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FIU, UM celebrate poet John Milton's 400th birthday!

PAGE 5



Co-captains leading young baseball team

PAGE 8



SPOTLIGHT

AT THE BAY PAGE 3



Florida senator spoke about retirement funds being used to support the manufacturing of nuclear weapons and the genocide in Darfur.

LIFE! PAGE 6

COLUMN: Steve Mesa takes a look at movies rolling out this March.

OPINION PAGE 4

Statehood for Puerto Rico is not a simple endeavor.

SPORTS PAGE 8



Women's basketball team loses their fourth straight to Middle Tennessee at U.S. Century Bank Arena.

LIFE! PAGE 5

COLUMN: Jonathan Davila tackles *Street Fighter 2* online, gets taunted.

OPINION PAGE 4

Diplomacy is necessary in order to address the Taliban.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jazz Night @ FIU, Feb. 27, 8 p.m.: Dust off your fedora and head over to the Wertheim Performing Arts Center for a free night of swinging jazz. Bring a date and earn points for having taste.

Swagger with T.I., Feb. 27, 8 p.m.: Join the King of the South in concert this weekend at the American Airlines arena and remain sexy by doing so.

Women's International Film & Arts Festival, Feb. 27, 8 p.m.: Enjoy film, fine and performance art at the Women's International Film Fest! Opening night promises a screening of *The Brothers Bloom*.

Play the Game, Feb. 27, TBA: Hit up Sunset Place and earn infinite cool points by catching the premiere of the indie romantic comedy, *Play the Game*. Way-too-tight hipster pants optional.

Old School Hip Hop, Feb. 27, 10 p.m.: Head down to the Boardwalk Tavern in Coconut Grove for Old School Hip Hop college night. Don't forget your boombox!

For the complete calendar, please see page 11 or visit FIUSM.com/calendar.

WEATHER



FRIDAY

Mostly sunny
LOW: 61 HIGH: 79



SATURDAY

Sunny
LOW: 61 HIGH: 81



SUNDAY

Isolated t-storms
LOW: 55 HIGH: 80

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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES



ALEX GARCIA/THE BEACON

POLITICS: President Modesto A. Maidique (right) introduced the first speaker, Dr. Francis Fukuyama, of the "Geopolitical Summit" that took place in the Graham Center Ballrooms on Feb. 24.

Nation's successes, failures assessed

DAVID BARRIOS, JULIO MENACHE, BRIAN ALONZO
Beacon Staff

The global economic crisis, America's future as a superpower and the realignment of the developing world were among the topics discussed at the America and the Rising Powers conference.

The speakers, each considered among the foremost experts in their fields, included Dr. Francis Fukuyama, Dr. Robert Kagan, Parag Khanna and Dr. Fareed Zakaria.

Hundreds of students packed into the Graham Center Ballrooms to attend the event, advertised as a "Geopolitical Summit," on Feb. 24.

The four plenaries consisted of a

speech by the keynote speaker followed by comments from a panel consisting of FIU faculty members and a question and answer session.

Each of the speakers offered their own perspectives on America's current and future role on the international stage.

Fukuyama, a Bernard Schwartz professor of International Political Economy at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at John Hopkins University was the first speaker.

He claimed that capitalism practiced in the United States only appeals to the middle class while lower classes become attracted to other economic and political ideas.

"If you look at why people vote

for Hamas in Gaza or Mr. Amad-enijad in Iran or in this hemisphere, why Evo Morales or Hugo Chavez, it is because all of these leaders provide a social agenda and programs that appeal directly to poor people," Fukuyama said.

He also said that if America doesn't listen to the urges and needs of other nations and continues to lecture nations on what their needs are, it would face problems achieving strategic goals.

Continuing the conversation on power politics, Kagan, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, discussed the position of the United States after the 2008 election.

SUMMIT, page 2

BASEBALL

Pitching key to team's success

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Director

During the baseball team's opening weekend, the first two starters combined to strikeout 18 batters in 12 2/3 innings. Corey Polizzano was the only starter to lose a game, but his counterparts' success only makes him want to win more.

"With me pitching on Sunday, I got Friday guys and Saturday guys that pitch before. If they do good, I have to match them or do better," Polizzano, the only returning starting pitcher from last season, said.

Polizzano did receive the least run support and four errors behind him did not help his cause either. Even though errors rattle him a bit, he chooses to

ignore them as much as possible.

Head coach Turtle Thomas said the team's pitching is what sets the tone to win games. That might be one of the reasons Thomas said it will most likely be Tom Ebert or Scott Rembisz to face the No. 18 ranked Coastal Carolina University (4-1), a team fresh off a

BASEBALL, page 8

Law school nationally recognized

DIANA JORDAN
Staff Writer

The University's College of Law was formally accepted into the Association of American Law Schools last month at the association's annual meeting.

The young law school, which opened its doors August of 2002, was awarded membership after instructing for five years and graduating at least three classes – the AALS's shortest possible time frame for admittance. In comparison, the University of Florida Levin College of Law and the University of Miami's Law School were admitted in 11 and 18 years respectively.

"We are very pleased with the AALS vote for our law school, which though less than seven years old, has in recent years received recognition nationally for the quality of its students, faculty and programs," said College of Law Dean Leonard Strickman in a published statement.

The AALS, founded in 1900, is a non-profit association of law schools in the United States. The association seeks to improve the legal profession through legal education and has come to be recognized as one of the highest distinctions a law school can attain.

AALS membership is the culmination of a long application process that concentrates on integral aspects of a law school's operation.

The aspects range from the school's curriculum, the quality of its faculty, scholarships it offers, its students and the diversity of the students and faculty members.

The Executive Committee of the AALS included the FIU College of Law into the association after learning about the school's plans of emphasizing an innovative transnational curriculum and also the school's commitment to helping students with scholarships and its new facilities.

"I have always been interested in going to law school. Now that FIU's College of Law has been admitted into the AALS, I will definitely consider it as one of my top choices," said junior and international relations major Jenny Martinez.

The college was also bestowed an honor when it received full accreditation from the American Bar Association

LAW, page 2

NEWS FLASH

LOCAL

Bill could make traveling to Cuba easier

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a spending bill on Feb. 25 that slightly altered U.S.-Cuba policy, making it easier for Cuban-Americans to travel to the communist country.

The bill, which faces a tough time in the Senate, discontinues funding for enforcement of violations of the rules limiting how often Cubans living in the U.S. can visit Cuba.

Cuba watchers say it’s unclear whether President Obama will lift restrictions for Cuban-Americans, American academics, church groups and others. Key administration posts in charge of such decisions haven’t been filled.

FBI raids nuclear center at University of Florida

The Federal Bureau of Investigations raided the nuclear space power institute at UF on Feb. 25.

Karen Rhew, supervisory assistant U.S. attorney, said that search warrants were served at the university’s Innovative Nuclear Space Power and Propulsion Institute.

UF spokesman Steve Orlando said the FBI was in the office of professor Samim Anghaie, the Iranian-born director of the institute.

No arrest warrants were made and no further comments on the investigation were made.

Broward considers cutting a day from school

The Broward County School Board is considering a four-day weekly schedule.

Board members say that cutting the school week by one day could slash at least \$75 million from next year’s budget.

To make up for the lost day, however, the school board says that having a 50-minute, seven-period class day could help them in saving money in electricity and other wear and tears in school as they face more budget problems.

NATIONAL

Chronicle on the brink of sale or closure

Owners of the *San Francisco Chronicle* said on Feb. 24 that the famed newspaper could be facing a sale or close its doors forever.

The Hearst Corporation said the paper is showing “staggering losses” due to the current recession that has plagued many other papers nationwide.

According to the owners, the paper lost \$50 million last year and needs to make deep cuts in order to survive and if their re-organization works, the paper will survive.

– Compiled by Paulo O’Swath

Conference inspires women to lead

MILVIONNE CHERY
Staff Writer

The Women’s Center will hold their third annual Women Who Lead Conference in March, a day-long conference designed to expand the leadership of women in society.

“This is a chance for our students to get to meet women from around the state and country who are leaders,” said Suzanne Onorato, director of the Women’s Center on the University Park campus. “This will allow our students to start thinking about their own decisions and their own career plans.”

There will be three breakout sessions at UP’s conference. During the first session, deans from several colleges have sponsored panels where women from that career field will be discussing academics.

At the conference, students will be able to have lunch with these women and take part in several interactive sessions during the second breakout session. Some of the sessions at the conference are “The Evolution of a Women Leader,” “Women in Business” and “Negotiating with the Big Boys.”

During the third breakout session, Pinecrest Mayor Cindy Lerner will be holding her own panel about creating change and how women have affected society.

Even though the conference is targeted for the female students at FIU, “male students are also welcome to come in and learn,” Onorato said.

At the end of the conference, there will be a networking reception where students can network with

community agencies and corporate partners.

Zoeann Finzi-Smith, a graduate assistant working at the Women’s Center, believes that this conference is great for networking.

“It gives the FIU female students a chance to network with people from their academic schools and women who work in that career field,” Finzi-Smith said.

The keynote speaker for UP is Lindsay Hyde, executive director and founder of Strong Women, Strong Girls, a non-profit organization based in Massachusetts, which helps at-risk third, fourth and fifth grade girls develop positive self-esteem.

“When we were first starting Strong Women, Strong Girls in South Florida, I believed it would be a great partnership to work with

FIU,” Hyde said. “Getting involved with this conference was even better.”

The keynote speaker for Biscayne Bay Campus is award-winning Chef Michelle Bernstein.

“This conference is a great thing for women,” Onorato said. “If you bring women leaders who have broken through that glass ceiling, then our female students will see that they can do it too.”

The Women Who Lead Conference will be held at UP on March 6 and at BBC on March 27. It is free and open to all students. However, the Women’s Center is requiring that all who want to participate register first through the Web site at www.fiu.edu/~career.

To get a complete list of the conference’s schedule on both campuses, go to <http://women.fiu.edu>.

SUMMIT, page 1

“U.S. has a fresh start,” he said when discussing President Obama’s popularity and how it aids the country diplomatically in the midst of the global economic situation.

He said that America continues to enjoy the standing it has held in the past among other powers, but members of the panel challenged his argument that the world had returned to a state of normality with a return to great power competition.

“U.S. unilateralism has precipitated a shift of moving back into power politics,” claimed Dr. Elisabeth Prugl, associate professor in politics and international relations.

Khanna, director of the Global Governance Initiative, then spoke on “Second World” theory – an analysis of rising powers with the qualities of both first and third world nations that trade with the first world powers of China, the European Union and the U.S.

Much like Kagan, Khanna took heavy criticism from the panel.

Professor Mark Rosenberg, former chancellor of the Florida Board of Governors, brought up concerns including the growing attention to the state of global poverty and the possibility of the military in America staging a coup due to destabilization as the second world emerges.

The fourth and final plenary starred Zakaria, columnist and television host.

He began by speaking about where he saw the world today, politically and economically, as it deals with what Zakaria calls a, “genuine, synchronized global

recession.”

“My thinking about the world changed in the last few months,” Zakaria said.

He argued that the current challenges are brought about by America’s successes rather than its failures.

What has led to this “post-American world” in the 21st century, he said, has been the rise of other forms of media such as the Internet, the end of inflation, the decline of the Soviet economic model and an era of global political stability.

“All these forces are pushing in the same direction: a single global economy, where every country has adopted a similar economic model- you could be capitalist like Sweden, or you could be capitalist like the United States,” Zakaria said.

This new global financial system has produced an international system never seen before in the world and one the U.S does not know how to deal with, according to him.

“The key challenge is whether we become scared of this new world by trying to deny it or we embrace this new system and become a key player,” Zakaria said.

The other panelists did not argue against Zakaria’s views though a student raised the concern over America pulling through the current recession.

“My gut is that what gets us out of this problems is our ingenuity,” he replied.

Some anti-globalist protestors demonstrated at the summit and raised questions concerning the perceived erosion of American sovereignty and speakers’ links to think-tanks.

“We’ve been gathering information on these individuals for the last three weeks

and posting it on our Web site,” said Christian Andrew, president of student organization Federal Jack, a Web site critical of the government.

Several students set up a table in Graham Center and distributed flyers and CD’s that added to the demonstration and provided information on their concerns toward the speakers and their views.

Throughout the four events they asked questions on a proposed North American Union and government links to The Council Foreign Relations policy institute and disruptions on alleged government links to Sept. 11.

“We’re asking them questions about this and they just dismiss it quickly as a conspiracy theory or tin foil hat-wearing lunacy,” Perish said.

President Modesto A. Madique was present at the summit and gave his views on the event.

“For the students that were here it should be a master class in Geopolitics,” he said. “And it should help them digest the various courses and materials they are taking at the University from our faculty. I think this is a very stimulating and educational session.

“I think there are a lot of lessons as to what are the roots of the crisis. There was a lesson also as to what will happen in the other end of the crisis. There is confidence that the United States will surmount this and any other crisis that comes along and I think that students hopefully can inscribe on that base their own futures, their own hopes, and their own aspirations”

The summit was also a celebration of the new School of International and Public Affairs, inaugurated Jan. 5.

College of Law gains ABA accreditation

LAW, page 1

only four years after initiating its program, the earliest possible date according to ABA rules.

Its graduates also placed first among the state’s top 10 law schools on the February 2007 bar exam and second for 2008. Both its trial and negotiation teams were also named the Southeast Regional Champions in national competitions in the past year.

“Having received full accreditation

from the ABA and after being inducted into the AALS, I would not consider any other law school before FIU. I want to receive a well-rounded law education from a prestigious program but don’t want to find myself in debt after I graduate. FIU’s College of Law can provide me with the best of both worlds,” said Armando Sanchez, a sophomore and economics major interested in pursuing a career in law.

Along with its core curriculum, the college reflects its mission in four

programmatic specialties: the Legal Skills and Values Program, the International and Comparative Law Program, the Clinical Program and the Community Service Program.

“The success of our law school is another accomplishment for FIU and one that will continue putting us on the map,” said Dayana Gonzalez, a freshman and Spanish major. “I’m very proud of what our law school has accomplished in such a short amount of time and hope to one day graduate from there myself.”



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Bill to grant retirees investment control

BARBARA QUIJANO
Asst. News Director

With the possibility of nuclear weapons in Iran and genocide in Darfur, U.S. citizens can help prevent devastation by familiarizing themselves with state legislation and by following their money.

“Using economic power now to stand up to Iran and using economic power today to try to bring an end to the genocide in Darfur are absolutely consistent with your political beliefs, whatever they are,” said Florida State Senator Ted Deutch. “The legislation we’re working on will give people who have some individual say over where their retirement dollars go the option to invest their retirement dollars in funds that don’t invest in Sudan or Iran.”

Deutch spoke about this proposed legislation – as well as the Protecting Florida’s Investments Act, passed in June 8, 2007 – at the Biscayne Bay Campus on Feb. 24 in the Wolfe University Center’s conference room.

The lecture was sponsored by the Middle East Society, part of the Department of International Relations and Geography at BBC, whose mission is to “foster a long-term partnership with the local community through lively debate and discussion about matters concerning the Middle East,” according to its Web site.

The co-sponsors for this lecture were the Judaic Studies Program and the Florida Security Council, LLC, a state-based organization comprised of Floridians that help the general public

prepare and respond to these “clear and present dangers,” according to their Web site.

“Our goal is to help FIU become a center of debate and learning, especially at BBC, on topics of the Middle East,” said Shlomi Dinar, Middle East Society director.

Deutch, chosen for his active role in encouraging the Middle East to divest from Iran, sponsored the PFIA, “making Florida the first state to divest its pension funds from any company doing business with the government of Sudan or the energy sector of Iran,” according to a press release on the Florida Senate Web site.

“What we realized is that there were about \$140 billion in the Florida retirement system,” said Deutch. “Included in those investments was a pretty significant investment in companies who were helping the Iranian government as they developed nuclear weapons.”

Informing citizens and enlisting the support of unions was the first step to passing the legislation, according to Deutch.

“Those who were invested in our retirement system had probably a large percentage of their sons and daughters fighting in Iraq,” said Deutch. “When it occurred to them that Iran, even as they pursued nuclear weapons, was also creating the weapons that were being used against our troops in Iraq, they were appalled.”

The Florida Legislature passed the PFIA unanimously in the Florida House and Senate, which began the process of divesting the state retire-

NEW SOUND, OLD INSTRUMENTS



CYNTHIA FRANCISQUINI/THE BEACON

STRING SERENADE: “Wil B” of the group Black Violin plays his violin in front of students gathered at the On Point Poetry and SPC event “It was all a dream” inside the WUC ballrooms Feb. 18. The free event showcased music and poetry.

ment system from companies that promote arms production.

“Incitement to genocide is the second worst crime against humanity. No. 1 is genocide,” Deutch said. “That’s why the PFIA included all those companies who are helping the government of Sudan actively commit genocide in Darfur.”

Once the legislation was passed, the Florida State Board of Administration ran through the retirement system, learning that the state of Florida invested more than \$1 billion

of direct holdings in companies that were making it easier to continue the genocide in Darfur, as well as helping Iranians develop nuclear weapons.

“[The Florida State Board of Administration] sent letters to all of these companies telling them that their decision to invest in Iran, helping this genocide in Darfur ‘is not in our interest, we don’t support it ... unless you stop your activities, we’re going to sell our shares,’” Deutch said.

As of now, there are more than 15 other states that have acted in the same

manner.

“I think some of the points that he presented were definitely something we should take under consideration. I never really thought about Iran in a bad perspective, but now it’s kind of like broadening my perspective,” said Sherree Rhoden, senior international relations major. “I agree with the plan, but I think it needs to be scrutinized as far as eventually trickling down and hurting the people and the citizens of Iraq. I think that’s my biggest issue, other than that I’m gung-ho for it.”

Lowery sees love, education as catalyst for race relations

PARADISE AFSHAR
BBC Life! Editor

Civil rights leader Rev. Joseph Lowery, who gave the benediction at President Obama’s inauguration, transformed the Mary-Ann Wolfe Center into a Sunday morning church service when he lectured about the “black experience.”

“I’m a preacher everywhere I go,” said Lowery, a reverend in the United Methodist Church. “I always thought of my work in civil rights as a part of my ministry.”

The lecture took place Feb. 25 in front of more than 100 students and community members, including Kevin Burns, mayor of North Miami and Joseph Kelley, mayor of Opa Locka.

Lowery, a founding member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, had the audience mesmerized throughout his speech with a mix of humor, facts about the civil rights movement and the improvements in race relations that still need to be met.

He reflected back on personal stories from the civil rights movement, like the first time he was served at a restaurant where it had previously been denied.

“The waitress said, ‘I am a Christian, and every time I turned you down as a child of God, because God made you a different color, it hurt me,’” Lowery said.

For Jolie Reisner, 12-year-old daughter of

School of Journalism and Mass Communication professor Neil Reisner, hearing the story about how Lowery was not served shows how far the nation has come in terms of race relations.

“He was not even allowed to be served by someone who thought he should be, but now no one would think twice about serving someone who is black,” Reisner said.

Lowery also said in his speech that those who create change in terms of civil rights, including Dr. Martin Luther King, were crazy, but the “good kind of crazy.”

“The same God who walked with Harriet Tubman down the underground railroad is the same God who stood with Martin Luther King in Birmingham, and the same God will stand with you today if you embrace good crazy,” Lowery said.

Lowery also said that he never thought he would see a black president. And while he thinks President Barack Obama’s election shows progress, he still believes there is a lot that needs to be done, and a key point of that is education and loving one another.

“Aretha [Franklin] put it best: r-e-s-p-e-c-t. That’s what we must learn to have for each other,” Lowery said. “What difference does it make the colors of our skin? What difference does it make the texture of our hair? If you take away this complexion, we’d be alike, ugly.”

Kassandra Paul, BBC Student Government Council vice-president, agrees. And like



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

TIME OUT: Reverend Joseph Lowery enjoys a moment with Sabrina Saint Jour, SPC-BBC Pan African Heritage Chair, before making his speech at the University Feb. 25.

Lowery, she awaits a day where there is no racism.

“One day, we will be judged by our character and not our color,” Paul said.

Lowery’s vision for the future of the country is one where “brown can stick around, when yellow will be mellow, when the red man can get ahead man and when white will embrace

what is right.”

“If you decimate me because I am black or brown or yellow or white, you have to take that up with God,” Lowery said. “Because he made me black and there is nothing I can or want to do about it. And if God made me good crazy, all I have to say is ‘hallelujah!’”

THE SOAPBOX: *An Op-Ed Column*

Statehood for Puerto Rico more complicated than it seems

WILLIAM SEWELL FERNÁNDEZ
Special to the Beacon

In response to the Feb. 20 column “U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico eagerly demand statehood,” as a fellow Puerto Rican I feel it is my obligation to clarify certain aspects regarding its absurdly optimistic tone. The article erroneously claims that statehood is a realistic possibility for the island and that the majority of Puerto Ricans have conclusively decided to support it.

The people of Puerto Rico have no effective self-determination procedure. The island’s territorial status rests solely on the powers of Congress. One of the key reasons for the United States not to incorporate Puerto Rico are economic reasons. Puerto Rico is currently poorer than the poorest state, Mississippi, yet receives less federal funds. If Puerto Rico were incorporated into the Union, this would mean it would be entitled to much larger sums of federal funds, essentially increasing federal spending and straining the public sector.

At this time of economic uncertainty, where the looming specter of depression eyes the U.S. economy and huge government economic bailout plans are pushed through Congress, it would be irrational to consider adding another burden to the already staggering economy.

Currently, the U.S. holds an advantageous colonial position, where taxation without representation is practiced. The residents of Puerto Rico are forced to pay federal income tax, yet have no representa-

tion in the Electoral College and only have a mere impotent “representative” in the House of Representatives with a voice, but no vote.

This is the representation of the interests of approximately 3.9 million Puerto Ricans in the U.S. government. The U.S. also holds a beneficial position regarding Puerto Rico’s trade. The U.S. is entitled to charge a 15 percent tariff on both U.S. products entering the Puerto Rican market and Puerto Rican products entering the U.S. market. To grant statehood to Puerto Rico would mean giving up these mercantilist controls and the economic benefits it bestows to the U.S. economy.

Some other key reasons for the United States not to incorporate Puerto Rico into the Union are the political implications this act would have. Incorporating Puerto Rico into the U.S. would change the political dynamics of the executive and legislative branches. Puerto Rico would be integrated into the Electoral College, essentially giving it power when electing the president.

More drastic would be the impact on the legislative branch into which the Senate would have to integrate two more senators and the House would have to integrate approximately seven representatives. We must take into consideration the effect that incorporating nine individuals with a different language and different political culture will have on the dynamics of a well-established political structure. I will only say that altering this long-established structure, in combination with the cultural differences, will be



RICARDO FIGUERO/AP PHOTO

STATEHOOD!: In San Juan, a crowd demonstrated support for statehood for Puerto Rico on March 23, 1996 during deliberations on legislation sponsored by Sen. Don Young, which dealt with Puerto Rico’s status.

viewed dubiously by the current members of government as well as the North American population.

The recent political trends in Puerto Rico are not indicative of majority-support for statehood but rather representative of domestic political trends. The widespread victory of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party is partly a reaction to the corruption scandals surrounding pro-status quo Popular Democratic Party candidate Anibal Acevedo Vilá, who faces 24 federal corruption charges.

It is important to note that the NPP was also ousted from power in 2000 following a corruption scandal

regarding the governor at the time, Pedro Rosselló. The Puerto Rican people have been called to express their opinion regarding the territorial status during plebiscites held in 1967, 1993 and 1998. In all these plebiscites, the Puerto Rican people opted for the status quo, clearly indicating that they are not ready to compromise on the status issue.

The people of Puerto Rico find themselves in a colonial dilemma of having to choose either to permanently give up their dreams and hopes of independence and true sovereignty by attempting to incorporate itself into the Union, or to shed the chains of colonialism and

lunge itself into the uncertain realm of independence. The Puerto Rican people are unwilling to compromise on the status issue. But the unfortunate aspect which must be noted is that we have no true self-determination mechanism which would allow us to define our future. Our political and economic future, regardless of what we decide, is at the mercy of the U.S. Congress.

William Sewell Fernandez is sophomore international relations major and member of the Latin America and Caribbean Certificate Studies Program at Florida International University.

University would benefit from a needed veterans center

TED RANDALL
Special to The Beacon

Veterans are under siege, and sadly enough, it has become a national trend to ignore the needs of our veterans. Forty years ago, from the pestilent battlefields of Vietnam, U.S. service members returned to their home country to become third-rate citizens. The record is full of astonishingly abhorrent stories about the standard treatment of our veterans: filthy, rat-infested Veteran medical centers, substandard health care, non-existent transitional assistance and the absolute ignorance about and denial of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Sadly, with wars on two fronts, we face the same staggering deficits in veteran care and treatment today. Suicide among veterans and service members are at record highs. More than 200,000 veterans cower under overpasses and sleep homeless in parks and shelters. With more than one million service members having been in combat operations, crisis is eminent.

Baptized in urban combat in Iraq and the high arid ranges of Afghanistan, our veterans return once again to an apathetic

public and a cowardly government. John F. Kennedy said, “A nation reveals itself not only by the [people] it produces but also by the [people] it honors...”

We should be embarrassed. Right or wrong, our elected officials, acting on our behalf recruited our young men and women and sent them into harm’s way. Funding for veterans’ needs has been secondary to waging war and cutting taxes.

Huge efforts need to be made at the service, federal and state level to improve and expand services and assistance to veterans, many of whom have served multiple combat tours in either Iraq or Afghanistan. A new post-911 GI Bill was approved. Service branches have instituted significant transitional programs. But more needs to be done.

FIU can support this effort and honor and recognize our veterans by creating a Veterans’ Assistance Center.

This type of program is becoming popular nationwide. At the University of Minnesota, student organizations and student-veterans lobbied to get funding and space to open up a veterans’ center on the campus. In 2005, the administration granted funding

and remodeled space to provide appropriate accommodations for the center to include office space, couches, TV’s and computers. According to the center’s Web site, “[The] transition center aims to offer a safe-haven and help curb the disturbingly high drop-out rate of veterans who return to school.”

Minnesota administrators realized that universities could expect a huge influx of veterans returning to school much like that felt after World War II and with the post-911 GI Bill, in which tuition is paid directly to the university, this could mean thousands of dollars in guaranteed tuition.

Efforts are underway to secure grants and funding to create a comprehensive Veterans’ Assistance Center at FIU. The goals of the center would mirror those at the University of Minnesota and would complement those efforts being made at the state and federal level.

Much like the FIU Disability Services Office, the Veterans’ Assistance Center could be part of the Division of Student Affairs, have its own office space and assist student-veterans with a myriad of student related issues. A veteran fee could be assessed to provide some self-funding for

the center, though these fees would be paid by the GI Bill.

Unfortunately, the idea of a Veterans’ Assistance Center at FIU is being met with resistance. Yes, the budget crises is a horrible reality but not compared to the horrors our service members have witnessed or the sacrifices they have made. Grants and assistance money for such a project are available.

The Veterans’ Assistance Center is a win-win for FIU. It would put us on the map as a community who cares about our veterans and it would bring guaranteed tuition dollars.

The center would act as a recruiting tool for student-veterans and attract mature, confident and talented new students. Debate about U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan will continue for your years to come, much like it does over the war in Vietnam.

But let’s not make these wars another war in which young Americans were called upon to make enormous sacrifices and then be jilted.

Ted Randall is the Associate Director of FIU International Student and Scholar Services.

Paradise Found

FIU, UM collaborating in John Milton symposium

NATTY LEVY
Contributing Writer

FIU and the University of Miami are getting together to celebrate the 400th birthday of John Milton, 17th century poet. The universities will host a symposium this weekend commemorating the life and work of the *Paradise Lost* author.

Here at FIU, Andrew Strycharski, assistant professor at the English department, has been working in tandem with Jeffrey Shoulson, associate professor to UM's English department, to put together Miami's first Milton Symposium.

"We're using the story of *Samson Agonistes* as a springboard to address larger issues that are very pertinent today," Strycharski said.

The symposium is based on

Milton's drama, *Samson Agonistes*, which spins the biblical stories of Samson and the book of Judges to deal with issues of violence, faith, religion and politics.

It will consist of panels of Milton scholars from across the country as well as graduate students from both FIU and UM who will be discussing the dramatic poem in reference to issues of religion and violence.

"I think [Milton] is pertinent in all different levels of our lives: as individuals, societies and even broader social contexts. As a body, I think his stuff has always been extremely relevant and I think that's one of the things that really drives people to him," Strycharski said. "I don't think it's ever not been relevant."

Some of the panel members include Stanley Fish, professor of law at FIU; Feisal Mohamed, assistant professor of English at University of Illinois at Urbana-Campaign; John Rumrich, professor of English at the University of Texas in Austin; Regina Schwartz, professor of literature, religion and law at Northwestern University and Susanne Woods, a visiting scholar at the University of Miami.

In addition to the panels there will be a rare stage production of *Samson Agonistes* from 3 to 5 p.m. on campus at DM 150

on Feb. 27. This particular production is being put on by FIU theatre students and was directed by Phillip Church of the Theatre Department.

"When you look at something like *Samson Agonistes* it is beautiful. It is sexy, especially this production. It is moving and entertaining all at the same time," Strycharski said. "It's really an enjoyable play and it's going to be a really great production."

One of the interesting aspects about this celebration of Milton's work is FIU's partnership with UM.

"Working collaboratively is something that's long overdue between the University of Miami and Florida International University. We hope this is the first of many operations," Shoulson said.

Given that both Miami-based schools share a rich and diverse city and each has its own broad and unique assets to bring to the table, a collaboration like the symposium had never been done before.

"We think that it's important that whenever possible the two universities in Miami work together to share resources and to collaborate," Shoulson said. "We quickly thought that the topics we're covering in the symposium are timely and pressing and of interest to people beyond the narrow field of the study of Milton's

writing."

Milton, a man who lived and died hundreds of years ago, managed to strike hard with his writing at the core of issues involving women, violence and religion – issues that still plague society today.

"I think that we are representing Miami in a particularly powerful way by focusing on these sorts of issues, and at the same time I think it's appropriate for this kind of orientation to be happening in Miami," Strycharski said. "This is a kind of international crossroads and is a global city. We're addressing issues that really are global in scope."

The symposium is not just for English majors; symposium goers can be interested in women's studies, religious works, politics and law and still find something that will grab their attention.

"If you care about the world we live in, you care about the issues this symposium raises," Strycharski said. "I don't think there's a heck of a lot of work that needs to be done to get students to care because from my experience at FIU, students already do care about these things."

All of the Milton Symposium events are free and open to the public.

For more information on these events, visit www.milton400.fiu.edu.

Information

9:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
Interdisciplinary Panel:
Religion and Violence
CBC 254

Fred Frohock (UM Political Science), Erik Larson (FIU Religious Studies), Richard S. Olson (FIU Political Science), Irene Oh (UM Religious Studies), Rob Rosen (UM Law School)

3 - 5 p.m.
Reader's Theater Production
of *Samson Agonistes*
DM 150

GAMES GALORE

Karma comes back for 'shoto-noob'

Back in high school, I played *Counter-Strike*, an online first-person shooter, in the Cyberathlete Amateur League, an online videogame league.

I remember how my teammates and I would sometimes play against lesser-skilled players and make fun of them; calling them "noobs," or "newbies," and teased them by killing them with unconventional game weaponry.

When *Halo 2* became part of the Cyberathlete Amateur League, I was guilty of committing similar gamer crimes. I'd teabag my slain opponents and laugh when they'd pick up guns that weren't among the approved "skill" weapons.

But I grew up. I realized how pompous and arrogant I was and, although I still consider myself a competitive gamer, I'm more respectful toward my opponents – whether they're lesser skilled or greater.

But karma is unforgiving, and it came around to bite me in the bottom last week when I bought *Street Fighter IV* for my PlayStation 3.

I've never been very interested in fighting games, but I remember loving *Street Fighter II: Turbo* on my Sega Genesis back in the day, so I thought I'd give the new iteration a shot – for ol' time's sake.

I jumped online for some unranked

matches to get some practice. Ken was my character of choice.

I now have holes in my body in places I should not have them.

I stared at my controller in disbelief, fingers cramping while trying to keep up.

Time and again "You Lose" appeared across my screen as my opponent stood over Ken's beaten body. Sometimes, I'd go back into the game lobby and get made fun of by the player who just destroyed me.

"Have you ever played *Street Fighter* before?" asked one of my opponents. "You're such a shoto-noob."

Well, of course, but what's this "shoto" business? My previous years as a decent *Counter-Strike* and *Halo* player, when I'd make fun of my adversaries and use terms only "elite" players knew, immediately flashed before my eyes.

I went online and did some research. Apparently, a "shoto" is a character in *Street Fighter* who shoots fireballs and/or throws dragon punches. Shotos are normally used by newbie players because they are easier to learn and are among the more recognized characters, according to some *Street Fighter* forums I visited.

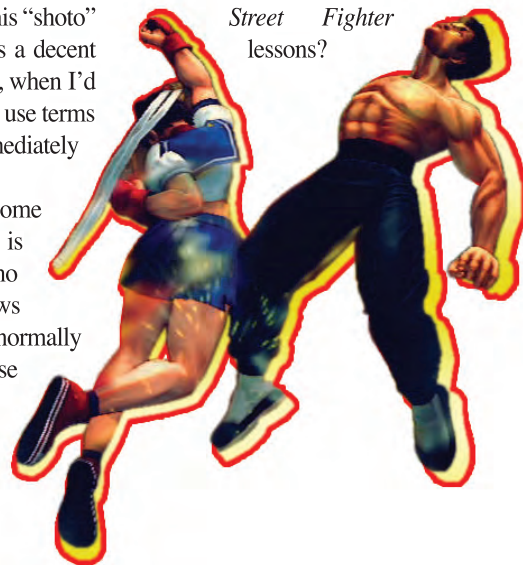
So yes, I am now a newbie, unskilled, shoto-using *Street Fighter* player. I feel just as low as I probably made some of my *Counter-Strike* and *Halo* opponents feel.

So I'm publicly apologizing.

If you've ever played *Counter-Strike* or *Halo* online or at a LAN center in the Miami area, I'm sorry if you ever came in touch with a player named "butt3r" who made you want to drown yourself in a bottle of water.

I'm sorry if my Master Chief avatar teabagged your dead body. I'm sorry I told you you sucked or told you to find a new hobby.

That being said, does anybody out there want to offer me some *Street Fighter* lessons?



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VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

COACHING CAPTAINS: Head coach Turtle Thomas talks to second baseman Ryan Mollica (center) and catcher Steven Stropp (right) during the third game of the series opener against Jacksonville University.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: MTSU 74, FIU 54

Team drops 4th straight

CHARLIE GRAU
Senior Staff Writer

After being upset by Florida Atlantic in Boca Raton on Feb. 21, Middle Tennessee State University was looking to reassert itself as the class of the Sun Belt conference. The MTSU Blue Raiders reasserted their dominance by defeating the Golden Panthers 74-54 at U.S. Century Bank Arena on Feb. 25.

The Golden Panthers (6-22, 4-13 Sun Belt) had no answer for Alysha Clark who finished with 32 points and six rebounds. The 5-foot-10 forward, who leads the country in scoring (26.1 points), helped the Blue Raiders dominate in paint by scoring 26 points as opposed to the Golden Panthers' 16.

The Golden Panthers made a 6-3 run midway through the second half to cut the lead to 15, but the run was short lived as the Blue Raiders (24-5, 16-1) pushed the lead back to 20. Junior guard Monica Bosilj led the Golden Panthers with 17 points.

FIU will look to snap their four-game losing streak against Florida Atlantic on Feb. 28 at 5 p.m. at U.S. Century Bank Arena.

FIU faces top 25 team this weekend

BASEBALL, page 1

7-3 win against the No. 1 ranked North Carolina, this weekend.

Polizzano will likely face Brown University during the Baseball at the Beach series held from Feb. 27- March 1.

He will have to assure his team will get a win against the home run challenged Bears who hit 20 home runs last season, while Ebert or Rembisz face a national powerhouse.

Coastal Carolina's offense will be the first test for the team's top starters who mowed down Jacksonville opponents. Catcher Jose Iglesias alone has four home runs, equaling the Golden Panthers' total so far this season.

Outfielder/infielder Tyler Townsend believes his teammates are up to the challenge.

He has never seen pitching performances quite like those of starters Scott Rembisz and Tom Ebert last weekend.

While the pitching staff has a 2.00 earned run average (ERA), the offense did not distribute runs evenly against Jacksonville.

It scored 20 in one game followed by a three-run performance. Second baseman Ryan Mollica recorded just one hit in the series when last season he led the team with a .413 batting average and a .483 on-base percentage. Townsend is not worried about his co-captain.

This season, Mollica is 1-for-13 at the plate but last season he had another slow start going 2-for-11 during the first three games.

"No, it's just one weekend, and I know how good a hitter he is. I know he's going to bounce back," Townsend said.

Thomas will be switching up the lineup until it starts producing consistently.

"I think every coach in America mixes up their lineups early on. We have to mix and match against right handers and left handers," he said.

The last game of the series will be against Tennessee University (1-2). The Volunteers offensive production has been dismal, as they are hitting .255 as a team while posting a .367 on-base percentage.

SENIOR LEADERS

Co-captains showing underclassmen the ropes

CHARLIE GRAU
Senior Staff Writer

Ryan Mollica and Steven Stropp may feel like senior citizens this year.

With 20 new faces joining the team, 13 of which are freshmen, the two and only seniors will be leaned upon heavily for leadership and experience.

"They both have been in college baseball for a long time. They know the endurance contest that the season is," said head coach Turtle Thomas.

The seniors believe the best leadership they can provide underclassmen is leading by example and setting the tone for the season.

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

Mollica and Stropp will be teaching underclassmen how to adjust to college baseball and how to fine tune their games.

"With baseball, there are so many little things that there's always some way you can fine tune your technique. There's always something you can try to help them out with that you see but they don't because you've been around longer than them," Stropp said.

As the Golden Panthers'

starting catcher, Stropp will be responsible for handling a young talented pitching staff and grooming freshmen catchers Doug Joyce and Sean Reilly.

"Being the only two seniors, we have the most experience on the team, and I look at it as we're more the teachers than anything else," Stropp said. "The coaches can do their amount of teaching but there is always that part that is left over that we have to do, and we have to teach these guys, especially since there are so many freshmen this year."

Although he finished the season with a .289 batting average, .370 on-base percentage, three home runs and 25 RBI, Stropp is more concerned with the 7.12 earn run average the pitching staff had last season.

"For me, hitting is secondary. I love to hit but my job is to catch. If you have a bad catcher, you have a bad team," Stropp said. "All my focus is going to be put on catching the ball and making our pitchers look as good as possible. If I get some hits, good for me."

Like Stropp, Mollica has been putting in extra time with the infielders to help improve the team's .957 fielding percentage and 1.7 errors per game from last season.

Coming from Central Florida Community College, Mollica

didn't get much mentoring and is going to make sure underclassmen are given the guidance he never received.

"There wasn't much teaching and showing of the ropes," Mollica said. "I'm just showing these guys how to work hard and technique."

LEARNING TO LEAD

Growing up, Mollica always looked up to his brother Derick who was two years older. The two brothers turned plenty of double plays together, playing two years of high school baseball at Wellington High School where Derick served as team captain.

Mollica credits his older brother for giving him advice and teaching him how to lead.

"I just told him he's got to be tough ... if he wants the team to follow him, he's got to lead by example," Derick said.

Last season, Mollica quietly led the team in batting average (.413), on-base percentage (.483) and doubles (23). But this season, he will be expected to repeat his offensive output along with setting an example for the younger infielders – and his brother has noticed the difference.

"You can just tell. From last year and his days of JUCO ball and high school ball, he was never the peppy kid around. He's got a

different swagger about him. His attitude is a lot different and he's got a lot of confidence heading into this year," Derick said.

But he wasn't always that way.

"He's always been the quiet brother out of the two. That's what my parents said. He was the shy one," Derick said.

Stropp also credited his family for teaching him how to lead, but coming from a family of six siblings, he's had plenty of opportunities to learn from his older siblings and teach his younger ones.

"Having three younger siblings, I think it just translates over to the [baseball field]. It comes easily and if you need help I'm more than willing to help you," Stropp said.

One time, Stropp taught his younger brother Joey how to catch a baseball in their backyard in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

"I would just get up there and throw the ball as hard as I could at him. Eventually he picked it up because you either get hit with it or you learn to catch the ball," Stropp said.

They're both hoping the team will be able to pick up their lessons as well.

Sergio Bonilla contributed to this report.