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The Beacon, March 30, 2009

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THE BEACON RECOMMENDS

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SPOTLIGHT

SPORTS PAGE 12



Baseball wins two close games vs. Sun Belt Conference opponent University of Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns.

AT THE BAY PAGE 4

SJMC student releases his first sci-fi novel, and aims for the series.

LIFE! PAGE 9

COLUMN: Chris Towers looks at The Decemberist's *Hazards of Love* and finds a genuine concept album on the band's fourth attempt.

OPINION PAGE 8



The University has taken measures to block online access to peer-to-peer file sharing.

AT THE BAY PAGE 4

Come relax at the Wellness Center with free yoga classes and massages!

LIFE! PAGE 9

French Club promotes language, culture for all.

OPINION PAGE 8

Has America become less Christian? Featuring a point and counterpoint.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Philosophy Club Meeting, Today, 3:30 p.m.: Get your Socratic method on and wax philosophical with your similarly minded peers at this club's weekly meetings.

FIU Yoga Club Meeting, Today, 7:45 p.m.: Unfurl your mat and relax your mind and body as you try the Downward Facing Dog and the Bharadvaja's Twist.

Students For A Free Tibet, Tuesday, 3:30 p.m.: Join together with this worldwide organization that looks to end Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Miami Dade County Fair & Expo, All week, 3 p.m.: Sure, you hate that they take up our parking lots and cause traffic, but who can resist greasy chicken on a stick and stomach-churning rides?

For the complete calendar, please see page 10 or visit FIUSM.com/calendar.

WEATHER



MONDAY
Partly cloudy
LOW: 69 HIGH: 82



TUESDAY
Scattered showers
LOW: 71 HIGH: 83



WEDNESDAY
Isolated t-storms
LOW: 71 HIGH: 84

CONTACTS

Editor in Chief 305-348-1580
chris.necuze@fiusm.com

UP Office 305-348-2709
news@fiusm.com

BBC Office 305-919-4722
bbc@fiusm.com

Tips & Corrections 305-348-2709
tips@fiusm.com

Advertising 305-348-6994
advertising@fiusm.com

Medical school speculated to stimulate local economy

ELSIE PUIG
Staff Writer

A new study commissioned by FIU shows that the new College of Medicine will have a large impact on the local economy by creating more than 66,000 jobs and generating more than \$8.9 billion in a span of 16 years.

This is according to a recent study by Tripp Umbach, a firm that specializes in assessing the economic impact of medical centers.

"Having two medical schools in South Florida increases the multiplier effect of the impact on the local economy," said Thomas Breslin, chair of the Faculty Senate and professor of international relations, who had the initial idea of bringing a medical school to the University.

The Academic Health Sciences Center is the building complex that will house the College of Medicine, Florida Department of Health, College of Nursing and Health Sciences, an ambulatory care center and other

"This medical school is the kind of long term, sustainable economic engine South Florida needs ..."

Modesto A. Maidique
FIU, president

health related programs.

As the new breeding ground for a recession-proof health sector, the medical school, which is set to open in August, has already created an annual economic impact of more than \$100 million in the local economy and has helped create approximately 100 jobs, most of which are high-paying professional positions.

"This medical school is the kind of long term, sustainable economic engine South Florida needs at a time when jobs are disappearing daily," said President Modesto Maidique in a recent statement.

Maidique is awaiting an approval from state legislators for an additional \$11 million for the medical school.

Apart from creating jobs, the medical school will stimulate the local economy by increasing local and state sales tax revenue and hiring local construction companies. According to the Umbach study, the school will also greatly expand the biomedical industry to \$5.7 billion annually by 2025.

The new AHSC will return nearly \$12 to the state in both direct and indirect tax revenue for every \$1 invested

MED SCHOOL, page 2

SGC-BBC

Silva withdraws candidacy

BARBARA QUIJANO
Asst. News Director

Ana Maria Silva, current president of the Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus, withdrew her candidacy for her second term as president of SGC-BBC for the 2009-2010 school year March 27.

"I don't look at [the withdrawal] as a discouragement, but a different way to explore other opportunities, leading me to my academic future," Silva said.

Silva said she had the opportunity to begin taking classes in the Fall semester for the International Business Honors program, which is based at UP. To be eligible to be president of SGC-BBC she needed at least 50 percent of her classes to be taken in the campus.

"Not being able to run is an opportunity for me to explore other options and possibilities at FIU," she said. "It doesn't mean I'm going to stop being involved and continue my leadership at FIU."

LIGHTS, CAMERA, DRAW



JAVIER DE LA VEGA/THE BEACON

SMILE!: Jennifer Molina, an elementary major, gets her caricature done while SPC promotes Upoar Week.

Athletics feels effects of massive budget cuts

CHARLIE GRAU
Senior Staff Writer

Public and private universities have seen their budgets shrink over the past year and collegiate athletics isn't being spared.

On March 24, the Athletics Department announced it was cutting \$1 million from its operating budget when the new fiscal year begins on July 1.

The budget for next year will be approximately \$22 million.

"We've been able to avoid this for a year and a half, and now it's time for Athletics to make some cuts," said Athletic Director Pete Garcia. "Times are difficult all over, but we are not going to use this as an excuse."

In order to trim the budget, Garcia said there would be layoffs and cuts within the department.

"This is a process where we are going to analyze everything and figure out from our staff and senior staff where the layoffs need to come from," Garcia said.

No sports are going to be cut and Garcia said academic support and

compliance will not be affected.

"We're in business to educate our young men and women and our No. 1 priority is to be in compliance with all NCAA rules and regulations," Garcia said. "We have a process of studying and analyzing every option to make sure that our student athletes are not adversely affected. It's still our responsibility to make sure that our student athletes have all the resources they need to be successful on the field and in the classroom."

Garcia insisted that cuts would not affect phase two of FIU Football Stadium, the fieldhouse, and said it is on schedule and will be completed July 1.

Athletics has been able to avoid budget cuts because it has seen new streams of revenue from the football stadium, ticket sales, concession sales, sponsorships and athletic fee increases in 2007 and 2008.

But with the economy slipping, businesses and consumers are spending less and it's affecting

ATHLETICS, page 12

NEWS FLASH

FIU

New acting dean announced

The dean of the College of Architecture and the Arts, Juan Antonio Bueno, is stepping down and Associate Dean Brian Schriener was announced acting dean for the college.

Bueno is stepping down due to health conditions, according to a memorandum sent to the FIU community by Provost Ronald Berkman.

Dean Bueno will continue as a faculty member in the Department of Landscape Architecture.

“The search committee for the dean of the College of Architecture and the Arts will soon identify candidates for campus visits in late April and early May,” said Berkman in the statement.

LOCAL

Tri-Rail fare might increase

A 25 percent increase in the Tri-Rail fare is being considered by the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority, who runs the train system.

The decision will be made after SFRTA holds a public hearing.

If they decide in an increase, it will be the first time in 14 years that Tri-Rail fare is raised.

The Tri-Rail is funded by Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties as well as the state.

Florida lawmakers consider refusing stimulus money for the unemployed

Lawmakers proposed not to accept the \$1 billion in stimulus cash that could benefit 250,000 unemployed.

The main reason are the conditions established in the stimulus package. Lawmakers said the package stipulates that the state has to pass a new law that would extend the benefits to unemployed as well as pool for those eligible to receive benefits.

Furthermore, the federal offer will only be valid until the end of the year, leaving the cost to the Florida government to cover.

The state's unemployment rate rose in January to 8.1 percent.

No decisions have been made about the whether to receive the stimulus money.

– Compiled by Julia Cardenuto

Black union seeks place in council

DAVID BARRIOS
Senior Staff Writer

Members of the Black Student Union packed into the University Park Student Government Council chambers with questions and proposals at hand for the University-wide Council.

Their main request to instate the BSU as a governing council in SGC-UP was passed after an hour of debate during a March 25 meeting.

During the same meeting, a revised version of the Student Government Association constitution was introduced by Kenasha Paul, the SGC vice president for Biscayne Bay Campus.

A final draft has yet to be agreed on and is tentatively set to be introduced to the ballot for the April 1 and 2 elections.

Among the changes made were the removal of the comptroller from the UWC, to be replaced by the senate speaker pro tempore during UWC meetings.

Proposed changes that were dismissed included an increased cumulative GPA requirement for presidential candidates from 2.5 to 2.75 and the elimination of the

“Our organization would seek to unite organizations like the ... Pan-African Organization, hopefully from both campuses, to be represented under this one banner.”

Bruno Phanord
SGA Student Services, chairperson

154-day requirement to run as SGC president.

Earlier in the meeting, Denzel Burnside, CEO of DB3 TV, and Bruno Phanord, SGA Student Services chairperson, represented the stance of the BSU as SGC-UP President Arthur J. Meyer raised questions about reassigning clubs from the Council for Student Organizations to a new governing council.

“What we have here is the old case of a tenant going to court against their landlord. We’re asking the court to not force us to deal with the landlord (CSO) who is not giving us enough funding,” Burnside said during the meeting.

Under its original request, the BSU asked to have organizations including the Pan-African Club, currently

under the CSO, falling under them for funding.

“Our organization would seek to unite organizations like the Haitian Students Association and Pan-African Organization, hopefully from both campuses, to be represented under this one banner,” Phanord said in an interview with *The Beacon* after the meeting.

Meyer supported the BSU being instated as a governing council but felt that restrictions should be required with the move of organizations from the CSO to the new BSU council.

“I just think that we need to evaluate the efficiency of a move like this,” Meyer said.

It was agreed later in the meeting that BSU would become its own governing council.

A future meeting between CSO, the SGA executive branch and the new council would need to be held to determine whether to move related organizations under the new council. These organizations represent different interests in the student body.

Governing councils in SGA currently include Panther Rage and CSO.

Among the responsibilities of the new governing council would be to fund organizations that would be directly under them, with funding coming directly from SGA; attending executive branch meetings of SGA and reporting directly to them while also establishing a lecture series in the same vein as CSO.

BSU, page 3

School revenue to benefit Sweetwater

MED SCHOOL, page 1

in the ongoing operations of the FIU College of Medicine, the study said.

It will also greatly contribute to health care cost savings in the local commu-

nity through the Neighborhood Help program, which is designed to help families in underserved communities.

According to the study, the pioneering program will give underprivileged families in South Florida access to education and preventive health care and save South Florida taxpayers hundreds of millions in health care costs by 2020.

The AHSC, which will stand in the northeast corner of University Park campus across the street from the City of Sweetwater, will help forge a mutually beneficial partnership between the University and Sweetwater.

“In the hope of turning the City of Sweetwater into a college town, we are going to

accommodate for the young professionals, students and professors who will be coming to the new College of Medicine,” said Manuel M. Maroño, mayor of Sweetwater.

Sweetwater looks to piggy back off the projected stimulus of the medical school to develop condos, medical offices, retail and business centers catering to the new demographic, specifically prospective students and professors, Maroño mentioned.

The economic prospects of Sweetwater will benefit by the increase in licensing fees of the new business that will eventually be springing up.

“For at least 10 years, the City of Sweetwater had been trying to reinvent itself

to accommodate the growth of the school,” Breslin said. “Essentially, the medical school will be a shot in the arm for the housing market here, by boosting revenue flow to the local economy.”

Aside from the students coming outside Miami-Dade County, the College of Medicine will hire specialists in their fields, and when patients with unusual and challenging complications cannot get treatment elsewhere, those patients will come to South Florida, Breslin explained.

“In 30 years, FIU will be the UCLA of the East Coast,” Breslin said, alluding to UCLA's medical center which is ranked in the top three hospitals in the United States.

THE BEACON



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CORRECTIONS

On the March 23 article titled, “Funes unanimously elected as new election commissioner,” it was stated that SGC-UP Chief Justice Leonard Goenaga said that SGC was an “arcane” title to refer to the Senate. Goenaga actually said that the term was “archaic.”

In that same article it was stated that Section 2 Part B of the SGC-UP Elections Code was being discussed, the actual article being debated was Section 2 Part E.

In the article titled, “New policy eases travel to Cuba,” published March 27, it is incorrectly stated that Giarcarlo Sopo worked on Obama's campaign.

In the same article, it is written that Uva Aragon “sees having more accurate polls an essential.” The sentence should have said that Aragon said she believes that it is essential to also include unregistered Cubans in the polls.

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

Car wash service begins 90-day preliminary run

JONATHAN DAVILA
Staff Writer

A car wash service began March 30 on the first floor of the Gold Garage, becoming the second pilot program implemented by Parking and Transportation this semester.

The service will run for 90 days, at which time it will be evaluated to determine the future of the service.

“As you enter through the east entrance [of the Gold Garage], the area will be located to the left and clearly marked,” said Bill Foster, executive director of Parking and

Transportation.

Students who wish to have their car washed simply need to drop their vehicle off in the designated area.

“Once the wash is completed, the car will be moved to a convenient location in the garage,” Foster said.

Prices range from \$15 to \$125, depending on vehicle size and the services desired.

Regular washes cost \$15 for small vehicles and \$20 for large vehicles.

A wash and wax costs \$50 for small and \$60 for large, and full detailing will cost \$95 and \$125,

respectively.

All washes include tire shining and a vacuuming.

“It’s probably not something I would use. It’s like the valet parking,” said junior international relations major Diego Sarmiento, who drives his vehicle to campus. “It seems like an inappropriate luxury.”

The revenue made from the pilot program will be used to support new food and retail venues on campus, according to Foster.

Business Services did not return a call seeking information about the company contracted in time for the publication of this article.

News literacy class aims to correct poor research habits

CHERYL MALONE
Staff Writer

Professor of Journalism and Mass Communications, Frederick Blevens, will be teaching an innovative course in the Honors College based on news literacy.

News Literacy: Building Community Through Digital Media, will be offered to third and fourth-year students within the Honors College starting this Fall semester at Biscayne Bay Campus.

“The idea is to train people how to consume the media,” said Blevens. “With the bombardment of information, news and so called ‘news and liability level’ is pretty weak.”

Blevens designed the course syllabus after having observed the pioneering of the course at the University of New York and Stony Brook, where the same concept of news literacy has been taught successfully for four years.

“I came up with the phrase ‘practice safe news.’ It reminds me of a meat market on the Web with really contaminated stuff out there – you can get infected, not your computer – I mean your brain can get infected with all the stuff out there that’s not credible,” Blevens said.

According to Blevens’ syllabus, the course includes both Fall and Spring semester requirements going hand-in-hand with each other, as both are necessary for the success of the student.

Interim dean for the Honors College, Lesley Northup, explained the layout of the Honors College’s yearly design.

The first and second years in the Honors College are based on team-structured classes, while the third and fourth become more flexible for students, with more

seminars.

“The faculty pays to provide honors students with a particular kind of course,” Northup said. “We must have a topic with a variety of disciplines.”

The news literacy class will offer an understanding of journalistic principles, interpretations and the importance of journalism in America, and will allow for experience in the field alongside the community

students a better understanding of how we receive the information,” she said.

But news awareness is only the first half of Blevens’ design. The material covered in the Fall will contribute to the second half of the class goal, which will be fulfilled in the Spring through interaction with a chosen community.

“The Internet has really negatively impacted two important pillars of society:

The Internet has really negatively impacted two important pillars of society: news media and libraries.

Frederick Blevens, professor
Journalism and Mass Communications

and media, according to the class syllabus.

While the class is restricted to junior and senior students within the Honors College, it is intended for a wide variety of students.

The Honors College is based on interdisciplinary study, Northup explained.

“Because of that, we will really enhance the thinking abilities of students,” Northup said. “It meets in with course curriculum.”

English major Claudia Carcach believes that the course will be beneficial for students.

“Through the course, I think I would be able to learn how to differentiate an opinion from actual facts,” Carcach said. “The world today is really convenient if you want to know about something, people just Google it.”

Psychology major Elaine Nieves agrees with Carcach on the relevance of the class in a world of growing technology.

“It is a great way of getting students engaged in what is happening in our world, as well as giving

news media and libraries,” Blevens said.

In order to unite the two together, Blevens wants to bring the students to a community, working through a public library, while properly accessing media to the public. It will depend on library space and computer access to properly give training or classes to the public.

The end goal is to successfully build a sustainable network of community media, helping the new age of information gathering, according to the course syllabus.

Although Blevens designed the syllabus, he intends to have student interaction and fieldwork with the community.

It is under this intensely student-oriented project that the course remains, with further design chosen by the course students.

“The advantages of this is that the people who learn news literacy will become, probably, dedicated news users – which means they are customers of journalism,” Blevens said.

Black Student Union takes stance at SGC-UP meeting

BSU, page 2

The members of the UWC include the presidents, vice presidents, senate speakers and comptrollers for both campuses. In attendance were Kenasha Paul, SGC-UP Vice President Paige LaPointe, SGC-BBC President Ana Maria Silva, SGC-UP Senate Speaker Jean Roseme and SGC-BBC Comptroller Carlos Becerra-Pineda. Meyer called in while away on business in Tallahassee. SGC-UP Comptroller Robert Chung was unavailable.

The BSU also asked why they did not receive any funding from SGA during the University-wide budget hearings earlier this

month. During that meeting, it was determined that the BSU would receive funding during their respective BBC and UP budget hearings.

“I want you to understand that we will most likely be expecting Activities and Services fees increasing. However, we cannot discuss this matter at this meeting because this is not a budget hearing. Remember that the budget committee also has two other members who are not here,” said Silva, who was chairing the meeting.

Silva stated that the BSU could expect more funding at the time of the budget hearings.

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Free massage, yoga classes offered

LORENA ESTRADA
Staff Writer

The Wellness Center offers free yoga classes and massage therapy to students who want to relieve some stress and relax at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

As part of University Health Services, which provides professional, accessible and cost-effective primary care services to registered students at FIU, students have the option to attend a one-and-a-half hour yoga class with yoga instructor Bonnie Quiceno.

Students can also receive a 10-15 minute massage session for physical and mental relaxation, where licensed massage therapist Shari Little provides a "healing touch" to students at no cost.

"Massage therapy is the best thing for students because of the tension that builds up from the stress of studying and the long hours of sitting at a desk," said Little. "I target areas such as shoulders, neck and back to relieve and help prevent knotting."

Whether it's to relax for a while in between classes or relieve some stress, students like Ulises Guerrero, a junior political science major who works at the Fitness Center, have taken advantage of the opportunity offered on campus.

"I've gone to get a massage in between classes several times. It's great to get a free massage to release some tension during these [hard] economic times," Guerrero said.

Little has been working at BBC since massage therapy became available to students in 2004. Throughout the years, she's dedicated her time to helping students relieve stress, forming a consistent clientele.

"So far, I have students that have been coming to me every Wednesday for the last three years," she said. "They haven't

missed a week."

Because the center has been overwhelmed with students seeking massage therapy, students have been limited to one massage per week, according to Dona Walcott, assistant director of the Wellness Center.

"We want to give everyone an opportunity to attend," she said.

Ten minute massages are available on Mondays at the Fitness Center from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Fifteen-minute massages are available on Wednesdays at the Wellness Center from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and are by appointment only.

"She can only fit so many people between those two hours of the day," Walcott said.

For those students who feel that 10-15 minutes just isn't long enough, Little also offers a full-hour massage for \$30.

"You can't find anything better than that," said Little, who noted that the price range of a one-hour massage is typically between \$75 to \$100.

Little also emphasized the importance of stretching when it comes to lowering one's level of stress. Students who regularly work out at the Fitness Center or that are interested in releasing stress while burning calories at the same time, can take advantage of the free yoga classes offered.

Christie Maimo, a senior journalism major, recently found out about the free yoga classes and said she plans to attend next week's classes.

"I used to go to yoga at least three times a week last year, but I stopped because of my school and work schedule," said Maimo. "But now that I know they're available to us here on campus for free, I'm so excited to start again."

Yoga consists of a dynamic flowing sequence of postures that link breathing and move-

SPRING FLING '09



CYNTHIA FRANCISQUINI/THE BEACON

WILD 'N CRAZY: (Top) Kembrie Alexandre, business administration freshman, faces off against Tameca Smith, hospitality management junior, in an All Star Events' oversized boxing ring hosted by SPC- BBC for Spring Fling '09 in Panther Square.

(Left) Kamila Cardenas, belly dancer/snake charmer for All Star Events, holds an albino bermise python while Delio Morato, graduate student and Sholom Neisten, a junior majoring in biology and psychology, engage in a meet-and-greet with the snake, March 27 in Panther Square.



JACOB KAISER/THE BEACON

ment. The practice begins with a warmup of all major muscles and joints, and then moves into more challenging, long-held postures that build core strength, endurance and flexibility.

Free yoga classes and massage therapy are included in students'

health fees and are co-sponsored by University Health Services and Biscayne Bay Recreation.

Yoga classes are available on Mondays from 3:00 p.m.- 4:30 p.m., Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

To set up an appointment for a free massage session, students can contact the Wellness Center at (305) 919-5307.

Students interested in a full-hour massage therapy can personally contact Sherry Little at (305) 302-1091.

FIU student publishes sci-fi book, aims for full series

IVAN FLORES
Contributing Writer

Jason Macumber, a Sarasota, Fla. native and senior public relations major has just published his first book, *Obscure Origins*, March 19.

"*Obscure Origins* is a science fiction tale for young adults. It's sci-fi because it is based around the Roswell mythology," said Macumber, referring to a Roswell, N.M. UFO sighting. "This story stands out because there isn't really [any] young adult sci-fi, it all leans toward romance," Macumber said.

After reading the *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer, he decided to write his own coming-of-age story about letting go of the past and overcoming the future.

"I enjoyed the strength of the storytelling

[in *Twilight*] so I wanted to see if I could write something like that," Macumber said.

The novel is about Rion Hart, a young man who discovers his life is a fabrication. Part of a secret government project, Rion is injected with alien DNA, and has lived his life as part of a virtual reality simulation.

The images that he thought were his life were actually a computer generated program.

The book was published by PublishAmerica and Macumber said the process was anything but easy.

"I sent query letters to 165 agents and publishers. I received 80 rejections, 10 responses, five asking for the first three chapters and five requesting the whole manuscript," said Macumber. "It's a really hard business to break into, you don't really realize it until you dive into it."

There are times when my energy is drained ... You wonder if there is even a point. If anyone will read it or will be interested ...

Jason Macumber, senior public relations major

Macumber has been writing consistently for the past six or seven years, but writing has been a part of his life since elementary school.

According to him, he struggled a lot because the people around him didn't understand what it means to write a book.

"[People] think the writer is in control. [In

reality] the characters are in control. I wanted it to move in one direction, but my characters moved me somewhere else," Macumber said.

He also said that balancing school, work and the writing of his book was a challenge.

"There are times when my energy is drained. I pour myself into the book and I don't think I can do this because of school, work and life," said Macumber. "You wonder if there is even a point. If anyone will read it or will be interested in the story."

Macumber hopes that his novel will become as popular as the *Twilight* series, and he is currently planning a book tour during the summer.

Macumber's intentions include making *Obscure Origins* into a series, and is currently

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Twilight-inspired book by student hits bookshelves

BOOK, page 4

working on the sequel, tentatively titled *Guardian Rising*.

"It's going to be more action-packed and some of the characters won't make it to the third installment," he said.

He hopes for the sequel to be published by

Christmas 2009.

"I've gotten such great feedback, that it's enough of a drive to finish the rest of the series, even if only 30 or 40 people have read it and enjoyed it," Macumber said.

But he is not only working on sci-fi. Macumber is also working on a romance novel titled *Seven Nights In Tokyo*, which is

about a terminally ill patient whose last dying wish is to spend a week in Tokyo. There, she meets the love of her life.

"It's completely different than *Origins*," said Macumber. "I want people to know that even at the end of their lives, they can still find true love."

Macumber plans to get a master's degree

in Asian studies and hopes to one day teach English in Japan.

"Writing for me is my way of de-stressing. It's my way of channeling my creativity. No matter what obstacles I have, I'll see through to getting the story out," he said.

Obscure Origins can be purchased at any major bookstore for \$27.95.

'Be Hip Be Fit Series' aims to address healthy eating

NATALYA COHEN Contributing Writer

Students went to the Biscayne Bay Campus Recreation Center on March 26 to eat chocolate brownie bars.

The brownies were to promote fitness, health and overall wellness.

"These are natural, 100-calorie brownies," said nutrition science senior Noor Nusrath.

Nusrath hosted the "Be Hip Be Fit Series," a program she coordinated to inform students about the different ways of living a healthier lifestyle.

Her inspiration came from the students.

"I worked continuously from Monday and thought I needed to create something to make people aware," Nusrath said. "I walked around campus and got to know more of the students. Honestly, the students were most helpful in the process and were determined to offer their assistance. That was amazing."

The Wellness Center sponsored Nusrath's mission and printed the posters to promote the event.

Elias Bardawil, director of Campus Recreation and Warren Shaw, assistant director of Campus Recreation, suggested Nusrath use the Rec Center to host the event.

"I am doing an internship at the Recreation Center and I felt that it was finally the time for me to give, in the most constructive way, to the school. I feel like I'm giving something back not only to the school, but to the students," Nusrath said.

Ronicha Azard, senior health science major and Enidra Porter, junior nursing major, helped Nusrath give away fliers and free evaluations.

Students also received brochures with portion control tips, meal plan methods, free pins from the recreational facility and nutrition assessment forms.

The forms asked students details about their lifestyle, such as the amount of water consumed per day, number of fruit and vegetables servings per day, snacks consumed on a regular basis, amount of carbonated beverages consumed per day and amount of exercise and nutrition goals. Students were also asked their age

and height.

Porter and Azard also tested students' fat percentage with a body mass index calculator to determine whether students were fit, average, unfit, overweight or underweight.

Free food and pamphlets were funded by the Recreation Center. Nusrath, however, printed and designed all the information for students walking by.

The monitor provides a bioelectrical impedance analysis which is used for estimating body composition, distinguishing water weight and subtracting other factors which may misconstrue one's idea of their ideal body weight.

Among the students signing up was Carl Derek Boniface, a fitness center member whose wife, Ashley Boniface, is an event management major.

He was not happy about his weight.

"I have got to lose a little," Boniface said.

Others, however, were not too keen on stepping onto the scale.

"I haven't worked out in a while," said Angela Thomas, a hospitality graduate student.



SERGIO MONTEALEGRE/THE BEACON



NATALYA COHEN/THE BEACON

HEALTHY MEASURES: (Top) Noor Nusrath (center), intern in the Rec Center at BBC, helps Denea Atta King (left), hospitality management junior, and Vivianne Medina (right), hospitality management junior, measure their body mass index with the BMI calculator. (Left) Enidra Porter, nursing major junior, adjusts the scale for Carl Derek Boniface, fitness center member and non-FIU student, at the "Be Hip Be Fit Series" outside the Wellness Center.

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UNIVERSITY PARK

PRESIDENTIAL TICKET CANDIDATES (UNOPPOSED)

Anthony Rionda (P)
Mykaelle Figueiredo (VP)

Since the race for the UP presidency and vice presidency is uncontested, *The Beacon* has decided not to officially endorse the only candidates running, Anthony Rionda and Mykaelle Figueiredo. After considering Rionda and Figueiredo's platform, however, *The Beacon* feels that their initiatives are in line with what we feel is the best interest of the University and its students.

Both Rionda and Figueiredo demonstrated a mastery of the issues and their ideas are both feasible and address the issues. The candidates' experience in SGC-UP – Rionda as current President Arthur Meyer's chief of staff and Figueiredo as director of community relations and Public Health senator – complement the individual goals they have set for themselves next year.

The Beacon is glad to see Rionda is interested in increasing the transparency of SGC-UP and that he has clearly defined steps to achieving it. According to his platform, Rionda seeks to keep students abreast of what is going on in the council through a regularly updated Web site with information such as meeting minutes and senators' voting records.

Rionda also seeks to publish video and audio of important meetings so they are available to students 24 hours a day as well as further engaging students through the Internet via Twitter, Facebook, etc. Increasing the transparency of SGA and ensuring that all students have the capability of checking up on their elected officials is something that has been a long time coming and, should he accomplish his outlined goals, Rionda will have set the bar high for future SGA administrations.

Rionda and Figueiredo also plan on addressing the rising cost of higher education by what really is their only avenue for doing so: student scholarships. By establishing an SGA endowment and finding private, outside donors for programs such as the Students for Students scholarship program, students can finally start taking action against the seemingly endless budget cuts coming from the Florida Legislature.

Creating a separate Web site specifically dedicated to campus jobs for students will also help students quickly find jobs on or around campus; a step up from the current FIUJobLink system, which is inefficient for students at best.

Rionda's plan for addressing students' concerns about the parking situation at the University is also practical. Most candidates blindly refer to this as a something they hope to improve, yet have no real plan to

do. This is mainly because there is actually little members of SGA can do to address this as they have virtually no say in matters of parking and transportation.

By instituting a point to point PantherTram system, as Rionda has suggested he will do, students will have the option of parking further away from the heart of campus (for example, Panther Garage) and still make it to their class in the Graham Center in a reasonable amount of time, without having to allow an extra 20 minutes for walking.

Rionda also plans on addressing student service problems, such as revamping the CSO point system, a problem that has led to some clubs losing funding they had legitimately earned. Designated club meeting spaces will also attract more students to the clubs themselves, as they know exactly where to go. Overall, *The Beacon* feels that SGA taking a more direct role in CSO and other SGA councils will lead to more streamlined and uniform operating procedures, making these entities all the more efficient.

The Beacon looks forward to working with Rionda and Figueiredo in the coming year and holding them to the promises they are making the student body. Should they manage to correctly implement everything they have set out to do, the '09-'10 year looks to be a promising one for both SGC-UP and students overall.

SENATOR-AT-LARGE CANDIDATES (3 SEATS)

Nicholas Autiello ✓
Yuniel Molina
Helena Ramirez ✓
Stephanie Jimenez ✓
Robert Quintana

The Beacon endorses Nicholas Autiello, Stephanie Jimenez and Helena Ramirez for Rep-at-Large in the coming Student Government Council elections at the University Park campus.

All three candidates support a transparent student government – one where the general student population would have access to their student leaders' voting records to ensure their elected officials are making decisions in their best interests.

These three candidates are also aware of students' more pressing concerns – tuition fees and increases, campus safety, student advising, parking and traffic, and environmental initiatives – which demonstrates their familiarity with their constituents needs and wants.

The Beacon believes Autiello's direct approach to the tuition and fee increases would help FIU students see their money is responsibly spent.

"I am going to demand account-

ability on part of the administration for using these new monies to ensure the greatest benefit to the student body," Autiello wrote in a statement submitted to *The Beacon*. "A lot of good things will come from these tuition and fee increases but not without significant sacrifice from many students."

The Beacon believes Jimenez's plans for campus safety would immediately benefit students that attend classes at night and may be vulnerable to attack or theft because of UP's parkland design.

"I will continue to work with the University Department Police to implement programs such as the security awareness programs which implements campus escorts, make sure blue-light phones in all parking areas are made visible, indoor emergency telephones in all classrooms and provide presentations to students and parents," Jimenez wrote in a statement submitted to *The Beacon*.

The Beacon also feels Ramirez's plans to inform students of readily available services such as academic advising, on-campus recycling and campus life programs are grounded goals that can be met and would directly benefit students.

"My platform is essentially about taking the concerns of students and finding solutions for them. I believe SGA should be in constant communication with the students," Ramirez wrote in a statement submitted to *The Beacon*. "Essentially I want to make our established services more effective and well known, and make the college experience everything it should be for all students."

The Beacon feels Jimenez's work as a senator for the College of Arts and Sciences and both Autiello's and Ramirez's experiences ranging from internships to senatorships guarantees that the UP community will be in experienced hands throughout the upcoming and transformative 2009-2010 school year.

LOWER DIVISION SENATOR CANDIDATES (4 SEATS)

Daniel Ybanez ✓
Maribel Chaluja ✓
Daniela Gonzalez ✓
Daniel Gonzalez ✓
Alex Lastra

The Beacon recommends Daniel Ybanez, Maribel Chaluja, Daniela Gonzalez and Daniel Gonzalez for the open Lower Division Representative seats.

Although the above candidates have young political careers, their platforms and personal statements indicate a needed willingness to perform and serve in the Universi-

ty's Student Government Council at University Park. The platforms these young candidates present are ambitious, but they must keep in mind what measures are actually feasible to implement during their time in office.

It is refreshing to see that the majority of the candidates for Lower Division Representative are pledging support toward University-wide "green" initiatives.

Daniel Gonzalez intends to "research and support any legislation that comes to [SGC] about increasing the number of recycling bins on campus," according to a statement he provided to *The Beacon*. Chaluja points out in her platform that "many want to recycle but don't want to go out of their way to do so" and wishes to increase the number of recycling bins on campus. Whether Chaluja really could "work closely with the mayor of Miami-Dade, Carlos Alvarez," though, remains unknown. Regardless, saving energy and promoting on-campus recycling should be a priority for student government.

Most of the candidates also cited parking to be a critical concern that affects the student body. Ybanez noted the parking situation but also mentioned other issues pertaining to the garages, expressing a desire to "work with maintenance crews on campus to ensure that elevators are working properly and that bathrooms are clean."

Chaluja said, "Obviously we have no space or money to build more parking garages, so why not attack the problem from another angle?"

Chaluja suggested increasing funding for the current PantherTram, the University-wide transportation service spearheaded by current SGC-UP president Arthur "A.J." Meyer. But in January 2009, *The Beacon* reported that a new parking garage was in the works, which would be built next to the Red Garage.

All of the candidates must continue to be informed of initiatives the University undertakes and address those initiatives through active participation in student government.

The majority of the candidates also supported having their voting records readily available online. Daniela Gonzalez agreed with online access to voting records, saying, "One of the main goals of student government is to make the students fully aware of happenings within the organization."

Such a measure would certainly ensure greater transparency between student government and its constituents.

The Beacon is confident that Daniel Ybanez, Maribel Chaluja, Daniel Gonzalez and Daniela Gonzalez will address the University's concerns in an enthusiastic yet professional manner.

THE BEACON

RECOMMENDS

SGA 2009

BISCAYNE BAY

PRESIDENTIAL TICKET CANDIDATES (1 SEAT)

Sholom Neistein
Kenasha Paul ✓

In what was probably the most difficult decision it had to make, *The Beacon* is endorsing Kenasha Paul for the presidency of the Biscayne Bay Campus.

Paul, the current Student Government Council - BBC vice president, is running against Sholom Neistein, SGC-BBC senate speaker, and *The Beacon* feels that both candidates are extremely qualified for the position. Both have years of experience in student government and are dedicated individuals, who we feel will be strong voices and leaders for the student body.

In a much disputed assessment, *The Beacon* thinks that Paul is the right candidate because of her grand yet realistic plans for SGA. She outlined specific goals to be met and based on those, we think she will be the best leader for the students at BBC.

Although Neistein plans on redesigning and updating the SGC-BBC Web site often, as well as pushing for green initiatives and fighting for greater transparency, *The Beacon* feels that Paul presented more concrete, specific and attainable goals to achieve what was promised in her platform.

Paul is a political science major who lobbied several times not only in Tallahassee but also in Washington and has a strong knowledge of other student governments across the nation. Based on this, she recently rewrote the entire SGA constitution in order to have a solid and more consistent guideline for SGA to conduct business and to have a more organized, based in real-world politics student government in our University.

She has been a leader in SGA since 2005 and has shown her commitment to represent the student body.

Paul believes in transparency and will redesign and make better use of the SGC-BBC Web site in order to inform the student body about what SGA is

doing and also get input from students as well as getting them more involved. She also said that every senator vote will be made available in the Web site, not only because of transparency, but also because she feels that the students have the right to know how their elected officials are representing them.

Paul plans on joining forces with the Vice Provost Office at BBC as well as the Faculty Senate to reach a greater number of students and fulfill their needs of better advising and involvement on campus.

She strives to bring back to BBC free printing in the computer labs and improve library services, such as opening the graduate students reserved rooms for any student during midterms and finals.

On the green initiative, Paul will fight against printing thousands of fliers and will work to implement an informative channel with SGA updates on the televisions in the shuttles from BBC to University Park. She wants SGA officials to talk more to students rather than simply printing fliers and putting banners up all across campus.

Paul believes that the relationship between SGC-BBC and SGC-UP is the key framework for a stronger and successful SGA and will work toward achieving a mutually beneficial relationship with SGC-UP.

Although Neistein has great and much needed ideas that are long overdue in SGA, *The Beacon* feels strongly that Paul will keep her word and bring change, accountability and transparency to SGA as well as bring the student body together and keep them more involved on campus.

VICE PRESIDENTIAL TICKET CANDIDATES (1 SEAT)

Christin "Cici" Battle
Juan Carlos Remedios ✓

The decision to recommend Juan

Carlos "JC" Remedios for the Student Government Council vice presidency at the Biscayne Bay Campus was not a difficult one for *The Beacon*. After several attempts to obtain the platform of the other candidate, Christin "Cici" Battle, *The Beacon* received no response from the candidate, and was also unable to speak and interview her about the plans she has for SGC-BBC if she were to be elected.

However, after speaking with Remedios about his platform, *The Beacon* has enough reasons to recommend him.

A clear picture of what issues characterize BBC is key to determine what the campus and its students need. We believe that Remedios, after three years of involvement in SGA, holds this key.

His priorities include the improvement of advising services, the consistency of "Go Green" efforts on campus, the appropriate use of funds and the equal representation of the diverse demographics, including but not limited to different religions, ethnicities, gender, sexual orientations and legal statuses.

The Beacon also believes his strategies are adequate to pursue his goals.

Remedios' planned method of reaching students to learn and better meet their needs is elemental yet effective. His intentions of speaking to students one-on-one, and making eye contact and shaking their hands to introduce himself and his platform is not only the personal touch that will allow students to feel and understand that SGC-BBC is at their service, but also follows Remedios' intentions of a green campaign.

Instead of printing an undetermined amount of fliers that will eventually end up in the trash can, Remedios' plan of walking around campus with the students he will represent is consistent with both his plan for continuing the green initiative at BBC, and of seeking to improve and obtain a better advising system for students, one that follows the first characteristic of customer service: individual attention.

The Beacon believes Remedios' goal of an approachable, user-friendly SGC-BBC is the first step to successfully represent the students at BBC.

RECOMMENDS POLICY

To coincide with the Student Government Association elections, *The Beacon* Recommends Committee, a group of five editorial board members, releases a list of candidate recommendations for the presidential ticket, senator-at-large and lower division senator at University Park and president and vice president at Biscayne Bay Campus.

These recommendations are based on an in-depth interview or, as in the case of the UP candidates, a debate accompanied with questionnaires the committee provided each of the eligible candidates running for office.

SGA elections will be held on April 1 and 2, *The Beacon* encourages anyone eligible to vote to please do so through their Panther-soft account at my.fiu.edu.

RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

University Park

Senator-at-Large

Nicholas Autiello
Helena Ramirez
Stephanie Jimenez

Lower Division Senator

Daniel Ybanez
Maribel Chaluja
Daniel "Danny" Gonzalez
Daniela Gonzalez

BISCAYNE BAY

President

Kenasha Paul

Vice President

Juan Carlos Remedios

FIU out of bounds in banning P2P

MATTHEW RUCKMAN
Staff Writer

On March 21, the University announced that all peer-to-peer file sharing would cease on campus, including all wireless and housing networks.

The University's intent is obvious: to deter illegal downloading by restricting students' access to the Internet.

The notification e-mail stated, "There has been a dramatic increase in the amount of copyright violation activities performed on campus within recent months.

It's not a university's place to prosecute or preempt a gray area of the law.

"These violations involve illegally downloading music, movies and other copyrighted material through the FIU network. In an effort to curb these illegal activities at the University, FIU will no longer allow peer-to-peer file sharing."

To many this will come as a shock.

The restricting of access to content and information was probably never one of the University's aims, yet this is what they are doing.

What this action shows is who the University will side with when money is involved.

Not the obvious choice – the students – but instead the Recording Industry Association of America in policing our personal lives.

The RIAA is the trade group that is responsible for most lawsuits concerning the illegal downloading of music.

The ban seems a bit absurd by itself, it ignores the murkiness of the legality of downloading.

Just because theft occurs does not mean the University should deny an important avenue to the Internet.

Cars are stolen on campus all the time after all – this doesn't mean you ban motor-vehicles within its boundaries.

What is also worrisome is how FIU is taking on the role of enforcer, a role I never expected of a public education institution.

It's not a university's place to prosecute or preempt a gray area of the law, it's the justice system's responsibility.

Many schools in fact do the opposite of what FIU is doing and try to protect their students, as would seem fitting.

Purdue University, for example, has its own P2P server that shields its student's identities from the litigious RIAA. Purdue merely imposes a cap on downloads in order to curb bandwidth costs.

This solution would seem preferable to the outright banning of a very important and efficient means of communication. It makes one wonder why this particular route was taken given the alternatives.

The only reason I can think of is the very blatant act of bowing down to the RIAA.

In the future I would hope the University defers to students' interest.

The restricting of our access to the Internet should never be scope of education.

Teaching is about the liberation, not confinement, of information and content.

Fading Faith? America still holds Christian values

ANDREW ZAMORA
Contributing Writer

When the Puritans first landed in Massachusetts they brought with them a powerful sense of faith, work ethic and morality.

More than 200 years later, America has grown to be one of the most prosperous and industrialized nations in the world. However, has this success come at the price of our old Christian values and faith? Has America become less Christian?

According to the American Religious Identification Survey conducted by Trinity College, 75 percent of Americans call themselves Christian – a sharp decrease from the 86 percent reported 20 years earlier. William Donohue, president of the Catholic League, believes that this is due to a "shift toward individualism over the past quarter-century."

People are not calling themselves Christian as much today as they did before and church attendance is declining, especially in the 21-45 age group (down to 25 percent from 33 percent in the 1970s, according to W. Bradford Wilcox of the University of Virginia). I believe that superficially our country may not be flying the same colors, but Christian ideals and views are still very prominent within our society.

Our society thrives on a strong moral code. We believe in a sense of justice and retribution, and we expect wrongs to be punished.

Good and evil are still large facets of our lives. Our enemies, such as the radical Muslims we face today in the War on Terror, are portrayed not only as enemies of the United States but as enemies of God, children are still taught the 10 commandments and millions of Americans go to work every morning guided by a strong work ethic.

There are still some, especially those better off, that hold fast to Calvinistic ideals. These individuals see those with more material wealth as being better than others and see the poor, the homeless and the sick as deserving the position they are in.

They say to themselves, "I worked hard to get to where I am today, why should I help them? They're there for a reason, most likely because they want to be.

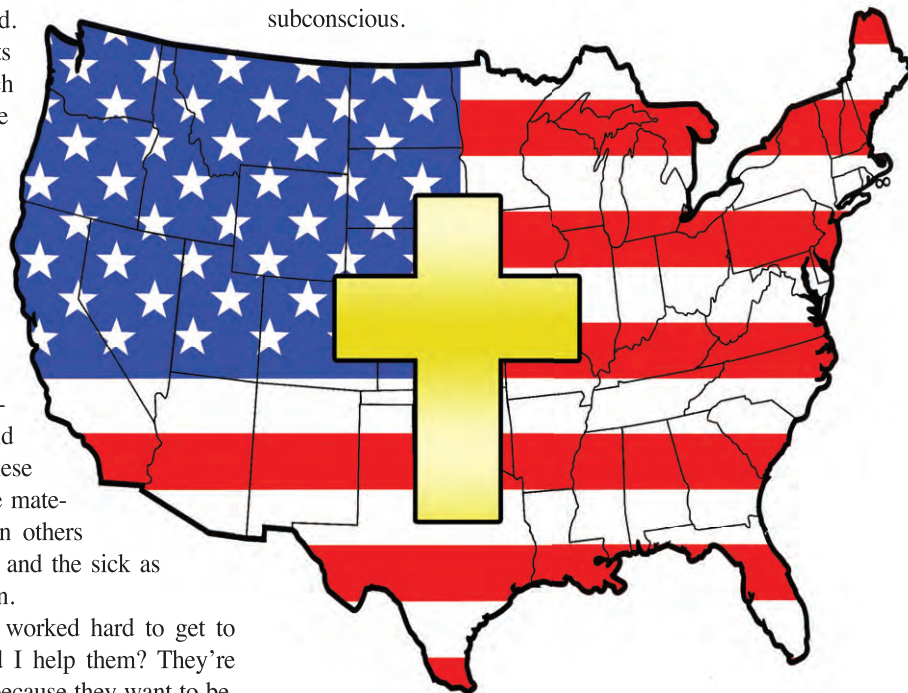
If they really want to get themselves out they can, just as I did."

Yet we expect others to help us because it is the "right thing to do." Americans still love to talk about the American Dream, an idea based on Puritan work ethic. The idea that you reap what you sow is a metaphor found in the Bible itself. Galatians 6:7 states, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

So perhaps we are superficially moving toward secularism. However, America still has its Christian roots buried in its subconscious. I was raised a Roman Catholic and was baptized, had my first Communion and was confirmed. However, I realized that there were certain facets of the Christian faith with which I did not agree and I stopped practicing. Yet even to this day I still catch myself thinking in the way I was raised to think and believe.

These teachings, since they are impressed on us at an early age and through the actions of the people around us, are very difficult to remove from thought. On top of that, we live in a society that inadvertently rewards behaviors associated with these ingrained beliefs and modes of thought.

So yes, superficially science and technology have continued their growth, and our great country moves closer to the science fiction future of our dreams. But the Christian heart of America still beats strong, only it has shifted its location from America's chest to its subconscious.



Study shows U.S. becoming less of a Christian nation

MOHAMED ABDIHAKIM
Contributing Writer

There's a common misconception when it comes to the founding of our country, the United States. The mistake, the "myth," is that this country was founded as a Christian one.

This is simply false and can be supported as such by one of the most influential and crucial documents in world history, the Declaration of Independence. In this document, there is a clear point stressed toward the side of religious ambiguity.

At the time, the Christian establishment was heavily criticized even by some of the more well-known signers of the declaration. Both Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were good examples, going as far as citing the church as the "lowest grade of ignorance of which their civil as well as religious leaders will always avail themselves for their own purposes."

Despite our country being founded under

Science cannot be the enemy of Christianity. In fact, Christianity needs to work together with the sciences to make sure we advance as a people.

Annieka Dennis, *freshman*
psychology major

such religious ambiguity, the United States still seems to be seen as a Christian country.

There is not much fault in this assumption, as more than 75 percent of Americans claim to be Christians, according to a recent survey. The question now dawning upon many is whether the United States has in fact become

less Christian.

My answer? A resounding yes.

In the Bush administration, several sensitive issues (more notably that of abortion) have been handled with Christ-embezzled safety gloves. Many issues were brought almost immediately to a religious focus, often times deluding both sides of the argument.

Even in the first 60 days of our 44th president's first term, there are small signs of a solid separation between church and state. A few weeks ago, President Obama announced his support for the advancement of stem cell research and ended tight federal restrictions on the matter. This is just a single example of how our country is diverting itself from its supposed Christian roots.

Catholics remain the largest religious group in this country, gaining 11 million followers since 1990. Even at such a rate of growth, the Catholic share of the U.S. population falls just short of 25 percent. The rest fall all along the religious spectrum, claiming anywhere from

unorthodox Christians, to Muslims, Buddhists and Jews (with many dissociating themselves with religion altogether).

Science is what many Christians consider the lone titan rival of the religion.

"Science cannot be the enemy of Christianity. In fact, Christianity needs to work together with the sciences to make sure we advance as a people," said Annieka Dennis, a freshman majoring in psychology.

History teacher Andre Olson at Nur-Ul-Islam Academy added, "Popular belief supports the struggle between faith and fact. This just will not work. The problem is that the two affect each other greatly."

Indeed, America has been undergoing a shift away from the Christian values it was thought to have been found under. As the trends in government and the overall attitude of American society toward organized religion shift in an opposing direction, the United States is probably going to keep facing the dawning aspect of a much "less Christian" country.

Vive la France

French Club offers international taste to students

MONICA PUERTO
Staff Writer

If a businessman or student from Miami is abroad in France, he will certainly need to know the daily routine and social customs of the French and be able to think on their terms rather than his own.

"A key advantage of speaking French is that I can travel to various countries in the world - African countries, Canada, etc - and be able to communicate with them," said Adrian Douzmanian, a freshman and native Frenchman.

But for those who were neither raised in France nor speak the language, gaining that knowledge does not require a trip overseas.

"Our club offers the chance to experience a bit of

France in Miami," said Barbara Telleria, secretary of the *Le Cercle Francais*.

Le Cercle Francais, FIU's French Club, was started approximately 15 years ago by the club's advisor, Maria Garcia, and a few members that shared a passion for French culture and language.

When asked to be the club advisor, French instructor Garcia said, "I accepted to do this job everyday of the year with all my heart."

Even though meetings are once a month, *Le Cercle Francais* does not stop expanding its knowledge and feeding its love for French culture.

Last week, the club and Pi Delta Phi, the French Honor Society, conducted a French awareness day, where brie and madeline cookies were served.

The event included discussions on French literature, movies and culture.

The club has already held two film festivals this semester: French Classics, with six modern films and *Cinéma Franco-Libanais*, which showed four contemporary French/Arabic films.

The club has also had a guided tour in French of the Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami and is looking forward to their next tour on April 11, which will consist of brunch and a visit to an art exhibit in the Alliance Francaise.

Leur passion does not end there.

The club also conducts reading groups. So far, they've had six meetings this semester: three for beginners/intermediate and three for advanced. In order for these events to

happen, the club raises funds by having a CrêpeMaker event, where they make and sell crêpes.

Club members are not required to speak the language or to be enrolled in any French courses. There are also no club fees.

"Being an integral part of a university that has the word "international" in its title, *Le Cercle Francais* takes the initiative to demonstrate to the FIU community not only the culture of France but also how expansive the French language is throughout the world," Telleria said.

The club meetings are generally located in the Graham Center and times vary each month. The next meeting is scheduled for April 2 in GC 241 at 3:30 p.m. For more information on upcoming events, write to fiufrclub@gmail.com.




POP & CIRCUMSTANCE

The Decemberists dish out first 'concept album'

Well, Colin Meloy finally did what he's been threatening to do for four albums.

On their latest album, *The Hazards of Love*, The Decemberists have put it all together musically and thematically for their first true "concept album."

Through The Decemberists' first four albums, Meloy's overly verbose and prog-inspired folk songs conjured images of Jethro Tull and Tommy, especially on 2006's *The Crane Wife's* two epic song suites.

Meloy has always had a knack for telling stories, and the band behind him has really turned into an impressive rock outfit that knows how to follow these stories and change their

mood and atmosphere. While *The Crane Wife* seemed to, at times, reach for some of the thematic elements that *Hazards* has, no more than a handful of the songs were really related to each other.

Hazards of Love, on the other hand is an exquisitely crafted suite that connects musically from beginning to end, with thematic elements cropping up throughout the length of the album.

I've been told there is even some sort of a story about ghost children and a shape-shifting forest dweller who impregnates a princess, or something along those lines, but in all

COLUMN



CHRIS TOWERS

DECEMBERISTS, page 10

PhD: Piled higher and deeper

diversions



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art by iris amelia / story by susana rodriguez



MOMENT OF CLARITY

Album quality, talent defines success in hyped hip-hop world

I get into arguments with people all the time about music, and while at times it can be interesting, sometimes it can be perturbing. Hip-hop is so subjective that even the most farcical statement is made regularly. I have heard dudes recently say things like, "Big L is not that good," or "Jay-Z is overrated."

And the list goes on, because it is inevitable that people make the most ridiculous opinions and stick by them.

All of those statements are tolerable to an extent, because at some point you just don't argue with people when they won't listen. People have favorite rappers and opinions that I accept and cannot change, but there is something to be said about what the most efficient way to rate these artists is.

The most popular discussion that comes up though, are the comparisons between rappers. You cannot escape it, but at least it can be agreed what guidelines should be considered when determining who is "better."

First of all, the artists' body of work has to be looked at, and by that I mean the quality of their

albums. Mix tapes can get you some credit, but an album is the body of work that determines your consistency to make good albums. Give me a good album, not four hot songs and trash. When you talk about pure talent, somebody will give you a chance and some beats to make a good album.

Freestyles on YouTube are a demonstration of raw talent, but that doesn't put them among the best. It puts them among the best at freestyling in public, but not among the best hip-hop artists in the world.

The one topic I discussed with a few people was the random comparison of Lupe Fiasco and Jadakiss. It came up when I was playing basketball (where a lot of great dialogue happens about rap). Jada and Lupe are different, but it just came up when I was talking about how transcendent Lupe is.

You know what side I was on, and although I had some support, I was getting pummeled by Jadakiss fans who thought it wasn't close. But all their support was about how good Jadakiss is, but even they admitted that the caliber of his

albums were not on Lupe's level.

Their support was just based on songs here and there. Jadakiss is very good, OK, but in basketball terms, he doesn't have the rings. Jadakiss may be Vince Carter, but Lupe is Dwyane Wade.

The talent is very close, but more substance has been produced by the winner. Wade has a ring. Lupe has a classic album, almost inarguably (See Food & Liquor). Jadakiss has a couple dozen hot tracks, but what are his albums worth?

This is not meant to be a shot at Jada, because I do respect his skills. But mixtapes are the scrimmage. Albums are the season, and awards are the rings. If your album is good, you're a playoff team, but if it is the best album, it's a ring, or a championship. And I don't mean the Grammys, I mean the consensus by hip-hop's most knowledgeable people on a classic album.

When you're speaking of who the best is at something, you have to weigh their accomplishments on the biggest platform.

Moment of Clarity examines the state of hip-hop every other Monday.



JONATHAN RAMOS

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY •
MARCH 30

WHAT: Hands on Haitian – trying to formulate a group
WHEN: 4:30 p.m.
WHERE: GC 340
CONTACT: 305-348-1069

WHAT: Philosophy Club Meeting
WHEN: 3:30 p.m.
WHERE: GC 314
CONTACT: 305-348-1069

WHAT: International Students Club – Cultural Dinner/Meeting
WHEN: 7 p.m.
WHERE: GC Panther Suite
CONTACT: 305-348-1069

WHAT: Haitian Students Organization Meeting
WHEN: 6:30 p.m.
WHERE: GC 150
CONTACT: 305-348-1069

WHAT: FIU Yoga - Meeting
WHEN: 7:45 p.m.
WHERE: GC 241
CONTACT: 305-348-1069

TUESDAY •
APRIL 1

WHAT: National Organization for Women Presents: Take Back the Night
WHEN: 11 a.m.
WHERE: GC Pit
CONTACT: 305-348-1069

WHAT: Students for a Free Tibet
WHEN: 3:30 p.m.
WHERE: GC 314
CONTACT: 305-348-1069

WHAT: Miami Dade County Fair and Expo
WHEN: 3 p.m.
WHERE: Coral Way and 112th Ave
CONTACT: 305-223-7060

WHAT: Florida Grand Opera – The Marriage of Figaro
WHEN: 8 p.m.
WHERE: Adrienne Arsht Center
CONTACT: 305-949-6722

WHAT: West Side Story
WHEN: 8 p.m.
WHERE: Roxy Theatre
CONTACT: 305-226-0030

Compiled by Mariana Ochoa

Meloy colors 'Hazards of Love' with steel guitars, mandolins

DECEMBERISTS, page 9

honesty, I don't hear the details.

The album format by design has to limit storytelling, as even the most well crafted of musical theater requires some amount of dialogue to move the story along.

Much like The Who's *Tommy*, it's obvious even on first listen that there is some sort of story here, even if it is so obtuse that it requires weeks of listening to really derive.

Still, the album works extremely

well for what it is, with numerous discernible characters and guest vocalists (My Morning Jacket's Jim James is listed in the credits, but I cannot for the life of me pinpoint him in the album).

Musically, the album expands on the prog influence that really came to the forefront on *The Crane Wife*, featuring a number of layers to the instruments and various tempo changes throughout individual songs.

"A Bower Scene" and "Won't Want for Love" are among the

heaviest songs The Decemberists have ever done, with a big low end, distorted guitars and loud plodding drums.

Elsewhere, the more folky sound of their earlier albums is built upon with new instruments to their canon, from pedal steel guitar to mandolin, and on "Isn't It a Lovely Night," an accordion. The strength of the album as a song suite serves somewhat to hamper the individual strength of the songs, as often the songs veer off course in order to bring back thematic

elements earlier introduced.

Still, songs like the sprawling epic centerpiece "The Wanting Comes in Waves/Repaid" which features strong vocals from Lavender Diamond's Becky Stark, manage to stand alone while still working within the context of the suite.

This is a strong album overall, though the nature of it takes a few listens for the individual songs and melodies, which can match up to some of the best in The Decemberists catalog, to really sink in.

Patience is rewarded, because after a few listens and the overwhelming feeling of trying to take it all in at once is gone, you really start to appreciate the intricacies of the melodies and the wit in the lyrics.

Though, as always with a Decemberists album, you may want to have a lyric sheet and thesaurus handy just in case you get a word like "roust-about" thrown at you.

Pop & Circumstance examines all things pop music every week.

DRAWING IN NATURE



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

IN PLEIN AIR: Veronica Carrasco, a nursing major, works on a landscaping assignment for Painting I.

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Bullpen bounces back, offense comes alive late

BASEBALL, page 12

took over in the top of the ninth, but imploded quickly.

Relievers Aaron Arboleya and Jorge Marban both gave up six walks and six runs to Scott Rembisz in his fifth victory of the season.

Junior Arrojo led off the bottom of the ninth with a single. Pablo Bermudez bunted him over to second base.

Ryan Mollica, who hit two home runs in the game, was intentionally walked to face Tyler Townsend.

He hit a pitch back to the pitcher for the second out of the inning, but his groundout advanced the runners to second and third.

Steven Stropp could not avoid a fastball that hit him to load the bases. It was up to Tim Jobe to win the game.

But Justin Robichaux did not let Jobe win with a game-winning grand slam. His inaccuracy led him to walk Jobe to end the seesaw battle.

The bullpen nearly cost the team the first game of

the series, but head coach Turtle Thomas was pleased his team was able to fight back.

“No matter how we play, we’ll always take a conference win no matter which way you slice it or dice it,” Thomas said. “They made a good comeback and we made a good comeback of our own.”

FIU 11, UL 7

One day removed from his worst performance of the season, Jorge Marban was sent out in the eighth inning to close out the next game.

This time, Marban delivered.

“I just came in with a fresh start,” Marban said.

He mentioned head coach Turtle Thomas’ talk after the previous game helped him this outing.

“I wouldn’t be able to tell you word by word. It really helped me out because it knocked some sense into me because I really wasn’t focused last night,” he said.

Starting pitcher Tom Ebert, who came into the game with a 0.61 earned run average, gave up seven

earned runs in 5 2/3 innings. He gave up runs early and often; he never dominated the Ragin’ Cajuns’ like he had his previous four opponents.

Yet, the Golden Panthers, fueled by a six-run fifth inning, rallied back from a 4-0 deficit to defeat the Ragin’ Cajuns 11-7 on March 28 at University Park Stadium.

Whereas the bullpen last night pitched one inning and gave up six runs, R.J. Fondon and Jorge Marban combined to pitch 3 1/3 innings and did not allow a run.

The win gives the Golden Panthers another series win and a 6-2 record against Sun Belt Conference teams.

That record places the Golden Panthers third in the conference behind Middle Tennessee and Western Kentucky who both have 8-1 records.

Marban got his fourth save of the season and threw effective off-speed pitches rather than just fastballs.

For the second consecutive game, the Golden Panthers’ offense scored 11 runs and obtained 16 hits.



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

REACHING BASE: Steven Stropp gets on base against the University of Louisiana Ragin’ Cajuns. The Golden Panthers scored 11 runs in each game.

The two through six hitters all had at least two hits against the Ragin’ Cajuns.

The Golden Panthers began to get the offense going in the fifth inning.

Tim Jobe extended his hitting streak to 16 games, and he said seeing the pitcher a second time through the lineup was beneficial for the offense.

“You know what he has,” Jobe said. “You know how he’s going to come at you. Talking with the guys in here, you know what he’s going to throw. Certainly, seeing him twice helps a lot.”

Coach Thomas said the offense manages to score runs in a variety of ways because of the hitters’ versa-

tile abilities.

“You try to recruit a team that you got a few guys that hit some home runs, a few guys that could steal some bases, some guys that hit for high batting average,” he said. “If you’re lucky enough to have that type of team, you have a chance to keep some offensive pressure on the other team.”

SUN BELT BASEBALL STANDING

TEAM	OVERALL	CONF	PCT
Middle Tennessee	18-4	9-1	.818
Western Kentucky	17-7	8-1	.708
FIU	17-5	6-3	.773
ULM	14-11	5-6	.560
Arkansas State	10-13	5-6	.435
Florida Atlantic	15-8	4-6	.652
Louisiana-Lafayette	10-12	4-6	.457
Troy	14-10	3-5	.583
New Orleans	9-15	4-7	.375
UALR	7-16	3-7	.304
South Alabam	11-14	2-6	.440

*All records up to date as of Mar. 29

SUN BELT LEADERS

BATTING

Min 2.5 AB	G	Avg	AB	R	H	RBI	2B	3B	HR	BB
Townsend, FIU	20	.486	74	22	36	26	9	1	5	12
Robertson, MT	20	.462	78	23	36	13	12	0	1	9
Brentz, MT	20	.427	75	25	32	23	2	2	9	8

PITCHING

Min 1.0 IP/Team	Gm	ERA	W-L	Sv	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Ebert, FIU	6	0.61	3-1	0	35	22	12	7	5	41
Rembisz, FIU	6	1.54	4-0	0	43	35	11	10	4	37
Polizzano, FIU	4	2.61	2-1	0	24	21	11	7	5	23

Pitching supported by potent offense

TOWERS, page 12

devastating to opposing pitchers.

The Golden Panthers rank third in the conference in runs, on base percentage and slugging percentage, and have been especially dangerous from the two-six spots in the lineup.

Since starting 3-for-26 on the season, second baseman Ryan Mollica has gone 29-for-62, with six home runs, and has generally returned to being the player that hit more than .400 last season.

As he has heated up, so has the offense.

As good as Mollica has been over the last two and a half weeks, Tyler Townsend has been that good and better for the entire length of the season, leading the conference in

“As good as Mollica has been over the last two and a half weeks, Tyler Townsend has been that good and better ...

batting average and on base percentage, and coming in second in slugging.

Townsend’s steady presence has allowed the Golden Panthers to slot in a couple of newcomers into the lineup.

Tim Jobe and Mike Martinez, who switch off between first and designated hitter, have both been able to step right in and produce at high levels, giving FIU a handful of dangerous hitters.

Against the Ragin’ Cajuns, the bats were able to string together big

innings and timely hitting, and in Jobe’s case, a timely bases loaded walk in the bottom of the ninth to walk off with a win on Friday’s game.

For Saturday, the middle of the Golden Panthers’ lineup hit five doubles in the innings to spark a six-run fifth inning to bail out Tom Ebert, who finally had a bad outing after dominating with a .61 ERA through his first four starts.

Ebert allowed seven runs, five earned, to plate through 5 1/3 innings, with

five strikeouts, to raise his season ERA all the way to 1.80.

Friday’s biggest problem was the bullpen, which allowed six runs in the top of the ninth to erase a workhorse performance from Scott Rembisz, who was effective without his best stuff.

However, on Saturday, freshman R.J. Fondon and closer Jorge Marban held the Cajuns’ scoreless through the final 3 1/3 innings to close the game out and pick up the win.

This is a team that is much improved from last year, and should be able to at least be competitive with the best of the Sun Belt.

And if the pitching continues to lead the conference in earned run average, the bats will hit enough to keep them near the top.

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BASEBALL SERIES: FIU 2, UL 0



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

RESURGENCE: Ryan Mollica hits against the Ragin' Cajuns. Mollica is one of the hottest batters on the team. He hit two home runs against the Cajuns.

COMEBACK KIDS

Golden Panthers overcome deficits to win two games

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Director

For the first time this season, starting pitcher Scott Rembisz and Tom Ebert did not look like the dominant pitchers they've been all season.

The University of Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns came into the series with the worst team batting average in the conference, but managed to tag four runs on Rembisz and seven runs on Ebert.

But the Golden Panthers' offense scored 11 runs in both games to defeat the Ragin' Cajuns in the first two games of the series.

FIU 11, UL 10

Through the first three innings, starting pitcher Scott Rembisz and the Golden Panthers had the game on cruise control.

Then in the fourth inning, they hit a bump in the road that came in the form of a two-run home run by designated hitter Matt Goulas.

The rest of the game would be a contest with erratic pitching, a late inning meltdown and a walk-off victory against the Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns on March 27 at University Park Stadium.

With the score tied at 10, Tim Jobe came up to bat with the bases loaded and two outs.

He jumped out of the way of a pitch that almost hit him. It would've ended the game instantly, but Jobe wanted to take matters into his own hands.

"I wanted to hit it out," Jobe said. "I was looking for a pitch to drive."

Instead, he saw four straight balls as he drew the game-winning walk to give the Golden Panthers the 11-10 victory. The win

improved the Golden Panthers' Sun Belt Conference record to 5-2, good for third in the conference.

Rembisz retired the first nine batters he faced in order. The Ragin' Cajuns could not figure him out. But the second time seeing him, they began to pile on hits against the Golden Panthers' No. 1 starter.

After the two-run homer by Goulas, the Ragin' Cajuns produced two more runs the following inning to take a 4-3 lead.

The Golden Panthers' offense did not let the Cajuns enjoy their lead for long by recapturing the lead with a two-run inning due to a series of singles capped off by a base hit by Mike Martinez.

For the Golden Panthers, the offensive onslaught continued. They scored three runs in the next inning and two in the eighth to extend their lead to 10-4.

Rembisz shut out the Ragin' Cajuns for the next three innings as well. The bullpen

BASEBALL, page 11

Baseball team proves to be a contender

COLUMN



CHRIS TOWERS

If you are following a college baseball team, you always want to give them a little time before you start judging them.

More than any other sport, baseball performance is prone to fluctuations from game to game and week to week. Baseball, by its very nature, requires a large number of samples to get rid of some of the "noise" that comes with these fluctuations.

Is 20 games long enough to judge a team?

If you were to judge FIU's baseball team after their first 20 games, you'd be looking at a team that, despite some obvious deficiencies, was able to dominate opponents on both sides of the ball.

Through 20 games, Turtle Thomas' squad, made up largely of new players and some returning contributors, stood at a sterling 15-5 record, with a couple of late inning losses being the only blemishes.

For people following the Golden Panthers, the beginning in earnest of conference play, a three-game home set against the University of Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns was the series to reserve judgment.

Tony Robichaux's Ragin' Cajuns have led the Sun Belt Conference in team ERA for four straight seasons, a distinction FIU currently holds, and are usually among the Sun Belt Conference's better teams, garnering a first place vote in the preseason coaches' poll.

If you were waiting for this series to pass judgment on the Golden Panthers, your opinion of them was probably not too different than before it.

During the first two games of the three-game set, the Golden Panthers scored 11 in both games, with a lineup that is absolutely

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'We have to be creative and work harder'

ATHLETICS, page 1

athletic departments across the nation.

"Every school that receives any amount of state or public funding is going through something similar. Every school is being faced with issues and that's just not in our league but every league in the country," said Sun Belt Conference Assistant Commissioner for Communication John McElwain.

Although some resources will get cut, Garcia said the competitiveness of each team will not be sacrificed.

"We are not going to use this as an excuse for fielding teams that are not going to be competitive at the highest level. We have to be creative and work harder," Garcia said.

Part of the creativity Garcia spoke about was creating new streams of revenue for the department through external uses of its facilities.

So far, Athletics has been able to secure a partnership to host first-round games of the Gold Cup at FIU Football Stadium and formed a partnership with the Miami Diamantes, a Florida Winter Baseball League.

The Diamantes will play all their home games at University Park Stadium. Athletics has also rented the stadium club at the football stadium for parties and meetings.

Garcia and McElwain said they've never seen anything like this in collegiate athletics and it's one of the first times athletic departments may have seen their budgets dip.

"Athletics has continually grown and was an area where more and more money was going into," McElwain said.

"I think we are in a unique situation, where for the first time, we are being asked to take a hard look at our numbers. That's not a bad thing because it can lead to better efficiency and optimizing our budget."

Over the last 10 games

- The baseball team is 8-2 during that stretch.
- The Golden Panthers outscored their opponents 99-62.
- Ryan Mollica hit four home runs, scored 13 runs and had 19 runs batted in (RBI). He has a .465 batting average.