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IVORY COAST

Ivory Coast rebels take 2 more towns

A spokesman for Ivory Coast's internationally recognized leader says that rebels loyal to Alassane Ouattara have taken over Bouafle and Sinfra.



INDONESIA

Officials praise arrest of terror suspect

Indonesia's most wanted terror suspect, the senior al-Qaida operative blamed for the 2002 Bali bombings could provide valuable intelligence about regional militant networks.



ETHIOPIA

80 Jews wounded, arrested at protest

A Jewish group says that Ethiopian police injured 80 Ethiopian Jewish protesters and arrested 80 more during a demonstration near the Israeli Embassy in Addis Ababa.

Students petition to save teacher's job

JORGE SANTA CRUZ
Contributing Writer

Always surrounded by a crowd of students, adjunct instructor Abdolrahim Javadzadeh walks to his own beat, conversing endlessly and blurring the distinction between professor and student.

Soon, however, his time at FIU may end.

Javadzadeh, better known as "Professor Abdy," earned his doctorate in sociology from FIU in 2007, but he's actually been teaching here 11 years.

During that time, he has asked numerous times to become a full-time professor, a request that has been denied repeatedly.

"You do your Ph.D. thinking about better opportunities. This has not been the case. I'm moving on," Abdy said, noting that he is weighing two opportunities at other institutions.

But he he's not leaving before an organized group of students gathers 1,000 student signatures on a petition asking FIU to retain him.

"I signed the petition because there are not enough professors with his qualities," Raul

Alonso, a senior sociology major, said. "He gets you to think. He cares about the students."

Since last September, the petition has flown from student to student, and it will be delivered to the Department of Global & Sociocultural Studies after it reaches one thousand signatures, a precedent not seen before, according to some sociology faculty members.

The document probably will be delivered this week or next.

"He is very available to students before and after class to discuss the issues of the day," said Amal Aldito, a senior women's social studies major. "He teaches critical and analytical thinking within a sociological context."

The department chair has declined comment on the situation, but, according to some sources, the department is reevaluating Abdy's adjunct status.

"Because you have a Ph.D., and you have the knowledge, that does not mean you know how to transfer your knowledge," Abdy said. "You have to be interested in people. Teaching has to be in your personality."

FIU's denial to give full-time status

CRANES FOR HOPE



GLORIA BAILON/THE BEACON

Junior Gabby Livoti, an Asian studies student, and junior Taiga Yonemoto, an international relations, folding cranes as relief for Japan. The students put their origami skills to good use to raise money for the devastation in the island nation.

Childhood wimp now teaching martial arts at University

ELIZABETH VELEZ
Contributing Writer

Scott Miller grew up as a skinny kid who was picked on throughout school.

He now considers himself a geek who can kick butt.

Working as an inner-city school teacher most of his educational career, Miller has found an alter ego the past 16 years by mastering and teaching Capoeira, a Brazilian form of martial arts that combines fighting, dancing, music and art.

"I was Professor Alemão (his Capoeira teacher name), which was trying to please my mastery and be like the top Capoeira that he wanted me to be," he said. "Then, I was a family man, a pretty mild-mannered math teacher type guy."

Miller holds a Capoeira class at Florida International University two nights a week after teaching math at New World School of the Arts.

He is excited to bring the martial art to FIU so he can help students build their confidence the same way Capoeira built his.

"I love geeks and nerds that come in – little skinny ones with, you know, no muscle – because I see their future," he said.

Miller also values the talents his female students bring to Capoeira.

Capoeira is a dance, fight, martial art and also a culture and Professor Alemão incorporates all of those elements in class.

Isis Darios
Capoeira's Student

Julie Burke, a student of Miller's whose Capoeira name is Armada, or armed, had a similar respect for her professor.

"It's inspiring to be around someone who has such a passion for what they do and professor brings that to every class," she said.

Miller's passion came at the age of 31, but not much to his surprise.

"In Capoeira we have a saying that you don't find Capoeira, it finds you," he said.

He was working at an after-school care program with teenagers at Jackson Memorial High School when a co-worker mentioned wanting to show the teens a Capoeira video.

Miller had seen Capoeira being performed before at cultural activities, and though it amazed him he didn't think of it as something he could ever do.

The same day another teacher gave him the contact information to what he now refers to as his mastery, Master Delei, a Brazilian man trained in the martial art.

"I was just going to take a few classes just for fun, and that was 16 years ago now and I haven't stopped yet," Miller said.

Master Delei is the one who gave Miller his Capoeira name, Alemão, which means German in Portuguese.

He chose Alemão because Miller reminded him of all of the Germans that had migrated to Brazil because of his blue

eyes and blond hair.

While building confidence and strength is one of the things he loves about Capoeira, Miller brings more to the martial art than just crazy kicks.

"He really takes his time to teach us, not only the Capoeira movements, but also how to play the instruments, learn Portuguese words and the history of Capoeira," said Isis Darios, one of Miller's students.

"Capoeira is a dance, fight, martial art and also a culture and Professor Alemão incorporates all of those elements in class."

From 2000 to about 2004, Miller developed a program at Jackson Memorial High School where Capoeira was free for the students to learn, but they were required to stay in school, maintain certain grades and could not use Capoeira to get into fights.

"I'll tell you, that was the hardest thing I ever did," Miller said, noting that many of his students lived in dangerous neighborhoods and grew up without father figures.

"I sort of became an adoptive father to them," he said. "They still, you know, call me dad and everything."

Miller considers this to be one of his greatest accomplishments because most of them made it through life without going

NEWS FLASH

LOCAL

Florida House panel taking up annual budget bill

The House Appropriations Committee is taking up the chamber’s proposed \$66.5 billion version of Florida’s annual budget.

The proposal on Wednesday’s agenda would make sharp cuts to education, health care and other state services. That’s because Florida’s revenues during the budget year beginning July 1 are expected to fall short of high priority and critical needs by about \$3.7 billion.

The Senate’s tentative budget is about \$3.3 billion bigger than the House bill.

WORLD

Bahrain expands crackdown, detains Shiite blogger

A social media editor in Bahrain says the tiny Gulf country’s most prominent blogger and vocal supporter of Shiite-led anti-government protests has been detained.

Amira al-Husseini, a Middle East and North Africa editor at Global Voices Online says police took the 50-year-old blogger, Mahmoud al-Youssef, into custody early Wednesday from his home in Duraz, an opposition stronghold northwest of the capital Manama.

3 Mexicans face hanging in Malaysia drug trial

A lawyer says three Mexican brothers arrested on suspicion of producing methamphetamine at a Malaysian factory face the death penalty if convicted of drug trafficking.

Prosecutor Umar Saifuddin Jaafar said Wednesday that the Kuala Lumpur High Court is scheduled to hear defense lawyers present their case in late April.

The three suspects were charged together with a Malaysian and a Singaporean in March 2008 with drug trafficking.

All were arrested at a factory in Malaysia’s southern Johor state where police found more than 63 pounds of methamphetamine worth 44 million ringgit.

– Compiled by Nicole Castro

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Police seek abused girl on photos

MELISSA NELSON
AP Staff

Police hope routine images from a donated digital camera that contained other photos of a young girl being sexually abused will help them find the girl.

The Pensacola Police Department’s website posted the images on Tuesday of what appears to be a day care center and a living area.

Detectives have searched for the unidentified girl without success since volunteers at a local thrift store discovered the photos last December

when the camera was dropped off as an anonymous donation. The thrift store volunteers called police to report the images on Dec. 14.

“The child was undressed and drugged. In my opinion, she is in grave danger and has been or is being sexually abused,” Detective Chris Wilkinson said Wednesday.

It appears the girl was around 4 years old when the photos were taken, he said. The date stamp on the 2005 Sony Digital Mavica is 2006, but Wilkinson said the pictures might not have been taken that year. There is a likelihood the photos were taken

around 2006, he said.

Along with the graphic photos of the girl being abused, there are photos of what appears to be a day care center and of a living area, Wilkinson said.

Among the photos released by the department is one showing five toddlers — their faces obscured by police— at what appears to be a preschool Christmas celebration. Other photos show an infant changing table with a poster of cartoon children above it and white sofa with sheets folded on it and boxes stacked behind it.

Petition has 1,000 signatures collected

PETITION, page 1

was a young teen,” Abdy remembers. “And when I arrived, I could not understand Americans’ accent.”

After graduating high school, his dad bought him a car, and he drove south to study civil engineering at the University Of Miami, a time during which he joined different

Iranian groups to denounce human rights abuse in his home country.

“Iranians here in the US are very rebellious,” Abdy said. “We are all well grouped, and really fight for the human rights in our country.”

Abdy transferred to Miami Dade College to complete his associate’s degree, then finishing his bachelor’s in civil engineering at FIU.

“I was more concerned to talk to the workers than to do my job working as a

senior inspector in a consulting company,” Abdy said. “So after 12 years, I decided to change my career.”

In 2000, Abdy came back to the FIU to do his Ph. D. in sociology and finish his book,

Marxist into Muslims: Prevailing Islamic Ideology in the Middle East, which was published on December 27, 2010.

“Whether you like it or not as a professor, you are forced to learn from the students’ experience,” Abdy said. “They bring different ways of thinking, so there is not a monolithic way of thinking. Each class has at least 15 nationalities.”

Abdy taught his first class, an uncommon upper division class for a rookie professor, when his first professor at the Ph. D. program noticed he was able to teach.

During breaks, Abdy travels to Iran

working on his second book, which he is writing in Persian, about an Iranian dissident.

Now almost 50, Abdy drives daily around south Florida, with the trunk of his car filled with books and a pair of soccer shoes for his Wednesday game, trying to find a public spot to quench his inner necessity to interact with society.

“I have taken four core classes with Dr. Javazadeh. What I most admire about him is his ability to stimulate students to take initiatives to learn knowledge and find truth,” said Viviana

Acosta, a senior sociology major.

“Students can feel the energy and optimism radiating from his teaching.”

Jorge Santa Cruz, a senior journalism major, produced this story in the JOU 3303 Advanced News Writing course taught by Dr. Fred Blevens.

Teacher emphasizes respect for fights

CAPOEIRA, page 1

to jail or getting killed like many of their friends, and still train in Capoeira with

him today.

“Seeing how much he gave back to youth in the community, it inspired me to want to bring Capoeira to my community and wherever I go,” said Tremaine Jones, a student of Miller since 2006.

Despite his many “adoptive” sons, Miller has a real son, Marcello Miller, who is 15 years old, and was so interested in Capoeira as a child that he would watch TV standing on his head.

“That would worry the, you know, family,” he said, laughing. Still living in Minnesota, Miller’s family is very supportive of his passion for Capoeira, but don’t take part in it.

Being a father and a teacher, Miller has had less time to travel, but has had many “adventures” because of Capoeira.

His mastery would invite him to Europe and South and Central America, where he would attend batizado ceremonies, which resemble a baptism into the art of Capoeira where the students are given nicknames and their cords, or belts.

group would travel allowed for adventures, as they would never stay in a hotel, but instead would camp out or stay in the homes of people who also enjoyed Capoeira.

“I’ve always loved travel, never liked being a tourist,” Miller said.

Miller is no longer with his mastery group because of “ego problems.”

Though Capoeira is a martial art, it can also be used to fight and becomes very competitive for some people.

He once took his students to a Brazilian festival and found himself in what he thought was a harmless Capoeira fight, but almost turned violent when his opponent purposely kicked him in the face.

He did not return the unfair violence, and saw it to be a great lesson for his students to learn that it’s important to have respect for fighting. He emphasizes the importance of control in Capoeira and teaches his students to take down their opponents fairly, not with cheap shots.

“When you go to the ocean you have a lot of respect because you know the waves can wash you away,” Miller said.

“But, still, you enjoy it, you know, within the confines of your safety.”

Elizabeth Velez, a senior journalism major, produced this story in the JOU 3303 Advanced News Writing course taught by Dr. Fred Blevens.



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FOOTBALL

SPRING FINALE

Golden Panthers set for spring game

JACKSON WOLEK
Staff Writer

The annual Blue vs. Gold football game taking place this Saturday will be a sample size preview of what we can expect for this upcoming season at FIU. It will feature what we saw from last year's team, along with a new playbook, and a slew of incoming players.

It is still not clear how many spots are actually up for grabs, but the spring practices the players have been a part of, as well as the summer workouts, will help determine the starting lineup for this upcoming season.

"I think the summer really makes or breaks guys because you can tell from day one who's in good shape, and that's one of the challenges for us in the offseason," said Coach Cristobal. "You're not going to win a game with that Friday night speech. You're going to win the game in the offseason."

The area where they bring back some of the most experience and depth is at running back. The Golden Panthers bring back all four runners who helped make FIU the second best running attack in the Sun Belt last year. The list includes Darriet Perry, Darian Mallary, Jeremiah



REBECCA VILLAFANE/THE BEACON

The Golden Panthers close out spring practice with their annual Blue vs. Gold game on April 2.

Harden and Kedrick Rhodes.

"Each one of us has something else to bring to the table. You have speed, you have power and you have agility," Perry said. "You can't just really set your defense up for three running backs." Wesley Carroll will be the starter once again for the Golden Panthers, but this year he is going to be backed up by Jake Medlock and Blaine Dalton.

"I think as a unit were all doing

well with this team," Carroll said. "We can only control making the other ten better that's what we always talk about and I feel like we've done a good job so far."

The wide receiving core is headlined by senior T.Y. Hilton, who chose to skip the NFL draft to stay one more year at FIU. Although the team lost its second most vital option from last year in Greg Ellingson, they still have Wayne Times and Jacob Younger to

fill the void.

Also look for Willis Wright, who only played six games last season, to have an increased role in the offense. "We just have to step up and make more plays now," said Times on losing Ellingson. "We lose a guy but we bring a guy in, so we still put another bullet in the chamber we never stop shooting." The area that

SPRING, page 4

Plenty to follow in last spring outing

It's that time of year again. Spring practice is coming to an end and with it comes the highly anticipated spring football game, where fans will get their first extensive look at the squad that will take the field this fall.

COMMENTARY



JOEL DELGADO

But this annual Blue vs. Gold game this season has quite a different feel than what it has been in previous years.

For the first time, the Golden Panthers are playing their glorified scrimmage match as defending conference champions and the pressure on this team to perform

MATCHUPS, page 4

TENNIS

Win streak extended to nine after win over FGCU

BRANDON WISE
Staff Writer

The Golden Panthers, ranked No. 62 in the nation, defeated Florida Gulf Coast University in a 6-1 victory. FIU extended their win streak to nine matches, the longest it has been since the 2009 season, when they had a fourteen-match streak.

"It means were doing something right," said coach Melissa Applebaum-Dall'au. The team's streak is nothing to scoff at, having only played one close match over the past two months against UNLV.

The matches got started when the team of Guilietta Boha and Rita Maisak had to forfeit due to illness. Having to start out already down a game, the Golden Panthers (10-5) stepped up. The duo of Liset Brito and Maria Spenceley continued to dominate, defeating Iris Rendon and Bettina Botha (8-3). Coach Applebaum-Dall'au loves what she is seeing from her seniors.

"Hard work speaks tons about people. When you put the hard work in and you put the hours in, your confidence level just increases," Applebaum-Dall'au said. "They are at a point now where they work so hard on a day to day basis, I think that confidence level has grown so much

that they believe no matter what the situation, they will come out on top. They are paving the way exceptionally well."

The team of Christine Seredni and Lisa Johnson then clinched the doubles point by defeating Gyanna Mandic and Morgan Bechtel (8-3).

In the singles portion, Brito, who jumped 24 spots to No. 57 in the nation, picked up her ninth consecutive set victory over Bechtel (6-0,6-1).

Despite the jump in the rankings, she still felt a little rusty.

"I have not played in a while," Brito said. "But today I felt good. The girl didn't push me that much, so I still was able to do I wanted to do."

Maria Spenceley picked up another point for the team when she defeated Mandic (6-2, 6-2) to make it 3-1. She has quietly won nine straight matches, matching Brito, and it is an accomplishment that she is very proud of.

"It's the first time I have done that in my four years of college," Spenceley said. "I'm pretty happy that I could end my career like that."

Lisa Johnson clinched the match for the Golden Panthers with her straight set victory over Bettina Botha (7-6[4], 6-4). Guilietta Boha then followed her by defeating Bibiana

Almeida in straight sets (7-6[5], 6-1).

The most intriguing match of the afternoon was Christine Seredni against Iris Rendon. Seredni had to battle back from being down a set, but was able to pull of the upset over what could be considered the Eagles hottest players (4-6, 6-4, 10-4).

QUICK TURNAROUND

The team does not have time to relax, as they will play host to the Southern Methodist Mustangs on Sunday, who are ranked No. 37 in the nation. The match will be a test to see if the team is prepared for what is ahead in the Sun Belt Conference tournament and possibly the NCAA tournament.

Coach Applebaum-Dall'au is looking to end the season on a high note with these next two matches.

"It's a great opportunity for us," Applebaum-Dall'au said. "They are a ranked team with a lot of depth, but I think we have a great opportunity to come out on top in this one."

Spenceley also thinks that this will be a good indicator to determine where the team will be heading down the final stretch of the season.

"Depending on how that goes (SMU and UCF matches)," Spenceley said. "We will know where we stand."



KRISTI CAMARA/THE BEACON

Christine Seredni [above] helped clinch a doubles win over FGCU.

Much of what we see will foreshadow upcoming season

MATCHUPS, page 3

remains high as the expectations of this team continue to rise. It is only spring, but fans can get a good idea of where the team really is and how they have progressed over the course of the offseason.

The team returns most of its starters from that roster, 15 to be exact, but lost several key pieces in the process. It will be intriguing to see some matchups on both the offensive and defensive side of the ball on April 2.

DEFENSIVE BACKS VS. WIDE RECEIVERS

Opposing offenses used to game plan around Anthony Gaitor, trying to avoid throwing the ball in his direction as much as possible. He was able to shut down some of the Sun Belt's top wide outs on several different occasions, including Troy's Jernel Jernigan in last year's pivotal road win against the Trojans.

This year, FIU will be without arguably the best pass defender in program history and will have to fill that void if they are going to repeat as the best defense in the Sun Belt Conference. Jose Cheeseborough and wide-receiver-turner-cornerback Junior Mertile have been receiving

most of the playing time at the corner positions while the coaching staff has been able to see newcomers Richard Leonard and Tevin Blanchard.

The coaching staff has been able to get a look at a number of different cornerbacks over the course of the spring and it will get one final glance this weekend as spring practice comes to a close.

This defensive unit will have its hands full on Saturday, dealing with playmakers like T.Y. Hilton and Wayne Times as they try to stop them from making big plays. Don't be surprised to see Wesley Carroll challenge the defensive backfield and try to find Hilton or Times on a streak.

WESLEY CARROLL VS. JAKE MEDLOCK

Carroll will not be the only quarterback warranting attention during the annual spring game. Backup Jake Medlock, currently occupying the No. 2 spot on the depth chart, has been seen by some as the future at the quarterback position.

He has been seeing a lot snaps this spring and watching him under center will be something to look out for. Carroll, who helped lead a conservative passing game last year, will enter his final season of eligibility after a solid 2010 season. But

do not be surprised to see his eventual successor take a considerable number of snaps over the course of the fall.

That is why it will be intriguing to see how Medlock has developed after a season with the team mostly working behind the scenes to improve. We will find out soon enough how much it has paid off.

LINEBACKERS VS. RUSH OFFENSE

The linebacker corps lost some intensity over the offseason with the departure of Toronto Smith, who led the unit with 91 tackles. But there should be plenty of talent in waiting that will allow the linebackers to remain a key strength for FIU in 2011.

Frequently during the course of last season, former defensive coordinator Geoff Collins would call on the linebackers to apply an ample amount of pressure on opposing offensive lines and that should be no different this fall with Todd Orlando taking over the play calling duties.

Linebackers Winston Fraser and Markeith Russell will be the leading linebackers in 2011 and with Kenneth Dillard and others returning, seeing how they respond to a new coordinator and a shift in leadership will be key.



KRISTI CAMARA/THE BEACON

T.Y. Hilton [above] will provide a big test for defensive backfields.

The rush offense took a major leap forward in 2011 with Darriet Perry and Darian Mallary powering the way. Along with Jeremiah Harden and Kedrick Rhodes in the backfield, this unit should be even better this

season.

Depending on the support they get up front from their offensive linemen, they should be able to be effective this weekend and against defenses this upcoming fall.

Defensive backs making adjustments after key losses

SPRING, page 3

needed the most improving was on the defensive side of the ball.

After losing players like Anthony Gaitor and Toronto Smith, FIU came back strong in an offseason headlined by the hiring of defensive coordinator Todd Orlando and the signing of top prospects Jordan Hunt, Corey Tindal and bringing in Richard

Leonard.

"I think we're adjusting very well," said Jonathan Cyprien. "As a whole team we've always been a family. So losing them, we understand the process and someone else has got to step up." The spring game will see much of the same players that were featured on last year's team, with a couple new faces which you can expect to see a lot of.

"We're going to make sure that ball gets spread around a little bit so they can see some of our new playmakers play a whole lot of football," said Cristobal

When it comes to the scrimmage on Saturday, both players and coaches are still pumped up and Cristobal has just one message for the fans. "We need them here, this is their championship team," Cristobal said.

SOFTBALL

Golden Panthers return home with series vs. Troy

MALCOLM SHIELDS Staff Writer

After taking two out of three games on the road last weekend against North Texas, the Golden Panthers will return home on April 2 to square off against last season's conference tournament runner-up, the Troy Trojans, in a three-game series.

The series will be FIU's last home series before going on a two-week road trip that will pit them against conference champion Louisiana-Lafayette, Louisiana-Monroe, and Florida from the Southeastern Conference.

HOME COOKING

The Golden Panthers are 8-6 at home this year with a 3-0 record versus Sun Belt Conference teams. Last season the Golden Panthers were 8-3 at home versus conference opponents.

The Golden Panthers lost two of three in the series in Troy, Alabama in 2010. The Trojans last visited FIU in 2009, where Troy also took two out of three in that series.

Last year, Jessy Alfonso, Ashley McClain, and Brie Rojas had good series at the plate versus Troy. Alfonso went 5-for-8 in the series

with a homer and three RBI's. McClain went 2-for-7 with a two run home run and Rojas went 2-for-7 with a three-run homer.

Jenn Gniadek made one start against the Trojans and went five innings allowing two runs on five hits and striking out seven in the win.

For Troy, there are few players on the team from last season that have much success against the Golden Panthers. Nikki Hollett was 2-for-9 with two RBI against the Golden Panthers while Hayden Gann went 4-for-6 with three RBI in the three-game series at Troy.

In the pitching circle, Ashlyn Williams is the only Trojan on the pitching staff who made an appearance against the Golden Panthers. Williams was the starting pitcher in both games. She pitched two complete games and defeated the Golden Panthers twice with a 3.00 earned run average. She also struck out at total of nineteen total batters in the two games.

SCOUTING TROY

Troy comes into the weekend series with a 20-16 overall record and a 1-5 record in Sun Belt Conference play. The Trojans have five hitters in their lineup with a .300 average

or better. Nikki Hollett and Hayden Gann lead the team in batting with .396 and .371 averages, respectively.

Hollett's impressive .904 slugging percentage is one of the best in the Sun Belt Conference and she also has the power to go deep, hitting a team-best 16 home runs to go along with 44 RBI this season.

Gann is second on the team with seven home runs and 27 RBI for the Trojans. The Golden Panthers are hoping to avoid allowing many base runners during this home series.

The Trojans come into the series with a three pitcher rotation led by Ashlyn Williams, who has anchored the pitching staff this season.

Although she has a record of 8-10, she has a solid 2.44 ERA and leads the Trojans in strikeouts with 159 while holding opposing batters to a .189 batting average.

Morgan Grove and Hayley Hutchins round out the Trojans pitching staff. Grove and Hutchins have ERAs of 2.84 and 3.68, respectively.

Visit our web site for results from FIU's doubleheader vs. FGCU on March 30 and more.

www.FIUSM.com

SLIDING IN



Joel Capote [right] slides into third base during the final game of a three-game home series Western Kentucky on March 27. The Golden Panthers are preparing for a road conference series at Louisiana-Monroe from April 1-3.

The joke's on you on April Fool's

ALFREDO APARICIO
Staff Writer

Everyone is a fool on April first. While not a legal holiday, April Fool's Day is widely recognized as the day when everyone can be the victim or creator of a prank.

In some countries, such as New Zealand, pranks last until noon and anyone who passes the deadline is called an "April Fool". In the United States, however, jokes last all day.

The earliest record of April Fool's Day pranks goes all the way back to 1392 in the *Canterbury Tales* and the tradition has survived all the way to the present.

Yaima Suarez, 20, a sophomore psychology major recalls a prank a few years back that involved a horrible joke.

"Someone told me they had crashed and I got super worried but it all turned out to be a joke," she said. "It was really lame."

Suarez herself tries to remember the day every year to avoid being pranked.

"I think it could be fun," said Suarez, "but it's definitely not for everyone."

Kristen Möller, a sophomore mass communications major, sees the day as one of fun because it allows people to break out of their monotonous routines by playing pranks on people.

"I would celebrate the day if I could think of awesome pranks but sadly I have yet to think of something worthwhile," says Möller.

"I just act as a bystander instead even though I have never seen any pranks done before either."

Möller uses April Fool's Day as a way to poke some fun at her friend, Franklin Paramo, as the day lands on his birthday.

Other students view the holiday as dumb even though they have participated in the past.

Andrea Suarez, a sophomore nursing major, once wrote a fake secret admirer letter to her boyfriend that seemed to come from his co-worker who had an intense crush on him.

"Sadly the prank was never completed because he left work early that day," said Suarez. "I don't continue to celebrate it though because I'm just too gullible for it."

Suarez remembers the funniest prank she has seen from the days she used to work at Sports Authority.

"One of my co-workers hid behind empty shoe boxes and they told another person to get something from there," she said. "She jumped out and completely scared my other co-worker."

Pranks are just one of the many activities done on April Fool's Day around

the world, as other countries have developed their own traditions for April Fool's Day.

The Flemish tradition includes children locking teachers out of their schools and parents from their homes and only letting them in if they promise to bring sweets the same day or the next.

In France and French-speaking Canada, the day includes poisson d'avril, which literally means "April's fish", and involves attaching a paper fish to the victim's back without being noticed.

Rossmery Galan, a sophomore elementary education major, has seen the power of a good paper prank on April Fool's Day.

"I think the funniest prank I have ever seen was 'newspapering' a teacher's room in high school. A couple of her old students got into her class and covered everything in newspaper even the pencils," said Galan.

"It was hilarious to see her frustration but she enjoyed the fun either way."

Whether the pranks are meek or complex, April Fool's Day is a day that celebrates making a mockery of others and getting away with it.

Simply enjoying the wonder of it is to have pure, unpretentious entertainment.

CHOCOLATE RAIN



ALEXIA ESCALANTE/THE BEACON

Sophomore Naveeta Ramkissoon, who is studying biomedical engineering, dips fruit in the chocolate fountain at the GC pit courtesy of SPC on March 29.

REEL TO REEL: SPC FRIDAY NIGHT MOVIES

Johnny Depp only redeeming quality of 'Pirates' franchise

My last memories of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise are fragmented, to say the least. I hovered in and out of consciousness one rainy May afternoon after being dragged to the theater to watch the third film in the series, *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End*.

What I do remember was being shocked at the reverence it held towards Captain Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp). In one scene, he hallucinates about commanding a ship with a crew entirely comprised of copies of himself. Yes, we get it. The audience loves Johnny Depp. It was an exercise in narcissism of the first order.

Eventually I was able to rewatch the film

but with great regret. *At World's End*, along with the second film in the series, *Dead Man's Chest*, was an unequivocal disaster: overlong, over-bloated and increasingly incoherent in its plot.

Revisiting the first film, however, *The Curse of the Black Pearl*, I was shocked at how well it works, primarily the humor, teetering between the macabre, slapstick and swashbuckling. The embodiment of all three of these features is Johnny Depp.

Take for example his entrance. Jack Sparrow, pirate, playboy and all around scoundrel sails into the harbor high atop the mast of his ship, looking like Keith Richards and most likely smelling of body odor. Behind him is a vast expanse of ocean.

He sails into port on a listing, rickety

PIRATES, page 6

THIS WEEKEND

FRIDAY, APR. 1

HATHA YOGA



WHEN: 1:30-2:30 p.m.
WHERE: Behind the organic garden

SUMMER VACATION STAR PARTY

WHEN: 8 p.m.
WHERE: MMC CP145

O, MIAMI



WHEN: 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$30, \$20 for students
WHERE: Boater's Grill

8TH ANNUAL SAGE FUNDRAISING RECEPTION & SILENT AUCTION

SAGE is an annual scholarship that grants scholarships to exemplary international and transfer students at FIU.

WHEN: 6-9 p.m.
WHERE: BBC WUC Ballroom

NATIONAL SECURITY SYMPOSIUM

WHEN: 7 a.m.-6 p.m.
WHERE: MMC RDB 1000 and the COL Atrium

BAKING WITH CLASS

WHEN: 1 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$110 per session
WHERE: Biltmore Culinary Academy

SATURDAY, APR. 2

VANESSA WILLIAMS



WHEN: 8:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$95
WHERE: Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts

LUNCH FOR THE HOMELESS AT CAMILLUS HOUSE

WHEN: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: Camillus House 726 NE 1st Avenue, Miami, FL

EMBA INFORMATION SESSION

WHEN: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
WHERE: MMC CBC 152

SPRING LUAU

WHEN: 7-10 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: MMC Everglades Lounge

LAS MERCEDES REFORMATION CHARITY EVENT



WHEN: 7-10 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: MMC GC Ballrooms

MIAMI RIVERDAY

WHEN: 11 a.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: Lummus Park Historic District

JERRY RIVERA

WHEN: 9 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$5-\$50
WHERE: Dade County Fairgrounds

JAMIE KENNEDY

WHEN: 8:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$25
WHERE: Miami Improv

SUNDAY, APR. 3

SOUTH FLORIDA HISTORY CHALLENGE



WHEN: 2 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free with admission to museum (\$8)
WHERE: HistoryMiami

SUPER BOWL PARTIES

WHEN: 6:30 p.m.
WHERE: Miccosukee Resort & Gaming

AMERICA & DAVE MASON



WHEN: 4 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$15-\$50
WHERE: Magic City Casino

SIGMA STUDY SESSIONS

A place for students to come and complete their work or study for any upcoming tests, quizzes, etc.

WHEN: 5-7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free
WHERE: Graham Center, in front of Bustelo and Burger King

ECO-FASHION FOR A BETTER WORLD

WHEN: 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$100 general admission, \$175 VIP
WHERE: New World Center

If you are interested in having an event featured in the calendar, contact: calendar@fiusm.com

FISTFULS OF TECH!

Apple not the only competitor in “post-PC” world

Ofentimes my column has to do with something Apple-related, usually a decision the company made and how that decision will impact the technology market. But instead of analyzing Apple's choice to categorize its tablets as “post-PC” devices from Apple's perspective, let's do it from the perspective of its competitors.



COLUMNIST

JORGE VALENS

When Apple Chief Executive Officer Steve Jobs announced the iPad 2, he declared it the device that would usher in the “post-PC” world of computing.

With the various desktop-like abilities these devices are capable of, Apple is asking users whether or not they need a PC anymore.

“In this new world, Apple no longer has to compete on specs and features, nor does it want to,” said former Engadget Editor in Chief

Joshua Topolsky. “There is no Mac vs. PC here -- only “the future” versus “the past.” It won't be a debate about displays, memory, or wireless options -- it will be a debate about the quality of the experience. Apple is not just eschewing the spec conversation in favor of a different conversation -- it's rendering those former conversations useless.”

Apple is not only trying to dominate the tablet market, it is reshaping it to suit its needs.

But let's jump over to the new entries in the market that are going to try their damndest to decimate Apple's marketing speak; Apple will be facing stiff competition this year.

First we have Hewlett-Packard, who recently acquired Palm. The Palm Touch Pad is physically similar to the iPad, except it is much more powerful. It runs HP's tweaked version of webOS and the company is launching a full attack against Apple. If anyone can do it, HP can.

What makes the TouchPad and HP's Pre 3

and Veer smart phones competitive is that they are very much entrenched in the cloud and offer smart ways of communicating with each other.

The devices can all connect together simply by tapping your Pre 3 or Veer to your touch pad to transfer information. You can even continue working on projects you started on your TouchPad and vice versa. HP calls the technology Touchstone, which is a spin off of their induction-charging tech, so now HP's devices not only charge up by contact but also transfer information.

Bigger picture, HP has the best of all the competitors in the mobile space: it has an open operating system which is just closed enough to ensure quality and webOS is a strong and refined operating system offering innovative features.

With HP's push to put webOS on all its desktops, they are really forging not so much a “post-PC” world but a world that includes the PC in a single experience.

Android's entry in the tablet world, Honey-

comb, is promising but still early. You can tell that Google is really refining the user interface and that this might be the sneak peak of how the future of Android will look.

But right now Honeycomb is still closed source and, with the limited amount of devices on the market, it will be hard to tell whether or not this makes an impact this year.

Ultimately, the “post-PC” era shouldn't be about one device. It should be about how users can have a consistent experience no matter what device they are on.

One day I want to be able to surf the Internet, play a game or edit a story on my laptop and be able to seamlessly continue that experience on my phone or tablet.

HP has the right idea in this respect, but whether or not they can conquer Apple and its “post-PC” challenge remains to be seen.

Fistfuls of Tech! is a weekly column on all things technology.

Rush shines in supporting role in SPC Friday night movie

PIRATES, page 5

old craft and glances at the skeletons of pirates hanging as a warning to other men in a similar line of work.

Throughout the entire film Sparrow doesn't walk so much as alternate between a swagger and a prance, many times with this quality being blurred. He's much like a feline throughout the entire work, amusing yet cunning.

If this reads like an ode to Depp, it's because it should. The movie sorely misses him when he's not there, resorting to its plot and that is a

frightening prospect.

It's all about this blacksmith named Will Turner (Orlando Bloom) who was discovered drifting at sea when he was a boy with a pirate's medallion hanging around his neck. And there's this girl, see. She, Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightley), is the daughter of the British governor of Port Royal, a British base in the Caribbean, whose blood is thought to lift a curse placed on the entirety of the crew of the Black Pearl. The crew are undead after unleashing a vicious Aztec curse.

The only character that can command the

screen as well as Depp is Geoffrey Rush playing Barbossa, the current captain of the Black Pearl. Rush embraces his role with equal gusto, playing Barbossa as the slimy, old, vicious pirate.

This certainly wasn't the “adult” sea-faring adventure that hit screens when it was released in 2003. That honor went to the incredibly authentic and ass-numbingly boring Master and Commander.

The film is tongue-in-cheek. It makes a point to emphasize just how evil Captain Barbossa is, “so evil that hell itself spat him back out.” And if you didn't catch that the first time, it's repeated

to you again literally five seconds later. The film understands that sense of pirate lore and folk tales but pokes fun at them.

This is all fun until you've realized that the movie is dangerously overlong. And, holy hell, Knightly and Bloom have no chemistry whatsoever. All in all, the film is about two swordfights and one naval engagement too long.

Reel to Reel is a weekly column on films. Look for it every Friday. This week's special edition column reviews SPC's Friday Night Movie.

10AM - 3PM: 4/11 (MMC) & 4/12-13 (BBC)

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Campus protest zones undermine free speech rights

KELLY MALAMBRI
Staff Writer

As many know, the Biscayne Bay Campus is much smaller than the Modesto Maidique Campus, and as of late it seems to be being treated quite differently because of this fact. On March 10, 2011 *The Beacon* reported that at BBC, protesting is only allowed in the small, specifically the area limited to the space by the flagpoles in front of the parking lot.

While this area is at the center of the campus, the limits on students' right to assemble put in place by the University are very rare, overbroad and infringe upon students' First Amendment rights.

Many argue that on the smaller campus, these limits should be put in place to prevent any disruption from occurring near classrooms, and this has been the reasoning behind the advent of the protesting zones in the first place. However, as *The Beacon* also noted, an overwhelming amount of universities do not have these restrictions, and protesters are able to demonstrate

more freely. Essentially, if the rules put into practice at BBC were justifiable, it seems more universities would have adopted them in order to protect class time from those interruptions, too. However, this is not the case, and the restrictions are more broad than necessary.

The rule implemented at BBC specifically limits the locations available to protesters and does not specify that certain content in a protest be prohibited, making the rule seemingly content-neutral. However, other types of loud, disruptive speech are allowed on campus during class hours.

For example, upon taking classes at the Marine Science building, I have heard swim meets or practices and the cheering that follows from inside the building. It is questionable that only protesting is prohibited from such areas because of its disruptiveness, but events such as these, just feet away from the building, are permitted, even though they cause the same problems. Activities such as these, and those that can be heard from across the bay that frequently occur, invalidate this reasoning

“Pushing students away from the areas in which there is a potential for controversy infringes upon students' First Amendment Rights.”

behind the implementation of the rule.

Protesting in a confined area defeats the purpose of such demonstrations. Using the Marine Science building as an example again, if someone wished to protest a practice of research being conducted at the bay, the audience at the Marine Science building who the speakers aim to reach would be increasingly harder to communicate with. The rule thus unreasonably burdens students' right to communicate their protests in peaceful manner. The speakers, for example, will not reach students who enter the Academic Center Buildings I and II or the

Marine Science building from the south side of the University and do not cross through the Wolf Center.

Pushing students away from the areas in which there is a potential for controversy infringes upon students' First Amendment rights. Protests are not meant to be quiet pleas for change, but rather an “in-your-face” demand for immediate reform, whose message is intended to reach all of those that it affects. To repress the freedom of students and to demand such reform for unjustified reasons is clearly a violation of BBC's students' First Amendment rights.

Anonymous gossip boards an unhealthy student diversion

KATRINA BRUNO
Contributing Writer

Lately, I feel as if I involuntarily boarded the DeLorean and have been sent back to the golden days of high school, where gossip and mean girls reigned supreme. Its hard not to feel like a 16-year-old again every time I hear another rumor being passed around our campus, especially when it's stemming from an anonymous website.

In case you haven't heard, College Anonymous Message Board, usually referred to as College ACB, is a website where students are free to gossip and rant about fellow classmates and faculty on campus. Like the now-defunct Juicycampus.com, this successful protégé is making a name for itself. The University's student population seems to love the website, with over 90 pages filled with gossip, injurious comments and remarks.

Not only is this website unnecessary, but I believe that its existence and use is terrible for the University. The website taints the way the outside world views the maturity and level-headedness of our student body, but more important than anything, puts the safety of our students at risk.

Collegeacb.com has allowed individuals to create posts about anything they want and offers an opportunity for anyone to respond anonymously without consequences or repercussions.

Some topics from the University's *collegeacb.com* page bash and name-drop women and men who are perceived to be “slutty,” releases the names of student porn stars and strippers, accuses others of drug addictions, criticizes certain individuals because of their weight, makes racist

With the emergence of these sites, students have the opportunity to gossip about their fellow peers without realizing the significant damage it can do to another's self-esteem or reputation.

remarks about African Americans and Hispanics and offers specific fictional or factual stories about our peers.

While I believe there are positive aspects to anonymous forums, especially in college where we are encouraged to think, feel, and express ourselves freely, I believe when the anonymity is abused, it should be possible to strip away the anonymity and reveal who the bully in an effort to correct the situation or stop any potential harm.

College students spend much of their time communicating online, through Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, instant messaging and email, so it is easy to understand how quick these websites are able to be shared from person to person so quickly. With the emergence of these sites, students have the opportunity to gossip about their fellow peers without realizing the significant damage it can do to another's self-esteem or reputation. It seems that although *collegeacb.com* is looked down upon by a significant number of students, there are still many, unfortunately, who believe it is acceptable to participate in this type of callous gossip.

It's important to take a step out of your shoes and into another every time you click “send” and potentially cause harm to another student psychologically or physically. Cyberbullying is potentially very dangerous. According to statistics reported by ABC News, “nearly 30 percent of students are either bullies or victims, and 160,000 kids stay home from school every day because of bullying.”

There have been many reported cases that show children, teens and adults alike going as far as committing suicide. Our University should be a place where no one is afraid to be who he or she is and a place where one is free from cruel and malicious treatment on the web.

Bystander effect proof of selfishness, unreliability

SANAH FAROKH
Contributing Writer

When we are attacked, one thing we should be able to rely on is someone, anyone to intervene. More often than not, spectators do nothing to prevent or stop injustice when they have the full capability to do so. Not every situation involves an onlooker who is able to help, but if there are people laughing at the spectacle rather than helping the victim, then there is a definite problem.

On March 7, 2011, Detroit resident, Justin Alesna, 23, was verbally and physically attacked by a man in a gas station for standing too close in line. *The Detroit Free Press* reported that Alesna mentioned he was gay, so the assailant decided to punch Alesna twice in the face. According to *Michigan Live*, when Alesna pleaded for the clerk to call the police, he refused. “He didn't want to deal with the mess,” and witnesses laughed at the brawl.

Situations like these where the innocent are attacked and onlookers refrain from interfering is called the Bystander Effect. Psychology writer Kendra Cherry reports that the greater the numbers of witnesses, the less prone people are to intervene. According to a 2002 study by Dr. Mark Levine, observers are also more likely to take action if they can associate with the victim. The alarming truth is that, by and large, nothing is done by civilians to help another because we are so focused on ourselves, and we all know that this is true in one way or another.

Other than that, since it is easier

to not take responsibility for our own actions, it is even harder to be liable for someone else, thus allow the expectation that another bystander will jump in- “the diffusion of responsibility.” Passersby intentionally do not acknowledge the conditions because it is “insignificant.”

The dilemma that constantly occurs is whether or not we intend to do nothing. We either do not care for others because we care too much about ourselves or we are more comfortable following others despite our moral consciousness. Like a domino effect, if a bystander happens to help, on a rare occasion, a victim who was injured at a local gas station, metro or even in our Blue and Gold community, as soon as one person helps, everyone else decides to come to the rescue. Suddenly, everyone is a Good Samaritan.

We care for the animals that are tortured, so we join PETA. We care for the environment, so we get a Prius. We care for people that are affected by natural disasters, have disabilities, lack economic income, so we donate money. Our humanitarian efforts just happen to stop when we find a situation where we can be hands-on, reach out to help someone right in front of our eyes because we just rather not get our hands sticky.

I would hope that someone else's life is important enough to save. It is incomprehensible that people would remain a passerby if they had the chance to intervene. I would like to think that this would not happen in a modern “moral” civilization.

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SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Have something on your mind? Send your thoughts in (500 words maximum) to opinion@fiusm.com or drop by our offices at either GC 210 or WUC 124. With your letter, be sure to include your name, major and year.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Editorials are the unified voice of the editorial board, which is composed of the editor in chief, management, and the editors of each of the five sections. The Beacon welcomes any letters (500 words maximum) regarding or in response to its editorials. Send them to opinion@fiusm.com.



BRAZIL

Brazil law boosts grandparents visitation rights

A bill that strengthens grandparents' right to visit their grandchildren when the parents are divorced took effect Tuesday in Brazil.



HAITI

Results of presidential election postponed

Haitians will have to wait at least a few more days to learn the preliminary results of their presidential election because of alleged irregularities and fraud uncovered at the vote-counting center.



CUBA

Carter to end Cuba trip meeting with dissidents

Former President Jimmy Carter planned to meet with Cuban dissidents following two days of talks with President Raul Castro and religious leaders in a trip he hopes will boost strained U.S.-Cuban relations

Student cares for family while hiding his true self

BERTHA ALIS

Contributing Writer

As the guest relations coordinator at the Marriott International in Miami Beach, Matthew Lage, 23, lays red rose petals over the bed and floor of the honeymooner's suite and reserves the romantic dinner at a fancy restaurant for the couple celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

At his full-time job, Lage has the control to make every detail flawless, but when he comes home at night to care for his disabled mother and sister, all the power vanishes.

Lage is a part-time senior at the University's School of Hospitality Tourism and Management. What makes it even harder for him is that he lives a double life, hiding his sexuality from his family.

"After a long day at work, my mother wants all of my attention,

and it is exhausting," Lage said. "If I ignore her, she will come into my room and start telling me all the gossip of the day, what the neighbors did and how many times her ex-boyfriend called her. I can't ignore her because she needs someone to listen to her and I am all she has."

Lage lives with sister Elizabeth Lage and mom Isabel Lage in a small house in Hialeah. He has legal control of their finances because of their disabilities.

Elizabeth was declared disabled as a child when doctors noticed she was not developing at a normal rate. At age 35, she has the mental capacity of an average 10-year-old.

Isabel, 58, started having mental health issues after her relationship with Lage's stepfather ended three years ago.

Depression and anxiety started taking over her mind, and Lage had to

make the decision to take his mother to a psychologist where, after a long year, was declared disabled as well.

"Those 12 months were the longest of my life," he said. "My mom shaved her head. She did not want to leave the house, and if she did, she would have constant panic attacks. I was scared for her and for my sister because I couldn't always be there with them. I couldn't just drop out of school and quit work. It was hard."

He has had to deal with what he calls his mom's "craziness" all of his life. When he realized he was gay during middle school, he found a girlfriend to hide his sexual preference from her.

"My mom couldn't know I was gay. I was scared of what she would do if she found out, so I hid it from her as long as I could. I had that same girlfriend until I started high school," Lage said.

His lie worked well until one day he was caught by police in a Wal-Mart parking lot "doing things" with his then-boyfriend. His mother was called and she was heartbroken.

"I thought it was a prank," Isabel said. "It just couldn't be my Matthew; he is not gay, I kept telling myself he just can't be."

After that day, Lage had no freedom. Isabel thought that if she could keep him home and check his calls, emails and friends, she could change her son.

"I was 18 years old and basically on house arrest, but I found ways around it because I didn't want to argue with her," Lage says.

Lage used his best-friend Stephanie as his third wheel whenever he wanted to go out on a date. His mom trusted her and when he was with her, he was allowed to go out.

"His mom would call me every

time we went out to make sure I was with him," Stephanie said. "She would then ask me who was around, and she would remind me how much she trusted me with her baby. I remember there was one day I couldn't go with Matt on a date to the movies. It was like midnight when I heard knocking at my door; it was him with his mom on the phone begging me to tell her he was with me."

Lage continued to cover up his real life from his mom because he always felt with time, she would accept him.

Bertha Alis, a senior journalism major, produced this story in the JOURNAL 3303 Advanced News Writing course taught by Dr. Fred Blevens.

Visit our web site for the rest of this story and other web exclusive content.

www.FIUSM.com

MARINE SCIENCE

Conservation act aids shark research

DEBORAH SOUVERAIN

Staff Writer

Viciously stripped of their fins, in a process known as finning, many sharks find themselves helplessly sinking to the bottom of the ocean and left for dead to fulfill the demand for shark fin soup.

Scientists surmise approximately 72 million sharks are killed each year due to finning, leaving 1/3 of the shark population endangered of extinction.

Sharks are often harvested in nets or caught on long lines, regardless of size or species. Thereafter fishermen either stab or club the shark in order to disarm the animal, the shark's fins are then cut off and the live shark is thrown back into the water.

In efforts to curtail vast shark killings across the nation on President Barack Obama signed H.R. 81:International Fisheries Agreement Clarification Act into law on Jan. 4, significantly strengthening shark conservation both nationally and internationally.

Congresswomen Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU) first introduced the act in the House and Senator John Kerry (D-MA) introduced later in the Senate. The new Shark Conservation Act amends the High Seas Driftnet Fishing Moratorium Protection Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to improve the conservation of sharks.

The new law requires all vessels to retain sharks with their fins attached; therefore fishermen will be required to keep the bodies, which, apart from fins, are largely inedible and not valuable. Having to hold the body on-board fishermen will have less incentive to fish for sharks or keep them when accidentally caught.

"Shark meat is very dangerous, because it contains a lot of mercury," said Michael Heithaus, director of the School of Environment, Arts and Society.

Heithaus has done extensive research on the ecological role of large sharks in both Australia and Florida. Using the Western Australia seagrass ecosystem known as Shark bay for the past 14 years, Heithaus and his colleagues have observed predator-prey interactions with a special focus on Tiger Sharks and how ongoing reductions in their population are likely to impact marine communities.

"We have witnessed some shark populations decline as much as 90 percent along the North American coast. These populations may never recover," said Heithaus.

The law allows the United States to block seafood imports from countries which permit shark finning thus aiding international shark conservation efforts.

For years sharks have been slaughtered for shark liver oil, shark cartilage for pseudo cancer cures, their teeth, jaws, and skin

MEET YOUR CANDIDATES



NED CHANDLER/THE BEACON

Pablo Haspel, at-large senator for the Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus and running for Honors College senator (far right), promotes himself as and the upcoming elections to students along with Angelena Adams, SGC-BBC elections commissioner (near right) on March 30 in Panther Square.

for shark leather shoes and belts; however, despite being banned in the United States since 2000, shark finning has been the most pervasive issue in the conservation of sharks.

The rising demand for shark fin soup - which can be sold for \$300 or more a pound - is attributed to China's burgeoning middle class. A delicacy in many Asian cultures, shark fin soup is a symbol of affluence. Costing up to \$100 a bowl the dish is often served at special occasions such as weddings.

However, the shark fin has no flavor at all and is used primarily

to add texture to the dish.

Although the new law hopes to reduce the number of sharks caught strictly for their fins, little can be done unless similar laws are passed in the international community.

In Hawaii it is illegal to possess or distribute shark fins and countries such as Maldives and Honduras have outlawed shark fishing. However, finning is still legal in Indonesia, the world's largest shark-catching region.

"The new law is a great step towards improving conservation efforts; however, many sharks

swim into international waters. Laws such as this one need to be implemented by international institutions as well if we hope to see a substantial decline in the number of sharks being killed annually," says Heithaus.

Sharks are top-predators and play a vital role in marine ecosystems; a role they have been playing for over 400 million years. Losing their influence on marine ecosystems may destroy food chains of the entire marine ecosystem, cause an imbalance in predator-prey interactions as well as affect human fisheries.