense.

Last season, Lammar Guy started the most games at center field, but this season, he will move to left field and split time with part-time first baseman Tyler Townsend.

With his experience playing center last season, Guy should provide added range in right and improve the team's outfield defense, as he was an all-conference defensive MVP at Lake Brentley High School.

The junior's bat produced a batting average of .235, with a .319 on base percentage and .412 slugging percentage. If he is able to raise his batting average, he will be a productive corner outfielder with his speed and power potential.

Center field was supposed to be

manned by freshman Pablo Bermudez, who combines a compact, upper cut swing with blazing speed, running a 6.72 60-yard dash.

However, Bermudez injured his hamstring during the first game of the season, so if he is forced to miss a number of games, Guy will shift to center and freshman Michael Vargas will see some playing time in left. Vargas hit .482 with 29 stolen bases as a senior at Don Bosco Prep school.

Miami-Dade College transfer Greg Waddell will get first shot to man right field. In his two years at MDC, Waddell helped them win two conference titles and was named an Academic All-American.

Other players who look to get some turns in the outfield will be Ty Main, who started 17 games in the outfield last season and part-time first baseman Tyler Townsend, who might move to right field when catcher Steven Stropp plays as the designated hitter.

# 6 COREY POLIZZANO STARTING PITCHER	# 34 TOM EBERT STARTING PITCHER	# 36 DANIEL DESIMONE RELIEF PITCHER	# 33 JORGE MARBAN RELIEF PITCHER	# 29 STEVEN STROPP CATCHER	# 13 JUNIOR ARROJO SHORTSTOP	# 25 JAVI SUJO FIRST BASE	# 7 RYAN MOLLICA SECOND BASE	# 1 MICHAEL VARGAS OUTFIELD	# 5 TY MAIN OUTFIELD	# 12 PABLO BERMUDEZ OUTFIELD	# 22 GREG WADELL OUTFIELD
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# Pitchers choose college over Major Leagues

**JONATHAN RAMOS**  
Asst. Sports Director

Justin Leith didn't have to think about it much. Doug Joyce had to spend his whole summer pondering it.

But regardless of how the freshmen made their decision, they both chose FIU.

After being drafted in Major League Baseball's First-Year player draft, Leith and Joyce elected to accept scholarship offers from FIU over overtures from MLB teams. The two budding players elected to be a part of the Golden Panthers' recruiting class, which ranked 15th nationally.

Joyce, selected in the 41st round by the Kansas City Royals, was hard pressed to take the opportunity to play professional baseball, not to mention the financial lure of it.

"It wasn't easy, it took a long time and I was thinking about it all summer," Joyce said. "I was going to get drafted higher but they drafted me later because I did not want the amount they were going to give me."

Joyce, a catcher, says he was offered as much as \$150,000 in signing bonus money, the type of funds he was close to taking.

"Hopefully in three years I can get drafted again," he said.

The choice was not as hard for Leith, a left-handed pitcher out of Barron Collier High in Naples, Fla., who will bring a devastating changeup to the mound for the Golden Panthers.

## EARLY IMPACT

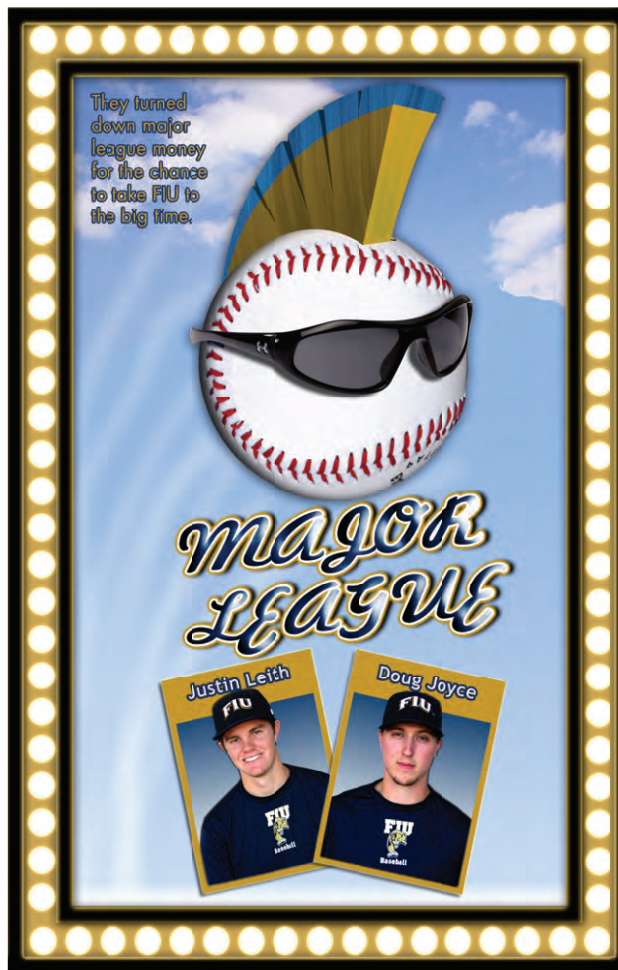
Leith's ability will give him a chance to carry a heavier role early as opposed to Joyce, whose potential is promising but needs to find consistency.

"I like throwing inside to hitters with fastballs and throw changeups away from them. I have also been working on the cutter while I've been here, which is a bit slower than a fastball and it moves," Leith said. "I can also throw a curveball and slider."

The cutter will add to Leith's already impressive group of pitches, and he will have more options to get hitters out.

"It should have a lot of an impact, because if you're behind in the count and you need a ground ball, it's a pitch you can throw to jam the hitter and get a ground ball," Leith said. "It can help a lot."

Head coach Turtle Thomas described the cutter as a "short, quick slider that looks like a fast-



ball but darts late" and also has praise for Leith's best pitch: the changeup.

"He's really got a good changeup. That's probably his primary pitch right now, which is good because you have a pitch that gets guys off balance. He's going to be a good college pitcher."

For Leith, the decision was a relatively easy one, and his family played a role in advising him

through the process. With a brother already playing college baseball, Leith had mentoring in making a selection.

"They said it was my decision, but my mom wanted me to go to school and get an education," he said. "My brother plays baseball too [University of Richmond] and he wanted me to take it."

The lefty, who was taken

31st in the draft by the St. Louis Cardinals, had a 4.6 weighted GPA in high school, along with a 1290 SAT score and said the money was not as important as the opportunity to get an education and enjoy the college experience.

"I just felt like I could have a lot of fun here whereas if I would have gone into the minor leagues it becomes kind of a job," he said. "Here I get to have fun and play baseball and get some school."

## 'WISE CHOICE'

Senior catcher Steven Stropp believes the newest Golden Panthers made the right pick.

"He has a lot of guys he can learn from," Stropp said of Leith. "He has a very good changeup and that's a really tough pitch to learn out of high school. A lot of guys, it takes them four years of college to learn that and he's already got it mastered."

Stropp, who will catch Leith and also mentor fellow catcher Joyce in some capacity, thinks Joyce can become a big-time producer in his own right.

"I think he has made the wise choice," Stropp said of Joyce's decision. "He has a lot of talent but he's very raw. Coach Thomas is going to be able to change

him into a fine tune ball player and hone his skills."

Ultimately, the Golden Panthers had to not only beat out a major league team for Leith's services, but an Atlantic Coast Conference power and cross-town neighbor in the University of Miami.

"Well there is a lot of things you want to emphasize to kids and we are a developing program that thinks we have a chance to be really good the next few years.

"We had a staff last year that didn't really have a lot of depth to it, so he has a chance to come in and throw a lot of innings which is always big for most young men," he said.

Leith said the appeal of early playing time and the potential of the program to grow was enough to settle on playing for FIU. Joyce and Leith will be eligible again for the draft in three years.

"When I came to campus I really liked it a lot and coach Thomas said all the right things. Here I figured I would have a better opportunity to play earlier on," Leith said. "When I came [Thomas] was talking about the idea of helping build another power in baseball, kind of like UM already is. I want to be a part of that."



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THE BEACON | Editorial

*With campus thefts on the rise,  
more security, patrol officers needed*

The University has recently seen a rise in on-campus thefts, more specifically that of golf carts and catalytic converters from underneath vehicles, according to police reports.

In a Feb. 20 article of *The Beacon*, Madeline Baro, assistant director of Media Relations, explained that one of the reasons campus thefts continue to occur largely unchecked is the lack of security cameras, mainly in the parking lots and garages. The cameras available are of poor quality, making it difficult to identify the perpetrators of any given taped crime on campus.

*The Beacon* believes that not only is the absence of security cameras a problem, but so is the lack of police officers patrolling the campus.

According to last year's crime numbers, there are only three officers at any given time patrolling the University Park campus.

If you do the math, UP is 344 acres. That would be an estimated, overwhelming 114 acres for each police officer to patrol. It is not surprising that these thefts are occurring and growing.

Besides that, during rush hour, for example, officers are usually located by the traffic circle and the 12th Street entrance to the University, leaving one officer to patrol the rest of the campus. While this is useful in helping

deter and prevent accidents, as well as controlling traffic, the rest of the campus stays unattended.

According to police records from 2005 through 2007, burglary and vehicle theft cases have grown, especially in residential areas in both UP and the Biscayne Bay Campus.

*The Beacon* feels that too much emphasis is being put into traffic regulation while crimes are happening all around both campuses and resident students' risk of getting their vehicles and belongings stolen is rising.

With more officers around, this problem could be circumvented and more eyes would be on the garages, parking lots and other areas, hopefully helping prevent burglary and other types of crimes.

In addition, the Public Safety Department should make the emergency number to FIU police better publicized and more readily available to students, maybe through signs posted in high-risk areas such as the parking lots and garages.

The emergency numbers are (305) 348-5911 for UP and (305) 919-5911 for BBC.

The budget cuts and lack of funding are valid concerns and reasons for the lack of cameras and officers, but *The Beacon* thinks that these should be made priorities in order to not only prevent but help solve crimes on campus.

## NOWHERE TO GO

Crisis gives new meaning to 'homeless'

THIA LEWIS  
Contributing Writer

"That's it! The Pittsburgh Steelers have won their sixth Super Bowl!" The roar in the stadium was deafening as the commentator made that announcement with nine seconds left on the clock. A sea of white and gold immediately flooded the field.

Just a stone's throw away, amid the celebration, the unemployed and the down-hearted lined the cold streets of Tampa with dim hopes of receiving a few morsels of food. The Super Bowl took place in what *The Miami Herald* called the community with the highest number of homeless people in the state, with 9,500 at the last count.

Homelessness is everywhere and is becoming rampant in our neighborhoods. A few years ago, the average stereotype of a homeless person was that they were lazy. Only the mentally ill or the burdens of society (the drug and alcohol addicts) become homeless, were my thoughts. However, as our economic conditions worsened, my image of the homeless slowly began to change.

When I see a homeless person on the street, I no longer see a bum or a "crazy." Instead, I see a poor soul down on his luck who more than likely lost his job and ergo lost his home. With close to

600,000 jobs lost in January and the unemployment rate rising to 7.6 percent within the last month, this recession is creating more and more homeless people every day. According to a census by the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, there were 4,574 homeless people in Miami-Dade in January.

If you take a look at Palm Nova mobile home park in Davie, you will notice a few things missing: mobile homes. This park is one among many that is closing its gates and saying goodbye to thousands of its tenants. Its closure forces 500 public school students to pick up and leave with their families, right in the middle of the school year.

Most of the families that resided there cannot afford to live anywhere else due to high rent prices and are therefore rendered homeless. Schools are reporting a drastic increase in the number of homeless students. According to a national survey, one in five school districts saw an increase in the number of students that became homeless in fall 2008.

Schools and social services are making an effort to help families like those in Davie. They have already assisted over 1,300 students this year. However, statewide, there are 34,375 homeless students. This number is six times higher than it was a few years ago.

With all the stimulus plans and bailouts going out to help the car manufacturers and banks around South Florida, surely something can be done to ease the plight of those that have no choice but to

succumb to homelessness. Some Miami activists have taken it upon themselves to issue their own "bailout" plan. They are moving homeless people into foreclosed homes.

"We're matching homeless people with people-less homes," one activist said to a news crew. Granted, what they are doing is illegal but at least they are doing something to help those in need.

Homeless shelters are filled to the brim and are forced to turn away families due to lack of space.

Some are even forced to cut back on resources, or worse yet, close their doors because of a decline in governmental funds. Acutely aware of this problem, Holland America Cruise Lines began to donate its unused or partially used toiletries to a program in Fort Lauderdale known as the Cooperative Feeding Program, which provides these cleansing gifts to the working poor and homeless.

The government should be doing its part as well. A recovery plan that increases funding for homeless shelters, allowing them to stay open and provide temporary housing to those that lost their homes ought to be the order of the day. All of the power does not lie in the hands of the government, however. As a society, we are all joined together by this recession.

By doing things that may seem miniscule and unimportant, such as donating clothes, food, toiletries and other objects to shelters or those we know in need, we are doing our part.



## Kindle 2 will hasten decline of traditional print media

ODETTE BARRIENTOS  
Staff Writer

The Kindle 2 has arrived.

Amazon has introduced "the future of book-reading," formerly known as Kindle, but now updated with more features. Kindle 2 is a revolutionary electronic-paper display that looks and reads like real paper. With Kindle 2, you can buy books wirelessly and store up to 200 titles.

Top U.S. newspapers including *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*, as well as top magazines including *Time* magazine, *The Atlantic Monthly* and *Forbes* are all auto-delivered wirelessly to your device every day. This also includes top international newspapers from France, Germany and Ireland.

In addition, you don't need to purchase Internet access or data plans to search or buy books through the online store.

A world of information is practically in your hands and not one single sheet of paper is involved. Even more surprising, Kindle 2 can now read to you. I thought going paperless was advanced enough - now we don't have to read

at all. At this rate, even college textbooks will be available to us without ever having to step foot in a bookstore.

It is enticing, but also strange and scary.

"People are getting so lazy they don't even want to turn pages anymore. They also want the car to drive itself; I'm scared about what will be invented next," said senior Gladys Pellot.

What does this mean for the future of books, newspapers, magazines and even advertising?

"The Kindle can be good or bad - good because maybe one day we won't have to carry college textbooks around. But, book companies like Barnes & Noble, Borders and university bookstores will die out," said freshman Alan Folch, who is majoring in hospitality and tourism.

The plus is the eco-friendly advantage. Less trees will be cut down because the demand for paper will decrease (assuming more devices like this come out and become more popular).

No more shipping and handling fees, so forget about anxiously waiting for days, weeks and months (standard shipping has become ridiculously risky nowadays).

Also, according to *Forbes.com*, "Screen-based reading and the digital revolution are actually going to engender a renaissance of print."

Perhaps this is right and we'll be encouraged to read more print.

However, the possible negative effects on the printing industry cannot be ignored. Who will buy subscriptions or even think about ever buying a paper again?

Newspaper and magazine publications could lose their foundations and crumble, bringing all those who work in the field down with them.

Many advertising agencies have already ceased doing print ads.

At a time where budgets are tightened and companies are at risk, layoffs in advertising are increasing. Advertising agencies such as Crispin

Porter and Bogusky, Leo Burnett and Ogilvy Group have begun reducing their workforce.

"Ad revenue is way down and it's extremely difficult to create print advertisement compared to radio or television ads," said Brian Turney, publisher of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* during an April 2008 global conference on the future of print media.

I for one enjoy reading newspapers - the real ones with pages you can smell and feel between your hands. There is something about the way a newspaper opens up. As for books, it's difficult for me to picture a world without them. What will be of pictures, cover art, children's books and photo journalists? Small electronic device screens will never do these forms of art justice.

On the other hand, I do like the instant access I can get to a newspaper from a country I've never even stepped into. Therein lies the beauty of the digital media - accessibility, speed and mobility. But how far is too far?

I am fearful but hopeful for the future. We thought radio would kill newspapers. We also thought TV was going to wipe out radio. I hope that the digital era will not be the end of print media as well.

**People are getting so lazy they don't even want to turn pages anymore. They also want the car to drive itself; I'm scared about what will be invented next.**

Gladys Pellot, senior

# SCARED SEXLESS

## *Chlamydia ranks first on campus*

**RACHAEL CONGDON**  
Contributing Writer

We all know the best way to prevent sexually transmitted diseases is to abstain from sexual acts, but let's be realistic: sex happens.

More than half of all the people in the United States will have a sexually transmitted disease or sexually transmitted infection at some point in their lives, according to the American Social Health Association.

We live in Miami, which is one of the top cities in the country for acquiring the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, so we have to be careful and face facts.

As young adults, most of us are experimenting with our sexuality and spreading our wings in this STD-ridden city. In Miami-Dade County there are more than 34,000 people living with HIV or AIDS, while more than 20,000 people living with HIV/AIDS reside in Broward County, according to Care Resource, Florida's oldest HIV/AIDS service organization.

So how do you know when to get tested?

Chances are it is time to get checked when you've had unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex. Even if you are using a condom with your partner, it's a good idea to get tested if you question his or her sexual history.

The American Social Health Association suggests you look for the following signs and symptoms to help you determine if you need to get checked: pus extruding from the penis, odd vaginal discharge, or pain or burning during urination. These symptoms can double for both chlamydia and gonorrhea according to ASHA.

It can be hard to admit that you have engaged in any of those activities, but taking a trip to the University's Health and Wellness Center would be in your best interest.

The FIU Health Complex offers a plethora of sexual health options, while the wellness center offers HIV testing at no cost. The FIU Health Services Clinic offers a variety of sexual health tests, none of which cost more than \$40.

But what happens if you test positive?

Psychological services offer individual and group counseling.

Women are also given a confidential option by visiting the Women's Center.

Getting a yearly pap smear is one of the best ways women can make sure their reproductive system is in check, according to senior health educator Casandra Roache.

But the best ways to avoid this whole getting tested and possibly having an STD situation is by having a monogamous relationship and practicing safe sex, said Roache.

Roache claims that chlamydia is the No. 1 STD within the FIU community. However, this figure cannot be confirmed, as the University Health Services Department does not collect data for specific STD statistics.

Just remember: Don't be a punk, wrap your junk!

For more information on FIU's health center you may contact the following: Health Services Clinic, (305) 348-2401, Health and Wellness Center, (305) 348-2401, or the Women's Center, (305) 348-2401.

You can also check out its Web site, <http://www.fiu.edu/~health/index.html>.

## Education enhanced by video games

**DAVE KOLPACK**  
AP Wire

The software company which publishes the video game *Gears of War*, is studying the reactions of avid gamers to see whether video gaming can promote learning skills that carry over to the classroom.

"We want to figure out what's compelling about the games," said John Nordlinger, head of gaming research for Microsoft. "If we can find out how to make the games fun and not make them so violent, that would be ideal."

Microsoft has put up \$1.5 million to start The Games for Learning Institute, a joint venture with New York University and other colleges. The goal of the research is to see whether video games — and not just software specifically designed to be educational — can draw students into math, science and technology-based programs. The institute has begun lining up middle school students to study.

Microsoft is not the first to explore whether video games could enhance education. For instance, University of Wisconsin researchers have found that playing *World of Warcraft* can encourage scientific thinking. The researchers noticed that players used mathematics and models to deal with situations in the game's fantasy world.

Even so, groups that monitor gaming say Microsoft's entry into the research will bring needed money and credibility. Many studies so far have focused on educational games, not shooter games.

"There isn't a lot of good research out there," said Linda Burch, chief program and strategy officer for Common Sense Media.

Parents also want a closer look at potential long-term psychological and sociological effects on frequent game players.

"I would hope that the goal is to have video games that can help develop reaction and problem-solving skills, without blowing everything up in sight," said Dave Walsh, president of National Institute on Media and the Family in Minneapolis.

Many shooter games force players to track "how many bullets and bombs and missiles do I have, and how do I spend and where do I go get more of them," Mundie said. In "*Gears of War*," players must navigate underground tunnels and buildings, monitor weapons systems, gauge their health and find places to take cover.

The idea that there is broader educational value in such activities is sure to find skeptics.

Vince Repesh, a counselor at the University of Minnesota at Duluth, said he fears that gaming is replacing education, not adding to it. He recalled a couple of students coming to him for help after they got hooked on "*World of Warcraft*." One student had gone from straight As to flunking out.

video gaming club at Fargo South High School. She wanted to meet other gamers and believes it's a good complement to academics club was started by English teacher At Fargo South High School, English teacher Chuck Lang started a video gaming club. He said he believes Microsoft is doing a good thing in researching the potential of games, even if it might benefit the company through increased sales.

"Why not spread this market out?" Lang said. "Why not promote something where kids are having fun?"

## SEX IN AMERICA

**134,000 new cases of syphilis are occurring each year, the highest infection rate in 40 years.**

**1.3 million new gonorrhea cases occur annually.**

**24 million new cases of human papilloma virus (HPV) occur annually, including a high percentage among teens.**

**63% of all sexually transmitted disease (STD) cases occur among people less than 25 years of age.**

**AIDS is the leading killer of Americans between the ages of 25 and 44.**

**Condoms provide virtually no protection against an STD called the human papilloma virus. HPV is the most common medical problem seen by gynecologists and causes almost all cervical cancer in the U.S.**



# Medieval times relived in new live-action sport

ROBERT VICENS  
Copy Editor

Imagine yourself running through a green field, grunting as you do alongside your fellows, waving a sword over your head and charging at an armored legion of screaming foes.

Sound like fun?

"Dagorhir, pronounced 'dagger-here', is a live-action battle game where you are the warrior!" reads a flier advertising Storm Guard, the soon-to-be official Miami chapter of a national organization with chapters in several states including Maryland and Ohio.

Mike Meyer, a business major and junior explains the mission of the game.

"We are a historical reenactment group. We practice combat techniques from the days of yore," he said.

Storm Guard is open to all and encourages anyone to show up on a practice day and swing a medieval weapon just to try it, whether it's to let out some pent-up school stress or for the thrill of learning the art of swordplay.

"At the end of the day, the best part is you can hit someone as hard as you

can but still shake hands with them and say, 'I love how you killed me,'" said junior Jacob Barrens, founder of Storm Guard and Asian studies major.

Dagorhir is safe and uses handmade weapons.

"We use contact adhesive, foam and duct tape. We make our own weapons," said Barrens. "We get the plans from the Internet and sometimes other members with more experience."

With swords, maces and even shields, dagorhir is a creative sport that allows participants to be crafty. Members can go as all out as they want in making armor and accessories for use while getting a good workout that includes beating friends' heads in.

Storm Guard is among the largest of the dagorhir

chapters in Miami and already looks forward to joining Ragnarok this coming June, according to Barrens.

Ragnarok, held in Ohio, is an annual festival where more than 1,800 people conglomerate for a week long camping event with large-scale battles, sword fighting classes and medieval reenactment.

When asked about his experience of the reception of dagorhir on campus, senior and computer science major Rick Blanco, member of Storm Guard since last semester, said surprise and curiosity characterized most of onlooker's reactions.

"Reactions have been pretty positive from the onlookers; neutral at worst," Blanco said. "I like dagorhir because no matter what it

looks like, it can get pretty exhausting and I encourage people to try it."

The group officially meets on Mondays at 5:30 p.m. at FIU in the large fields near the Graham Center, but has an extra practice on Wednesdays at the same time for those who can't make it to the first session.

For more information contact [jacobarr@hotmail.com](mailto:jacobarr@hotmail.com), (727) 698-2563.



POP &  
CIRCUMSTANCE

## Cutting out the middle man, a piece of humanity served

When my editor, Susana, offered me a weekly music column a few months back, I readily accepted the opportunity to rant and rave about whatever I wanted as often as I wanted.

For someone as into music as I am, this column should be effortless, tossed up with an hour's preparation every Thursday night before my Friday morning deadline.

However, the thing about weekly columns is that they have a tendency of coming up every week. I know this might seem like an obvious thing to say, but when you have to come up with a different topic every week, it starts to catch up with you and the ideas start to wane.

Every Thursday afternoon, I check my work budget and realize that, once again, "Pop & Circumstance" needs to be written. It's amazing how quickly a week comes and goes in relation to my column.

Comparatively, a week of classes seems to drag on forever and the same goes for the weeks leading to a concert I'm looking forward to.

It almost seems as if Thursday is pushing its way in the calendar, shoving Tuesdays and Wednesdays out of the way so it can get here quicker.

So here I am, eight hours into Friday, trying to figure out what exactly I'm doing with this space I'm given every seven days.

Now, I am not complaining about my duties, or trying to shirk them in any way.

Oh sure, using my allotted weekly stipend of 500 words to write an intellectually lazy, self-serving rant about deadlines might sound like complaining to you, but I'm just being honest.

A columnist needs, more than anything else, a willingness to be open and honest with his readers. "Well, whatever. Shouldn't you stop wasting my time with all this whining and start writing about music, and not yourself, you narcissistic prat?"

That is absolutely a fantastic question, dear reader, and one I intend to answer shortly. I am of the opinion that it is impossible to write about music in a vacuum. Each of our own personal experience subtly shifts the way music affects us, and more than any other medium of art, our personal enjoyment of music is intrinsically linked to where you happen to be at any given moment.

For instance, my favorite movie of all time is probably *The Big Lebowski*. I can watch that movie back to back every day of the year and not get tired of it.

Conversely, my favorite album ever is undoubtedly *Wilco's Yankee Hotel Foxtrot*. However, despite the high place I hold for it, I couldn't possibly be in the mood for it all of the time. It offers too few moments of pure, unadulterated joy for me to appreciate it all of the time.

What does this have to do with your previous query, you are wondering?

Well, writing about music is, essentially, writing about you. It is an autobiography, masquerading as cultural criticism.

It is impossible to remove your preconceptions and past from your experience with music. After all, you experience music not just with your ears but with the entirety of your self. And because of this, you cannot write about music without writing about yourself and that's all this column is supposed to be.

It just so happens that this week, I decided to cut out the middle man.

It is my hope that in the coming weeks, I will be able to do what I haven't thus far in the column's run, which is introduce my audience to new sounds around town and the country to look out for, but in the meantime you're stuck with just me.

*Pop & Circumstance is a weekly column discussing all things pop music.*

COLUMN



CHRIS TOWERS

PHD: Piled Higher and Deeper By: Jorge Cham

## diversions



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STOP THE PRESSES! art by iris amelia / story by susana rodriguez



## THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY •  
FEBRUARY 23

WHAT: Students WRITE Meeting  
WHEN: 2-4 p.m.  
WHERE: GC 340  
CONTACT: (305) 348-2297

WHAT: Philosophy Club Meeting  
WHEN: 3-5 p.m.  
WHERE: GC 314  
CONTACT: (305) 348-2297

WHAT: Haitian Students Organization  
WHEN: 6:30-8 p.m.  
WHERE: GC 150  
CONTACT: (305) 348-2297

WHAT: FIU Yoga Club  
WHEN: 7:45-9:45 p.m.  
WHERE: GC 241  
CONTACT: (305) 348-2297

TUESDAY •  
FEBRUARY 24

WHAT: Perksha Meditation Club  
WHEN: 12-2 p.m.  
WHERE: GC 305  
CONTACT: (305) 348-2297

WHAT: Beginner's Dance Aerobics  
WHEN: 4-5 p.m.  
WHERE: WUC 160  
CONTACT: (305) 919-5800

WHAT: Psychology C.A.P.E.  
WHEN: 2-4 p.m.  
WHERE: GC Ballroom Lawn  
CONTACT: (305) 348-2297

WHAT: Tango  
WHEN: 6-9 p.m.  
WHERE: GC Pit  
CONTACT: (305) 348-2297

Compiled by Susana Rodriguez & Eddith Sevilla

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