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VACCINATION EDUCATION



JASMINE ROMERO/THE BEACON

Senior Lecturer and General Chemistry Coordinator Uma Swamy leads a discussion on autism and the importance of vaccines at the Tuesday Roundtable on Feb. 17.

University students protest FIUPD militarization

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The University's Police Department has been expanding its military equipment.

Police militarization, the act of small police departments acquiring dangerous and unnecessary weaponry from the military, has expanded in the past two decades nationwide.

In various cities, local police departments have gained weapons such as M16s, large rifles used in war; armored cars, better known as MRAPs—Mine-Resistant Ambush Protection—grenade launchers and tanks. In the last couple of years, the FIU Police Department received 50 M16 assault rifles and an armored truck.

The 1033 program issued by the Defense Department allows departments to receive these kinds of military hardware.

According to CNN, the program has transferred \$4.3 billion in military equipment to local police forces since 1996, all in response to the war on drugs. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the government made additional

equipment available to local and state departments.

The program was originally implemented for economic reasons.

According to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1990 and 1991, it is more costly for the government to warehouse this type of machinery while it's not being used. So, instead, the government makes it

U.S. military bases [because] on paved streets in the United States, it's actually unsafe—they tear up the streets and have a high roll-over potential," said expert Radley Balko in an interview with CNN.

Balko is the author of the book "The Rise of the Warrior Cop" and a reporter for the Washington Post who presented at the University on Feb. 12.

“It's this fear of this highly salient, disturbing event that is propelling this heavy arming of the police, and people in schools wanting to arm up, too, in case of school shootings.

Noah Weisbord
Professor
FIU Law

available to police departments at low costs.

When an interview was requested, the FIUPD never responded.

"The army itself in a newsletter even recommended against using MRAP's, even at

Balko spoke of the harm police militarization brings and pointed out that it's unnecessary because the chance of a police officer dying on duty is about the same as a civilian getting murdered in a large U.S. city.

Noah Weisbord, a professor at

the University's School of Law, also commented.

"There's something about an atmosphere of violence now that connects the wars with these racialized events in Ferguson and in New York City, and it ties in with the observation that Radley makes—[but] these fears are misguided," he said. "It's this fear of this highly salient, disturbing event that is propelling this heavy arming of the police, and people in schools wanting to arm up, too, in case of school shootings."

Two University law students, Kaplin Ocbe and Bobby Joe Bracy, Jr., are petitioning FIUPD from obtaining these weapons. They feel police militarization on campus will constrict students' freedom of speech and assembly.

"We're asking why they need it," Ocbe said. "We're only ever going to see these weapons when there's [an] organized effort by students on campus and the police want to stop it."

Ocbe and Bracy are members of the Florida Student Union, an organization that aims to build student power.

Last semester, the Florida Student Union drafted a statement in opposition to the militarization

of the police and delivered a letter to FIUPD stating their formal disagreement.

Currently, the Union is seeking other organizations to support the cause. It also plans to deliver another letter on March 3 with this support. A petition campaign is currently being conducted for interested individuals to sign.

A panel event on Feb. 24 is also scheduled to expand public knowledge.

If nothing comes of this, the students plan to rally sometime in April.

"We're involved in this campaign seeking the demilitarization of our campus police because if we don't, then the next generation of students will never know a campus that isn't militarized," Ocbe said. "To them, it will be normal."

Bracy, a third-year law student, agrees with this and believes that it's important to raise awareness.

"I think a lot of people are aware of police militarization... but the awareness we're really trying to bring attention to is awareness of student power," Bracy said. "Students need to own awareness of the power to stop this."

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

Turkey says it’s reached accord with US on training Syrian rebels, but not on who enemy is

The United States and Turkey will soon sign an accord to train and equip at least 2,000 Syrian fighters this year, but the two NATO allies have been unable to agree on what enemy the Syrians will be preparing to fight, Turkish officials said Tuesday.

Tanju Bilgic, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, said the memorandum of understanding will permit the training of moderate rebels to

begin next month. The training site previously announced is Kirsehir-Hirfani, in central Anatolia.

Despite six weeks of talks, the two sides couldn’t agree on whether to train the Syrians to fight the Islamic State extremists, the U.S. priority, or the Assad regime, the Turkish preference. “It’s open,” said a senior Turkish diplomat, who could not be identified because he was not authorized to speak on the record.

Islamic State’s beheadings of Egyptians could draw West back into Libya

For nearly four years, the West has largely stayed on the sidelines as Libya descended into post-revolution chaos. Now the beheadings of a group of Egyptian Christians at the hands of the Islamic State group could draw the international community back into the densely complex tangle of fighting in the oil-rich North African nation.

Egypt, seeking retribution for the cruelly cinematic execution of 21 Coptic men who had gone to Libya to

work as laborers, carried out at least two waves of airstrikes Monday in neighboring Libya. The warplanes targeted what Egypt said were training camps and weapons caches belonging to a Libyan offshoot of Islamic State, which in recent months has made inroads in several parts of the country, seizing on the power vacuum left by the chaotic but so far inconclusive struggle among an array of militias.

Despite grisly executions, expanded campaign against Islamic State seems unlikely

In the space of two weeks, two grotesque executions by the Islamic State, the first the immolation of a Jordanian pilot held in Syria and the second the beheading earlier this week of 21 Egyptian guest workers in Libya, have dragged America’s two most militarily competent Arab allies into what appears to be an

expanding regional campaign against the self-proclaimed caliphate.

But the deeper involvement of Jordan and Egypt in the fight against the Islamist radicals seems at this juncture unlikely to lead to an expanded campaign by the United States and other members of the anti-Islamic State coalition.

Research conference to show undergraduate work

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University students will soon get the opportunity to showcase their research projects.

This semester, the University’s Honors College will be hosting its first annual Undergraduate Research Conference.

According to Allen Varela, the undergraduate research coordinator for the Honors College, recruiters from universities like the University of Pennsylvania and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University will be attending the conference.

“This would be a wonderful opportunity for students,” Varela said, “they can show [visiting universities] the research that they are currently doing....A lot of graduate schools like to see what students are doing in terms of research, as of right now, when they apply and what they plan to do in the future.”

The College will present a multi-disciplinary conference that enforces the fact that research can be found in any field of study.

Varela states that projects from all academic disciplines are encouraged and accepted for participation in the conference. Students are allowed to present works of art such as paintings, sculptures and musical compositions, among others.

All Broward College, Miami Dade College and

University undergraduate students are able to participate in the conference. In order for the students’ research to be conducted, the students need to be mentored by a University faculty member. The actual research project could be led by either the student or the faculty member with whom the student was working.

Students interested in showcasing their research at the conference need to submit an abstract, a brief synopsis about the project.

Abstracts will be accepted until Feb. 20.

Varela is excited about the conference and looks forward to two specific research presentations by students Brian Matilla and Gabriela Goldberg.

Brian Matilla, a senior majoring in atmospheric sciences and meteorology, was mentored by Haiyan Jiang, an associate professor at the University.

Matilla’s research presentation is titled, “Mapping the Lighting Distribution in Tropical Cyclones,” and according to Varela, his research is based on weather and topography.

Gabriela Goldberg, a junior majoring in chemistry with a minor in nutrition, was mentored by Dr. Douglas Kalman, an adjunct professor. Her research focuses on dietetics and nutrition and is titled, “Do various snacks affect mood states?: A prospective, randomized, parallel group clinical trial.”

Goldberg is testing 40 subjects with controlled

diets that emphasize four different groups separately—carbohydrates, protein, sweets and fruits and vegetables.

“I have my chemistry background and I am really interested in the chemicals in foods, like the different structures and how they relate to the brain because, the brain, people don’t really know much about it,” she said.

Goldberg is also interested in how these diet and lifestyle changes may be able to revolutionize how mood disorders, like bipolar disorder, are approached. She states that these changes are much more practical and don’t carry the side effects that drugs used for such disorders do.

“If there is any chemical that is in food that can be extracted later and be natural, that’s what I’m trying to get at,” Goldberg said.

Students like Alexander Rodichkin, a sophomore majoring in biology, look forward to the possibility of participating in such conferences and are excited to see the research conducted by their peers.

“I’m excited to see the work of other undergraduate students at this research conference,” Rodichkin said.

The conference is free and open to the public.

It will be held at the GC Ballrooms from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on March 17 and 18. For a more detailed schedule, visit the Honors College website at honors.fiu.edu/research.

Female sea turtle lays eggs in South Florida

DAVID FLESHLER
Sun Sentinel
TNS

A female leatherback turtle weighing hundreds of pounds crawled onto Singer Island last week, becoming the first known sea turtle to lay eggs in South Florida this year.

Nesting season officially begins March 1, when seasonal lighting ordinances take effect along the coast, requiring residents and businesses to shield or dim lights to prevent them from scaring off female turtles or disorienting their hatchlings.

The early arrival of a leatherback, one of the rarer turtle species, could foreshadow what biologists hope will be another year of resurgence for reptiles that were once turned into steaks and soup. Sea turtle nesting counts have soared in recent years, despite the gauntlet of shrimp nets, longlines and other hazards the sea creatures face on the open ocean.

Green turtle nesting set a record in Florida in 2013, with 36,195 nests, a huge jump from the 10,000 seen in typical years. Since they nest on a two-year cycle, biologists are wondering whether this year will set another record. But with the increase in turtle numbers, there has been an increase in the number approached

by people, which could scare them off or otherwise interfere with their ability to nest.

“As we’re getting more animals, we’re getting more encounters,” said Robbin Trindell, head of the marine turtle program of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. “We’re starting to see more reports of people going out to beaches to look at them and really cause stress to the animals. Florida has worked to do the right thing to keep these species recovering. We have to be careful now that we’re seeing results.”

The number of nests increases sharply as you head north. There were 518 nests in Miami-Dade County in 2013, 2,974 in Broward County and 25,711 in Palm Beach County.

Palm Beach County forms the southern end of the most important beaches in the western hemisphere for threatened loggerhead turtles, with about 15,000 nests a year deposited on the beaches that run from Palm Beach to Brevard counties, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Kelly Martin, environmentalist with the Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management, said the leatherback nest established last week was one of the earliest on record.

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50 SHADES OF ...
RecklessnessGirl Power

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With more than \$94 million in ticket sales, “50 Shades of Grey” has become the most mainstream kink book/film of the last five years. It’s the tale of two complete strangers who fall in love under weird circumstances but it has opened up discussion about sexual freedom – a sentiment I can agree with.

While I can respect women who feel more comfortable with their sensuality after watching this film, I cannot support the dangerous and irresponsible interpretation of what a healthy relationship should look like, especially when it involves BDSM scenarios.

In other words, the sex itself isn’t a problem; it’s the relationship between both characters and the lack of communication that leads to the abuse portrayed by this film as “sexy.”

“50 Shades of Grey” became a concern for the BDSM community when the book’s main character Christian tosses aside the three principle standards of the practice to satisfy himself without much concern of the well being of his lover

bothered me. A “cautious” man, Christian presents Anastasia with a contract (weeks after they met) with explicit rules and standards he wants her to follow if she had any interest in maintaining a relationship with him. These lines include much more than sexual acts, however, noting what food she’s allowed to eat and the type of clothing and grooming he demands.

If the contract handed to her without education from him on the matter wasn’t a red flag indicating that Christian is not a sane partner, then the instances where he bugs her phone, buys the company she works for or intimidates her into emotional submission to have more control, should have been.

Trust is as important in BDSM relationships as in traditional ones, so I question why the author and film producers paint a manipulative stalker as someone who trusts his partner or, even worse, as someone who is trustworthy. Ultimately, she verbally consents only because she fears losing him, which now leads me to the consensual standard.

When consent is given in any sexual interaction, it should come easily, free of pressure to follow through



PHOTO COURTESY OF STELLA SMITH VIA CREATIVE COMMONS

Dakota Johnson (left) plays Anastasia Steele and Jamie Dornan plays Christian Grey in 50 Shades of Grey, a movie based off an erotic romance novel by British author E. L. James.

out is one of the spanking scenes where Anastasia has this internal dialogue going on: “And he hits me again and again. From somewhere deep inside, I want to beg him to stop. But I don’t. I don’t want to give him the satisfaction.”

The second you feel uneasy during sex, you have no obligation to continue. Not only did Anastasia feel scared about expressing herself, Grey drives her to the point of tears and vulnerability she isn’t used to yet, which happens on multiple occasions. Hurting yourself to keep someone in your life is never acceptable. This lack of compassion from Christian and the forced obedience of Anastasia has created a new and harmful depiction of what consent looks like.

“50 Shades of Grey” should not be a replacement for sex education or serve as a manual on how to “spice up” your love life. A quick search can refer you to information on the BDSM lifestyle and link you to porn videos that instruct you on how to pleasure your partner. Only then should you start to consider looking into it. To be honest, there is better naughty literature out there, so don’t waste time making yourself ignorant in matters of love and sex by taking these books seriously.

Don’t fall for this false presentation of love. Don’t let this movie fool you into thinking disregarding someone else’s well-being is a turn on.

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Steamy, heavy-breathing and finger cringing are some of the words people use when they talk about the novel, and now film, “50 Shades of Grey.” The book is breaking records for the fastest selling paperback with just the first novel release, surpassing the Harry Potter series. It is riveting to get to know the face behind the rare feat in the self-publishing industry.

E.L. James, a middle age wife and mother to two boys, living in Britain, considers herself a typical woman, just one with a great imagination which lead to her success. Inspired by the Stephanie Meyer Twilight series, James began writing erotic-fantasies on fanfiction.net about the sparkly vampires.

Soon enough, she adapted her own version of a romantic erotic-fiction where her main characters had fans screaming. Entrepreneur and bachelor Christian Grey, who happens to be a dominant, and shy, self-conscious, Anastasia Steele, who is a college virgin, meet when Anastasia’s best friend Katherine who writes for the student newspaper is ill. Anastasia then enters Grey Enterprises Holdings Inc and is immediately attracted to Christian within seconds of meeting him. Their relationship opens with explicit erotic scenes and thus begins the story of their romance.

James later published the novel on her

website, FiftyShadesOfGrey.com. After, her e-book was picked up by Australian virtual publisher, The Writer’s Coffee Shop. Soon, large publishing companies were jumping to buy her novel. She also had proposals for the movie rights to her novel. Her fantasies became an overnight success.

Although criticized for the context, James has broken the boundaries in women’s literature, with a mass appeal in the market towards adult women. The novel spread worldwide with mostly female based audience with the help of social media and word of mouth. Named the number one top seller for USA Today, the series has sold over 100 million copies worldwide and has been translated in to 52 languages.

She states “The best part is getting emails from people saying they have not read a book in five years or didn’t enjoy reading books but they read my book.”

“Although criticized for the context, James has broken the boundaries in women’s literature, with a mass appeal in the market towards adult women.”

Alison Baverstock, an associate professor in publishing at Kingston University said her research showed a clear gender split, with 65% self-publishers being women and 35% men. Although self-publishers are often criticized, they know their audience and are confident about their work.

James, amongst other successful female writers, is an example of how well-educated women are dominating the growing e-book publishing market.

James is a game changing author whose humble and cunning personality were key elements in making her novel successful. Her novel has impacted a great audience, including readers and authors. Without a doubt, James is an inspiration for all women, demonstrating that anything is possible with perseverance and a little imagination.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF RADU JIANU



PHOTO COURTESY OF ILKERSEN PHOTOGRAPHY

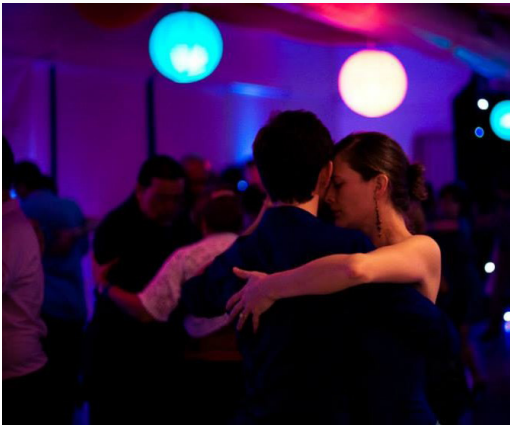


PHOTO COURTESY OF RHP PHOTOGRAPHY

Top left photo: Radu Jianu and dance partner Erika Latham. **Second to left photo:** Radu Jianu used to be a shy dancer until he learned tango. **Top right photo:** Radu Jianu, an architecture student, dances with partner Erika Latham at the Puerto Rico Tango Marathon in 2014. **Top right photo:** Radu Jianu, an architecture student, dances with partner Erika Latham at the Puerto Rico Tango Marathon in 2014. After giving tango lessons at Brown University, tango enthusiasts decided to offer free lessons at FIU.

International water crisis brought to light in lecture

KRYSTAL PUGH
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Dr. Andrew Hudson, head of the United Nations Development Programme’s Water & Ocean Governance Programme, travelled around the world calculating water sanitation and supply. His latest research reveals a devastating truth --our international system is facing a water crisis.— On Tuesday Feb. 18, FIU hosted Hudson as a guest speaker in Green Library Room 220, sponsored by Global Water for Sustainability Program and the FIU School of Environment, Arts and Society. Hudson devised a lecture to share with students about the current state

of water supply and sanitation. He began by providing statistics about the many countries in crisis of not being able to provide the basic human right --water. Through the statistics, he highlighted many key points and offered a general outlook of these communities living with poor water supply and sanitation. He explained how this basic need is something many people overlook and neglect. The death rate and infectious diseases such as diarrhea, dysentery and typhoid fever, have continued to increase due to lack of proper water intake and sanitation. Some major at-risk countries include Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Guatemala. These countries in particular are suffering from poverty and inequality. Hudson explains that these countries need more women involved in pushing the story, claiming that women in these countries seem to have a better understanding of the importance of water and sanitation. “To push water and improve water sanitation up the political agenda, we need to make the case to governments, decision makers, financial planners and planning agencies,” Hudson said. “We have to achieve universal equitable access [of clean water] for all countries.”

Local dancer to judge

MARLISA PONCE
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Coca-Cola’s “Comparte el Movimiento” is having a dance competition that gives 14-19 year olds the chance to win up to \$3,000 for a school of their choice. Coca-Cola hopes to inspire South Florida youth to get active, both physically and in their communities. We spoke to Nick Garcia, who was in the top 20 of “So You Think You Can Dance” season 11, about the competition and him being a judge for it. “When they told me about “Comparte el Movimiento,” it was more of a movement and cause, and a way to look at dance in a different way rather than judging dancers just solely on dance.” said Garcia. “And even though that’s what I’m

doing with this, there’s more to come out of it after the dance. Since dance is something I’ve done since he was seven years old, he understands the dance. What can you bring to the table that’s different from everyone else?

Nick Garcia
Comparte el Movimiento
tation and hard work that comes with competing. He always can



PHOTO COURTESY OF PUERTO RICO TANGO MARATHON 2014

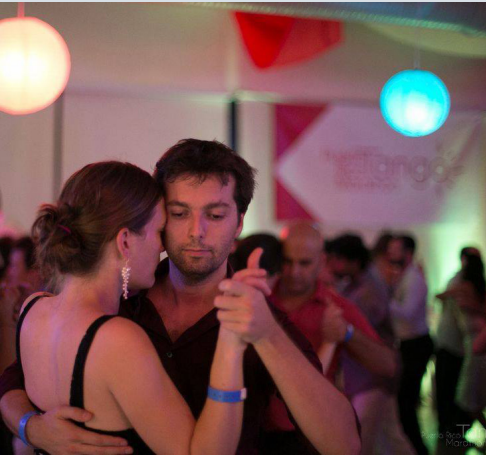


PHOTO COURTESY OF OKKEPHOTO.COM

ham dance Tango on the Beach. **Bottom left** ed Tango. He said he liked rules in Tango and **bottom left photo:** Radu Jianu and dance . This is them dancing at the Puerto Rico Tango assistant professor in the computer sciences de- Rico Tango Marathon. **Bottom right photo:** siast, Radu Jianu and his partner, Erika Latham,

PANTHERS

Assistant professor offers free Tango lessons for students

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Increasing tuition rates, paying triple per hour over 138 credits, the \$2.50 one-way ride to and from the Biscayne Bay Campus and the inability to redeem coupons on campus offered by off-campus food establishments all point to one fact: Florida International University loves our money.

An interview with Radu Jianu, an assistant professor in the computer sciences department, added something else to this growing list: tango lessons.

After giving tango lessons at Brown University, the tango enthusiast and his partner decided to give free lessons at FIU as well, but it was a bust. Only four students showed interest.

To say the least, Jianu was disappointed. In order to promote his lessons, he reached out to a GC coordinator for assistance in spreading the word, but their answer was no.

We have all seen the infamous couple giving salsa lessons in the GC atrium at night. Like most things at FIU, these dance lessons cost money. The Graham Center endorses the lessons through banners and on their site, because they are “a revenue-generating” service.

The couple from Salsa Kings charges \$20 for the first three lessons and \$10 for each lesson thereafter. They also ask students to buy appropriate shoes and attire.

On the other hand, Jianu has no interest in profiting from his work, he wants to offer free tango lessons to the student body here at FIU.

“I’m not asking to be paid for this service because I understand a student’s budget, and my end goal is to get more students involved in our tight-knit tango community,” Jianu said.

Jianu spoke passionately about why Argentinian tango was close to him.

“I liked dancing, but I was always too shy. I need rules and tango has a lot. I think rules make tango easy for college-educated scholars to follow,” said Jianu.

Jianu’s passion for teaching, years of experience with tango and willingness to be of service to the community make him an experienced dance instructor.

He smiled shyly and admitted that his interest in giving lessons is also for selfish reasons.

“The tango community at FIU and in Miami is rather small, so I would love to teach and have the opportunity to dance with different partners,” said Jianu.

In Providence, he had the pleasure of watching his inexperienced class grow from shy to active invested dancers in the tango community. He feels

confident that FIU students would be able to do the same.

“I have a different mentality from the people in GC. I think it should be about the students and honestly want nothing to do with GC anymore,” said Jianu.

To make his class happen on his own terms, Jianu created a website: fiutango.com. He would love students to experience at least one lesson and see how their body can move.

“Even if I have to hold a class outside on campus with my own radio, I’ll make it happen,” said Jianu.

To get involved or for more inquiries: contact Radu Jianu at rdjianu@cis.fiu.edu. Tango lessons are free.

lge charity competition

ore to the pressure that piles up during competition with his time on “So You Think You Can Dance.”

Garcia’s experience grants him the opportunity to help South Florida’s youth and the mission of “Comparte el Movimiento” in motivating youths to dance and get involved in their community.

Groups of 2-6 submitted videos of them performing dance moves to the official contest theme song, “Let Fun Take Control” by Latin duo North Rock 360.

Garcia told us sitting on the other side of the table feels really good, rather than worrying so much about a routine and performance.

The finalists won’t be announced until March 1, so Garcia hasn’t met them yet.

“I’m looking forward to seeing all of them and giving advice, and really just giving all I have to them,” said Garcia.

Once the five finalists are announced, their names will be posted and ready for public voting that opens March 1-8. Using #BailaConCoke, fans can vote for their favorites.

The three finalists with the most votes will perform live on the Coca-Cola stage at the Calle Ocho Festival March 15.

As a judge, Garcia said he’ll be looking for a group that stands out and advises contestants to be out of the ordinary.

“How could you be different? What can you bring to the table that’s different from everyone else?”

Garcia said those should be the questions the finalists should ask themselves before the competition.

For more information visit the website: <http://comparteconcoke.com/>

PAINT GREEN



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Alexander King Jr, a freshman studying biology, gets his face painted by Megan Bennett, a sophomore studying sociology, at the Black Out Green On event on Tuesday, Feb.17 at the MMC Housing Quad. Students enjoyed food, entertainment and giveaways and learned how to improve their green practices.

BASEBALL

HIT THE ROAD

Panthers go on first road trip to play in Coastal Carolina Tournament

ALEJANDRO AGUIRRE

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After taking two of three from No. 25 Tennessee this past weekend, the baseball team hits the road this weekend to compete in the Coastal Carolina Tournament in Conway, South Carolina. There, the Panthers will play four teams: Georgia Tech, Coastal Carolina, Albany, and North Carolina State. These games will be



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Senior infielder Julius Gaines robs a base hit by snagging a line drive against the University of Tennessee during their 3-game series from Feb. 13-15. The Panthers won 2-of-3 from the Volunteers of Tennessee.

non-conference games but will be a true test to see how the team can handle playing on the road

and away from their home field. FIU is going into this tournament having the latest ranking of No. 23 in the nation and they will start off the tournament playing a double header first against Georgia Tech and then Coastal Carolina. The Georgia Tech yellow jackets are 3-1 to start the season. The reason for this hot start is their offense has been consistent each game. The Yellow Jackets are scoring about eight runs per game. The FIU pitching rotation is coming off a home series where they did not give up a lot of runs to Tennessee which is another good offensive team. The pitching rotation is looking to do the same to Georgia Tech and silence their bats. Coastal Carolina, the hosts of the tournament, is playing on the exact opposite note compared to Georgia Tech. They are coming off a painful loss to Canisius losing 13-3. The Griffins are having trouble scoring runs and limiting other teams from scoring runs which is why that play style has led to an average 2-2 start. FIU needs to start the game on an aggressive note and put runs up on the scoreboard early in the game. This puts pressure on Coastal Carolina to answer back which is very difficult especially when the team is struggling to score.

The next day of the tournament, Saturday, the Panthers will take on the University of Albany. They have not played yet so this tournament will be their first taste of the season. This team is headlined by junior infielder Matt Hinchy and senior catcher Craig Lepre. They were appointed to be the co-captains of the team by Head Coach Jon Mueller. Hinchy



KRONO LESCANO/THE BEACON

Senior third baseman Josh Anderson tags out a runner from University of Tennessee trying to steal third base.

was named to the America East All Rookie Team helping the Great Danes to an appearance in the American East Conference Tournament.

Last year in his sophomore year he was plagued by injuries limiting him to 14 games but he's looking to have a bounce back season to follow up his great freshman year. Lepre, entering his senior year, has been the everyday starting catcher since his freshman year. He was one of the main offensive weapons on the team having a .273 batting average with 28 RBIs, 10 runs and he also hit seven doubles last season.

The final day of the

tournament, the Panthers will finish their road trip against North Carolina State. The Wolfpack is undefeated so far this season with a 2-0 record. Both their wins are commanding ones as they scored a total of 22 runs and have only given up eight runs. This will be another game in which the Panthers' pitching rotation needs to come through and hold down N.C. State's offense.

Chris Mourelle is coming off a great pitching performance last week in which he did not give up any runs in 5 innings. Mourelle could be heavily depended on for this game and even this entire tournament.

FIU has a tough task ahead of

them as none of these teams have a losing record as they all started the season off on a winning note just like the Panthers. Playing back to back games can be difficult especially when not on their home turf.

Now being ranked No. 23 the Panthers have something to prove to these other teams, that there is no mistake why they are ranked and it starts Friday, Feb. 20 at the Coastal Carolina Tournament.

Wednesday's game versus the Stetson University Hatters was not completed at the time of production.

SOFTBALL

Panthers head west for Madeira Beach Invitational

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The FIU softball team will travel to Madeira Beach this weekend to partake in the Eastern Michigan University Spring Invitational. They will take on the Villanova Wildcats, Wichita State Shockers, Columbia Lions, Texas State Bobcats, and North Dakota.

The Villanova Wildcats will be opening up their season with FIU today. Last year they went 18-34

overall and 5-16 in the Big East conference. Their star shortstop Ali Lowe graduated last spring but the majority of their starting lineup from last year will come back this season. Junior ace pitcher Kate Poppe who had 13 wins last season with a 2.05 earned run average, 219 innings pitched and 284 strikeouts will be back as well.

Wichita State is entering this tournament 6-3 to start off their season. They take command on the field but do have a young roster that gives them a few weak

points defensively. The one thing the Panthers should look out for is junior Cacy Williams. The Shockers

“ Junior Corinne Jenkins, along with senior Shelby Graves, always put up a fight in the circle.

” played in the Gettysburg Classic early this February where she set a record

hitting five doubles. The previous record was four, held by four different players.

Colombia will also open up their season at this tournament and play the FIU softball team on Saturday. The Lions finished at .500 last year (22-22) and went 9-11 in the Ivy League.

Texas State is coming in even at 5-5. They finished last season 26-30. Ariel Ortiz is one of the Bobcats most dominant players. She took control at the Hampton Inn tournament in Texas where she finished

going 11-for-17 with three home runs, one triple, five doubles, seven runs batted in, and a slugging percentage of 1.588. Despite having one player do it all, you need a team to win and that is where FIU could take charge over the Bobcats. The FIU softball team has chemistry on the field that helps them overcome opponents.

North Dakota University is coming into this tournament 4-6. The Panthers will play them on Sunday to close out the tournament.

There is no doubt that

the depth in FIU's pitching staff could handle all of these teams. Junior Corinne Jenkins, along with senior Shelby Graves, always put up a fight in the circle. The bullpen for the softball team also dominates with freshman Rachel Dwyer and sophomore Brianna Bartuccio. The combined ERA is 3.59.

Offensively the Panthers have combined for a .393 slugging percentage, .349 on base percentage, and 38 runs batted in which is very productive thus far in the season.

NATIONAL

All-star games: Do something or just go away

RHYS' PIECE



RHYS WILLIAMS

Zip. Zilch. Nada.

That is how much the big three sports all-star games mean overall. None of these games mean anything for standings or respect or anything beneficial. I don't believe that the MLB All-Star Game - coming to Miami in 2017 - still holds the key to home field advantage in the post-season.

I have some simple suggestions for each, but overall, the main change that needs to happen is that they need to count in one way or another.

NBA

The most recent game, which sparked my interest in this topic again was the NBA All-Star Weekend. This includes multiple skill challenges, a celebrity game, the upcoming stars game and the NBA All-Star Game - divided Eastern Conference versus Western Conference - to wrap it up.

The game had a final score of 163-158 with the West winning. That is the best and worst part at the same time. Yes, there was a bunch of offense but that also means that there was no defense. I am one of the people who, when I watch a basketball, game want to see some defense. Maybe some defense could be brought back into that game.

I think unless the game begins to mean something, then it should not be played anymore. There is no reason, during the middle of the season, to have players have an extra chance to hurt themselves.

Make it at the end of the season, but prior to the Finals to determine home court advantage. This would spark my interest

much more than currently. If you want the players to have a break mid-season, have the season take a 7 to 10 day break in the middle.

NFL

The Pro Bowl, held each year the week prior to the Super Bowl until just recently, was between the NFC and the AFC. It is the biggest joke among the three all-star games.

Yes, it is fun to see some of the best players in the league team up together but with the new format, it does not mean a single thing to win or lose.

It is a draft by former star players, who for the last two years were Deion "Primetime" Sanders, Jerry Rice, Michael Irvin and Cris Carter. This means that not only are the conference players mixed among each other, but also teammates are switched around and playing against each other.

Yes, it is fun to see some of the best players in the league team up together but with the new format, it does not mean a single thing to win or lose.

That is an awful idea in general. What happens, if say, Jared Allen, a defensive lineman from the Chicago Bears, sacks his own franchise's quarterback Jay Cutler and breaks his throwing arm or makes him tear his rotator cuff. Those types of

injuries could change Cutler forever from having arguably the best arm in the league.

I have three simple suggestions for the Pro Bowl to not only make it watchable, but to give it a reason to still exist.

The first is that the teams need to be switched back to a matchup of the conferences. As simple as that, it would give each team a chance to show that their part of the league is better.

The second would be to make it count, not for "home-field" advantage in the Super Bowl but the right to be the home team, as one of the best things I think about the NFL is that they move the big game around yearly. Even though this changes yearly, I think the only true, out-right home team should be if the host city of the super bowl is in the game, otherwise, let the Pro Bowl decide who gets to wear the home jerseys.

Also, the third thing is just a preference thing, but move it back to Hawaii. Having it in Hawaii is one of the best parts of the game and without it there you are not only losing a fan base - which incoming rookie Marcus Mariota from the University of Oregon may help get some back - but you are losing out on some great opportunities both financially and expansion team wise. If they were to get a large enough, the Hawaii based fan base, an expansion team could work there.

The other option that could help out is if the inter-conference play throughout the season, and player movement throughout the conferences was eliminated but being the realist that I am, I know that that is not going to happen.

MLB

Woohoo, the MLB All-Star Game is coming to Miami in a couple of years. Oh

wait, I forgot that I don't really care about baseball and that the MLB All-Star Game is just an even longer baseball game.

Baseball is a slow game in general and one would think that putting the best players, both on offense and defense, in one game might speed it up a bit. However, in my past experience that is not the case.

It is shorter than the longest game, which went for almost 24 hours, but it is pretty long compared to games like football and basketball.

As I mentioned before, I am not completely sure if this game wins home-field advantage for the winner out of the American or National leagues. If it still does then that is one less thing to change. If it no longer does, they need to change it back.

Also, I truly think that ending the ability for players to switch back-and-forth from the AL to the NL and vice versa would make it more interesting but I know that return more than likely won't happen in my lifetime. There are too many games in the MLB season for the leagues to not play amongst themselves.

I would also move it just like my proposed NBA move, to directly before the finals of the World Series. If you want the players to have a break mid-season, just have the season take a 7-10 day break in the middle.

Rhys' Piece is a weekly column on both FIU and National sports news that goes on. The views shown by Rhys' Piece are not necessarily the views of The Beacon, its Editorial Board or FIU Student Media.

Check back every Friday for the latest edition of Rhys' Piece and email rhys.williams@fiusm if you have a topic you would like to suggest.

INTRAMURAL

Rugby team looks past adversity, aims to improve team

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The FIU men's rugby team had an undefeated season this past fall, finishing first place in Florida. Defeating top notch teams such as the University of Central Florida, a powerhouse that held the number one spot for three years, served as a great accomplishment for the team and paved the way for a chance at nationals; it has also served as a learning experience showing that staying number one is just as difficult as becoming number one.

This season started off with a few stumbling blocks. Some key players graduated, shifting the look of the front and back lines. New players will be held accountable not only for filling in those positions, but for executing the plays as well as last season's players, who averaged 25

points per game.

Disputes in management have also been an obstacle for the team. A vital part of a team's success is a good relationship between coaches and players- there needs to be trust, understanding and chemistry. This was not the case for the men's

We have a lot of fit guys, which means our tackles are great. But They're new to the game, so they don't know when to stop a tackle, or do it correctly.

Barrington McNutt
Junior
FIU Rugby

rugby team. A fall out with Head Coach Gabriel Puella left the team with a difficult decision.

"His coaching styles and our playing styles were very different," said junior rugby team member Barrington McNutt. "So we had several arguments until he gave us an ultimatum to pick our captain or himself to lead the team. We obviously chose our captain."

The team was forced to travel to Savannah, Ga. for a USA Sevens tournament without their jerseys or management. Nevertheless, ten team members took the nine hour drive and played against eight teams. Despite the setbacks, those representing FIU placed third after defeating all Florida teams and losing to Georgia Institute of Technology.

A lot of pressure was placed on the first match of the season, as they had to prove to each other that they could still come together despite their struggles as a team.

"We only had ten players which meant every player had to be on

top of their game, and we did well with one of us being sick and one who got injured," said McNutt.

This season, the team made the decision to place rookie players in starting positions. Although most had played before, in high school, they had yet to grow accustomed to certain skills to play safer and smarter. This was setback

was evident, as they lost 27-24 to the University of South Florida on Saturday, Jan. 14, a team they had defeated 57-12 in October.

"We have a lot of fit guys, which means our tackles are great," said McNutt. "But they're new to the game, so they don't know when to stop a tackle or how to do it correctly. So we have to

work on their mauls and learning to play smarter."

The team will travel to Fort Lauderdale to participate in Ruggerfest at Mills Pond Park, a two-day tournament with 30 teams, for a game against Florida State University. FSU has been proven to be a tough contender in the conference and Florida Cup.

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WINE AND DINE

SOBEWFF brings opportunities for Chaplin students

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With a dash of spice and a spoonful of sugar, a heap of visitors from across the country are expected to be present at this year's 14th Annual Food Network & Cooking Channel South Beach Wine & Food Festival, a national wine and spirits showcase event.

Hosted by the University and Southern Wine & Spirits of Florida, the event has helped raise over \$20 million for the Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management. The funding supports the School's recently added Wine Spectator Restaurant Management Laboratory, as well as their Southern Wine & Spirits Beverage Management Center at FIU.

The event is held from Thursday, Feb. 19 to Sunday, Feb. 22, during which more than 70 events will be hosted by more than 150 celebrated chefs and 250 global wineries and spirits producers.

"It's a tremendous convergence of what we do in the festival combining

the guest chefs coming from out-of-town [and] the associate support of the Chaplin school," said Lead Culinary Instructor Michael Moran, who is also known for his efforts with the festival.

According to Moran, SOBEWFF is a great way for Chaplin students to network with leaders in the industry and apply what they learn through internship.

"It gives us an opportunity to take what we do here in the classroom and kind of get together with the industry," Moran said. "When they come back from the festival after it's over, they're so excited that it's almost hard to keep them in the building."

He also said it helps students clarify and narrow down their trajectory of where they want to go when they graduate.

For this year's festival, Moran worked closely with award-winning FIU graduate Eddie Zeng to help coordinate operations for Thursday's Italian Al Fresco Feast on the Beach event hosted by Debi Mazar and Gabriele Corcos from



CAMILA FERNANDEZ/THE BEACON

FIU graduate Eddie Zeng (right) shares laughs with senior hospitality and management majors Tracy Flores (left) and Barbara Renom (center) at the Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management. Zeng was awarded for his creation of a spice at last year's Second Annual-FIU and Badia Spice Competition.

Cooking Channel.

Zeng, who will now participate in his third year at the festival, was declared last year's winner of the Second Annual-FIU & Badia Spice Competition for his seafood spice creation "Biscayne Bay".

He was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship for his blended spice which includes thyme, kosher

salt, celery seed, fennel seed, cumin, paprika, black pepper and smoked paprika. The spice will be sold with a five percent of all global sales to go right back to the Chaplin School's funding.

"I believe it's the balance of the spices that makes the difference and the quantities that you put together, and blending the spice. So it's kind of like

chemistry," said Zeng.

"[SOBEWFF] helps me put my foot in the door into being involved in large scale events, being able to communicate with participating chefs," Zeng said.

As an undergraduate electrical engineering major, Zeng was heavily involved with the University's Student

Programming Council. This helped him realize his passion for hosting events. At age 15, he worked at a small Chinese restaurant his uncle used to own.

"I got kind of like, in a way, sucked into it without knowing it," Zeng said.

With his background in engineering and hospitality, Zeng wants to bring together both disciplines through creativity and innovation.

"To me, you know, being an engineer, but also studying hospitality, there's always that opportunity to be innovative. That is what I would like to achieve -- is innovation," Zeng said. "My brain just goes everywhere."

Moran believes that Zeng has been a leader in coming up with new ideas for the School.

"We're really on a very progressive track of constantly trying to do new things and he's at the forefront of helping us with experiments and coming up with new flavor profiles," Moran said. "He's absolutely fantastic and just one of many great students that we have here at FIU."

Festival giving chances to showcase skills

CARLA TRIVIÑO
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Students are preparing to participate in this year's 14th Annual Food Network South Beach Wine & Food Festival and the Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management is making sure they're ready to take on responsibility for an event.

The festival has hosted close to 80 events expanding all the way to Fort Lauderdale Beach. It has also raised more than \$20 million for the Chaplin School, attracting chefs and companies from all parts.

Through the University's SOBEWFF Ambassador Program, students can participate in the festival from working with guest services and logistics, to culinary and event production.

According to Gypsy Velez, Assistant

Manager for the Ambassador Program, students can network and learn from these culinary professionals.

"I've heard of students getting seven job offers after one week at the festival," said Velez.

Velez said that they try to pair students with the job they want because, "not everyone wants to cook," she said. These jobs can range from customer service, hospitality management to culinary assistant.

The star-studded festival has grown significantly since it started in 1997 as Florida Extravaganza. For five years, local restaurants and chefs worked with Chaplin students to showcase national and international wines at the Biscayne Bay Campus. It wasn't until 2002 that the University partnered with Southern Wine & Spirits of America, Inc. to create what it is today.

Tylar Segal, a senior hospitality and management major, sees the festival as a stress free job fair.

"We get to network with all the top people in the industry," Segal said.

Segal, who will now participate in her third year at SOBEWFF, is a logistics lead and helps set-up and create a venue within a week. Then she and her team manage a group of about 46 volunteers and help liaison between students and the event.

"I have friends who got jobs from volunteering at SOBE," Segal said, "and now they're working with network stars."

According to Velez, students like Segal who

volunteer more than one year, are eligible for scholarship awards between \$2,500 to \$5,000.

She also said the Food and Wine Festival raised \$2.1 million last year for the school and uses a portion of that money towards scholarships. The award amounts can differ depending on the volunteer position given at the festival.

Zoë Galanis, a sophomore hospitality and management major, has been working for the festival since September as Human Resources Coordinator. She recruits and interviews students and makes sure all volunteers have a job for the festival.

"I would love to be a special event director," said Galanis. She said that the festival has taught her about the small but important details that help run an event, like sponsors and creating rosters.

This year the festival will also showcase the new Badia Spice winner, "Biscayne Bay" created by FIU graduate, Eddie Zeng.

This is just one of the many success stories from the Chaplin School, and is why students are so eager to expose themselves to opportunities with big industries.

"Once I volunteered for the event, I knew this is what I wanted to do," said Segal.

Segal said she wants to continue working for the festival and be recognized for her work. She said the festival experience is different from learning inside a classroom.

"You actually see it get done, and even though I have a small role in it, I want to make a big impact."



CARLA TRIVIÑO/THE BEACON

Volunteer students (left to right) Christopher Morisset, Sumit Acheliye, Caroline Scher and Elizabeth Valladares help organize signs to be distributed at the SOBEWFF. Volunteers at the festival are eligible for scholarship awards.