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109 Tower poses parking issues

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Back in August 2014, the city of Sweetwater and the University celebrated the opening of 109 Tower, a 15-story apartment building across the street from PG5. But, almost six months later, city residents and tenants of the tower are unhappy with the living arrangements and parking conditions that the apartments had to offer.

At a planning and zoning board meeting in 2012, residents of the area brought up concerns that reducing the number of parking spaces of the tower from 224 to zero would cause parking problems for adjacent condominiums and housing, according to the meeting minutes.

The residents' concerns turned out to be true.

"This [building] has zero parking and, frankly, to me that's insane," said Guillermo Cuadra, chief of staff of the city of Sweetwater. "It has created a whole host of problems and, even though at the time FIU and the previous administration here supported it, now we have to deal with the problem."

According to city police, they started getting calls from neighbors that the Tower's residents were parking their cars on the streets of the city, sometimes blocking driveways.

"It's just upsetting," said Maria Luisa Jimenez, a homeowner near the apartment building. "Sometimes I have to leave quickly because I'm late and I go out and find that my driveway is

blocked and I can't get out. It's unfair to me and my kids."

Jimenez, 36, an immigrant from Nicaragua, has three kids in elementary school. She wakes up every morning at 5 a.m. to make sure that her driveway isn't blocked and that she could get her children to school on time.

According to the Miami Herald, three condominium associations appealed to the city commission to revoke the parking variance that had been approved for the building. The appeals were dismissed for failing to specifically explain how the decision would become a problem and how the neighboring condos would be affected.

Mayor Jose M. Diaz, who was the president of the commission in 2012, said that waiving the parking requirements probably wasn't worth it, according to the article.

"The previous administration just convinced the commissioners that it was a good idea," Cuadra said.

The city was able to provide the parking variance by making an agreement, forcing over 400 leaseholders to park across the street in PG5. The agreement allowed the residents of the tower to park on campus with a decal and provided free transportation in the city trolley and the FIU CATS Shuttle.

But, for 109 Tower residents and frequent visitors, this wasn't enough.

"I'm always there and my car has been towed twice," said Alexandra Blanco, a sophomore biology major. "They have the 30-minute parking spots and

MUSIC THROUGH TIME



KRONO LESCANO/THE BEACON

Violinist Robert Davidovici performs at the FIU School of Music at the FIU Chamber Players: "Chamber Music through the Centuries" performance on Tuesday, Feb. 24. He performed alongside pianist Marina Radiushina.

sometimes we're unloading groceries there and they'll call the tow truck before the time is even up. My best friend's car got towed after just 17 minutes."

Anthony Ghanem, a student at the College of Law, supports this claim.

"One time I left my car down there for about 40 minutes and, when I went back inside, they said I had left it for over 15 minutes of the allotted time," he said. "My thing is that doesn't it take the tow truck at least 10 minutes to get down there? My car has already been towed four times and it was \$140 to pick it up each time."

For him, this was an extreme amount.

"This is a college building, with college students living there," he said. "The cost of the tow is a little expensive for the average

college student. People complain about getting FIU tickets but getting towed is so much worse... Why make students go through this entire hassle for so much money because of the level of incompetence in infrastructure?"

109 Tower has 25 parking spaces, which are mostly used by staff and building managers.

"We have made everyone aware that parking is prohibited here at 109TOWER," said building management through a post via Facebook. "We have resident and employee vehicles blocked in due to parked vehicles in non-parking areas. Please move your vehicle immediately to avoid being towed..."

According to Cuadra, the city has just empowered a task force to help deal with the parking situations of the tower tenants and

the upset city residents, including a pedestrian bridge to go over Eighth Street.

"It was a known fact amongst all FIU students promoting 109 that there would be a bridge on top of the street so that we could walk during rush hour," Blanco said. "There is no bridge. It's just an extreme inconvenience."

For Cuadra, this whole thing was just a poorly planned situation.

"I tell our team here all the time that no matter what they're gonna do, make sure that you plan," he said. "After you plan the work, then you work the plan. This was just a situation that was poorly planned... And, if it was planned, it was almost premeditated for those problems to be there... So, now, it's something we're trying to cure."

Wellness Center to offer safety advice for spring break

LESLIE OVALLE
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For Jimmy Egas, there is always something to do in Miami.

According to U.S News and World Report, Miami Beach ranks number one on their "Best Spring Break Destination" list because of its perfect-for-tanning beaches and night-life.

Egas, a freshman majoring in business administration and marketing, agree with this ranking.

"Not only do you have the beach, but [you have] nonstop partying going around," he said. "Aside from parties there is a lot of culture and the city is beautiful."

While the beaches and clubs make it one of the best spots, Miami has also been ranked as the tenth most dangerous spring break destinations by NY Daily News.

On this list, Florida has the most cities -- from Miami, Orlando, Daytona Beach, Panama City to West Palm Beach.

Because of this, the University's Wellness Center will be hosting an event where students can learn about staying safe during Spring Break.

that will help them to have a healthier Spring Break," said Stephanie Caceres, senior health educator of University Health Services.

I love Public Health, and educating students about safe behavior during Spring Break makes me feel like I am making a difference.

Stephanie Caceres
Sr. Health Educator
University Health Services

The Wellness Center, Counseling and Psychological Services and the Victim Empowerment Program are partnering to educate students on their accessibility and services.

"Students can learn about healthy behaviors

Egas believes that an event like this one makes a lot of sense.

"That's why Spring Break is before Ultra Music Festival, because can you imagine the madness?" Egas said.

According to thelisttv.com, more than 1.5

million students will party during Spring Break and, while the average college student has about six drinks per week, during Spring Break this average goes up to ten drinks per day.

The event will provide information about Student Health Services, including information about the services available to students -- counseling, dietitian services, stress management, massage therapy and more.

Educational topics like safe alcohol consumption, sexual health, drug use/abuse, consent and general safety will also be addressed.

"These are all topics that are important to remember during Spring Break," Caceres said.

The event will also have "freebies," along with free sandwiches and other things provided by invited vendors, according to Caceres.

It will be held on March 2 at 11 a.m. at the Modesto A. Maidique Campus in the Graham Center.

"I love Public Health, and educating students about safe behavior during Spring Break makes me feel like I am making a difference," Caceres said.

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

Man known as ‘Jihadi John,’ reported executioner in Islamic State videos, is identified

The knife-wielding militant who appears in a string of grisly beheading videos, his face concealed by a black balaclava and speaking in British-accented English, has come to personify the brutality of the extremist group Islamic State.

Nicknamed “Jihadi John” in the world’s media, he was unmasked Thursday as Mohammed Emwazi, who is in his mid-20s and was born

in Kuwait, raised in West London and studied computer programming at the University of Westminster.

The apparent transformation of Emwazi—described as a man who once had been kind and soft-spoken—into the face of ruthless extremism raised new questions about the allure of Islamic State and Britain’s role as an incubator of Islamist militancy.

Hundreds of pits filled with oil wastewater discovered in California’s Kern County

Unbeknown to California officials, oil producers in Kern County have been disposing of chemical-laden wastewater in hundreds of unlined trenches in the ground without proper permits, according to an inventory that regional water officials completed this week.

The Los Angeles Times obtained the results of the survey conducted by the Central Valley Regional

Water Quality Control Board, which uncovered more than 300 pits that officials previously didn’t know existed. Expected to be released Friday, the survey also revealed that more than one-third of the region’s active waste pits are operating without required permits.

Kern County accounts for at least 80 percent of California’s oil production.

Michelle Obama pitches fruits, veggies at health summit

First lady Michelle Obama on Thursday reaffirmed her commitment to healthy eating and encouraged a gathering of health and policy experts focused on ending childhood obesity to challenge themselves.

“I might be in my final stretch as first lady, but I have no intention of slowing down on this issue,” she told the crowd. “I do not have a one- or two-year horizon for this work. I have a rest-of-my-life horizon, and I know

that all of you do, too. Because that’s what it’s going to take.”

While also celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Let’s Move! initiative to end childhood obesity, Obama helped announce a new marketing effort called FNV, which aims to market fruits and vegetables to children, during her keynote address at the Partnership for a Healthier America 2015 Building a Healthier Future Summit.

Rubio on immigration: ‘I’ve learned my lesson’

CHRIS ADAMS
McClatchy Washington Bureau
TNS

Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida delighted a gathering of conservative activists from around the country Friday morning, saying America doesn’t owe him anything but that he owes a “debt to America that I will never be able to repay.”

Before a mostly full ballroom at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference outside Washington, the Republican and potential presidential candidate recounted his personal history, one that took his parents with little money, no connections and limited education from Cuba to South Florida.

“Less than four decades later, all four of their children live the lives and the dreams that my parents once had for themselves,” Rubio told the gathering. “For me, America isn’t just a country. It’s the place that literally changed the history of my family.”

“The fact that the son of

a bartender and a maid that worked in a hotel is sitting on the stage with you today,” he added later, “that’s why America is special.”

Rubio also worked to confront one of the most damaging _ at least from the perspective of this audience _ episodes in his young political career: the 2013 debate over immigration.

“Well, it wasn’t very popular. I don’t know if you know that from some of the folks here,” he quipped, to widespread chuckles.

The possible path to 2016 is tricky and tight for Rubio, once a darling of the nation’s conservatives but now viewed skeptically by many. Despite one of the most conservative voting records in the Senate, Rubio lost many of his conservative fans when he pushed a bipartisan overhaul of the nation’s immigration system that made it through the Senate in 2013 but stalled in the House of Representatives.

Rubio said he’d learned from 2013.

“What I’ve learned is you can’t even have a

conversation about that until people believe and know _ not just believe, but it’s proven to them _ that future illegal immigration will be controlled,” he said. “That is the single biggest lesson of the last two years”

Addressing both foreign policy and domestic themes, Rubio riffed on several “imagine” statements _ conjuring what a new direction for the nation could bring.

Imagine if we repealed and replaced Obamacare, he said to applause.

“Imagine if we had leaders that understood that the family, not government, is the most important organization in society,” he said to more applause.

“Imagine if our laws protected innocent human life, from conception to natural death,” he said to even bigger applause.

Finally, to both applause and raucous laughter: “Imagine if we had a president who doesn’t travel the world bad-mouthing America. After all, that’s the U.N.’s job.”

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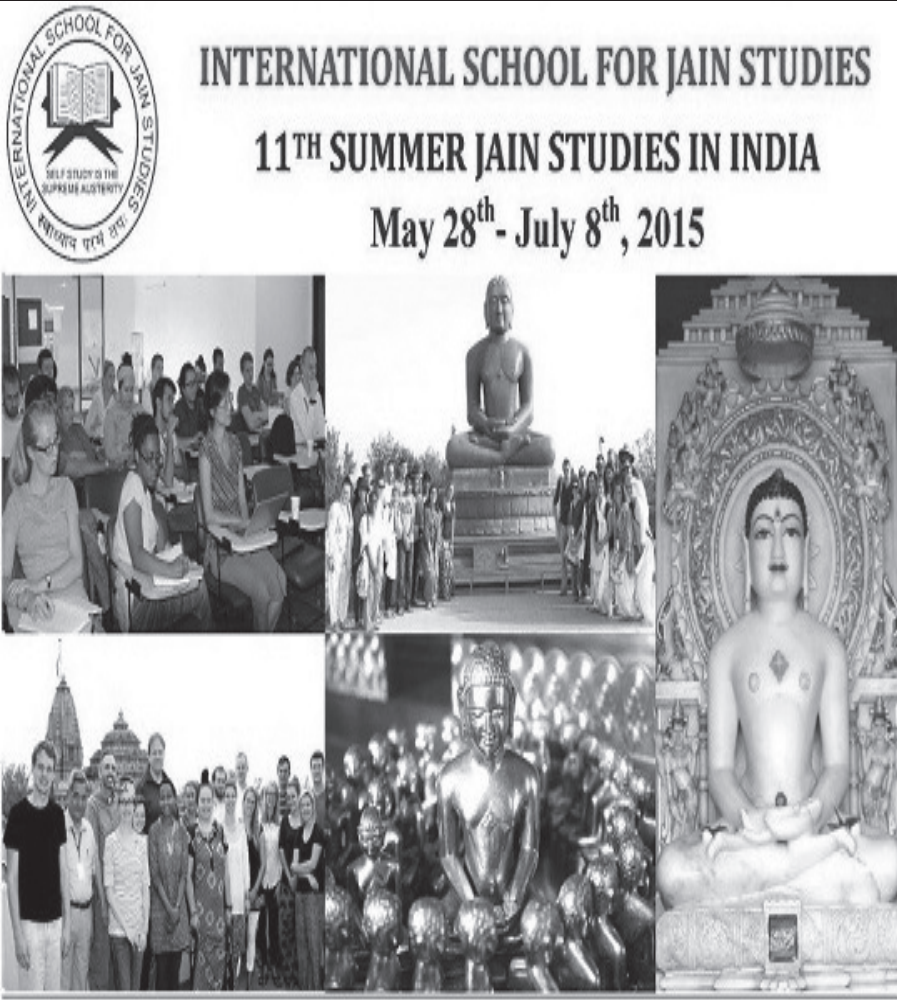
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International School for Jain Studies are pleased to announce two programs for Summer 2015 with a focus on the religious and cultural tradition of Jainism. This unique program will provide students from all over the world an opportunity to participate in a cultural and educational immersion in India. In India, the program will be based at ISJS centers in Delhi and Jaipur primarily.

Man’s best friend might just outsmart us one day

MICHELLE MARCHANTE
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Ever heard the saying, “Man’s best friend?” It’s a no-brainer that dogs are the best companions a human can have, sometimes even better than another human being. The question, though, is why? How can a creature that according to science and religion is unable to understand us, and yet be a better companion than another human?

The idea that animals, like dogs, while indeed having thoughts and emotions of their own, are not capable of rational thinking like humans has existed for a long, long time. Dog owners everywhere, I’m sure, would argue against that idea, claiming that not only do their pets

understand them, but that they do indeed know how they feel.

If you’re a person of science though, you’re not satisfied with the here say people claim, of the “proof” they show. You want to investigate, study, and actually come to a conclusion. While scientists are still researching this matter, the results of their findings so far seem to be giving reason to the dog owners.

Researchers at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig began to study Rico, a border collie, and were surprised to discover that Rico could learn new words as quickly as a toddler. The scientists then discovered another collie, Betsy, who knew more than 300 words.

During an interview with National Geographic,

Juliane Kaminski, a cognitive psychologist, who studied Rico and Betsy, said, “Dogs’ understanding of human forms of communication is something new that has evolved. It is something that’s developed in them because of their long association with humans,” Kaminski said.

Dogs were domesticated about 15,000 years ago, which according to the scientific community, is a relatively short time to learn language skills. So exactly how similar are their skills compared to humans?

During Betsy’s study, Kaminski had Betsy’s owner show Betsy colored photographs with an image of a toy she had never seen before and asked her to find it. Betsy sometimes brought the actual object or a copy of the exact photo-

graph to her owner, leading Kaminski to conclude that Betsy was capable of finding an object by a picture, a skill that is considered an abstract human skill. This gave evidence that dogs might actually be able to think like humans.

The community still hasn’t accepted the notion that dogs are capable of thinking like humans, but new studies continue to prove them wrong.

A study conducted in 2013 suggested that dogs were “emotionally connected” to their owners, as during the experiment, dogs tended to yawn right after their owner did. While this study sounds strange, it has a great significance, matching a study done in 2012 that showed people yawned more in response when people they cared

about yawned.

Elisabetta Palagi, of the Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies in Rome, believes that this study, “Once more demonstrates that dogs are capable of empathic abilities towards humans.”

This year, 11 dogs were tested to see if they were able to tell the difference between happy and angry human facial expressions. Emotions show on all parts of the human face, not just the mouth, so if dogs are truly able to spot an emotion, they should be able to do so no matter what part of the face they look at.

The results were favorable as the dogs were able to distinguish between the two emotions. Marc Bekoff, a behavioral ecologist who specializes in canines at the University of Colorado at

Boulder, did not find this discovery surprising.

“People and dogs have forged an incredibly close connection over thousands of years together. Along the way, dogs have been bred for certain traits, and one of the traits would be the ability to read us.”

Now scientists are curious to discover if this “ability” is due to extreme human interaction throughout the years or if dogs, wolves and other related animals with minimal or nonexistent human interaction would yield the same results.

Sounds like the scientific community is just scared to admit that they were wrong about their long-standing belief that animals were not capable of rational thinking and feeling empathy. But that’s alright because we dog owners know the truth.

An Oscar’s night that will be committed to memeory

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This year’s 87th Academy Awards ceremony, also known as The Oscars, served as a platform for celebrities to bring awareness about topics they are passionate about and are affecting today’s society. Celebrities took a portion of their acceptance speeches to touch delicate subjects such as suicide, racism, equal pay, immigration and more.

The Oscars, presented by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences is designed to honor the hard-working and prestigious actors, actresses, film makers, directors and anyone who was involved in producing these successful films. It is the night celebrities, especially those in film, all wait for. From the glitz and glamour of who wore it best and lavishing afterparties, celebrities and home viewers tune in for the much anticipated event.

Yet there was something magical about this year’s Academy Awards that left me in awe. It seems to me that

celebrities are finally using their power for good. Although there were many inspirational speeches, there was a certain few that stood out and had people talking still days after the event.

First-time nominee Graham Moore won the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for his work on the film “The Imitation Game.” Moore took his inspiration from the man in the center of the plot, Alan Turing, who was an important element in the advancement of computer science and cracked the impossible German code during World War II, giving the allies an opportunity to change the course of the war. However, he was later prosecuted for being an openly gay man which ultimately led him to take his life.

Graham started off his speech by sharing intimate moments of his life where he too has thought about taking his life because he was not always accepted or simply called weird. Moore stated, “I would like for this moment to be for that kid out there who feels that she’s weird or she’s different or she just doesn’t fit in. Yes you do. I promise you do. Stay weird, stay different.” This speech made such an impact that social media frenzy was filled with stay weird hashtags

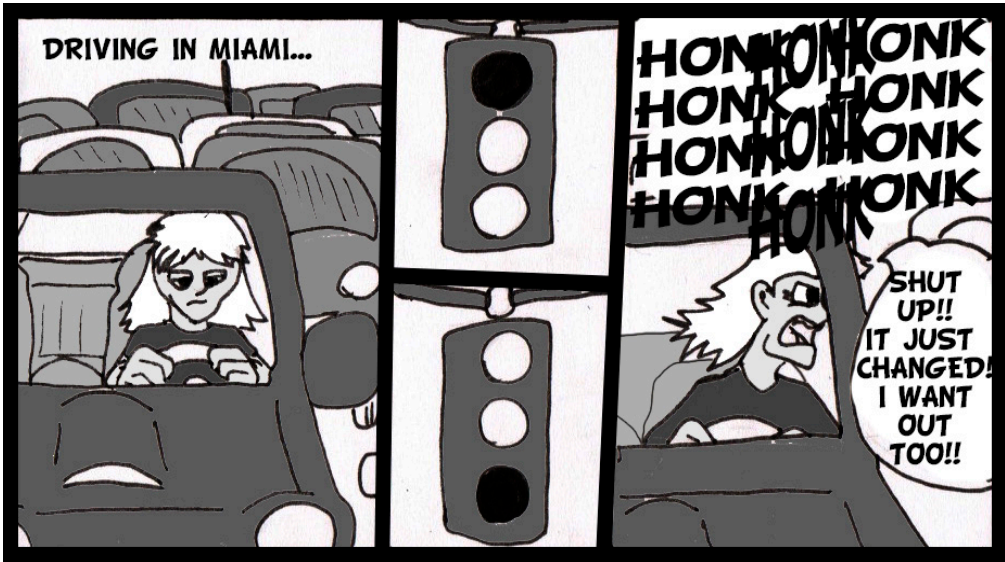
showing great support from fans and fellow colleagues.

They say you can’t win when you talk politics at the Oscar, but that didn’t stop Patricia Arquette. Academy Award winner for Supporting Actress in “Boyhood,” Arquette took the stage for her acceptance speech, but did not leave before clearly leaving her point of view on equal pay. “To every women who gave birth to every taxpayer and citizen of this nation, we have fought for everybody else’s equal rights. It’s our time to have wage equality once and for all and equal rights for women in the United States of America!”

This feminism inspired speech received applause from the audience, including myself. Arquette had whopping reactions from Meryl Streep and Jennifer Lopez.

Undeniably, this year’s Oscars was one for the books. I look forward to future Award shows, not for the designer dresses strutting the red carpet, but for more inspiring and pro-active speeches that I am sure are soon to come. With a much more connected society we live in now thanks to social media and other technologies, it is speeches like these that start a movement to create a greater world.

FRANK
AND
IRENE



SAMUEL PRITCHARD-TORRES/THE BEACON

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Star Trek’s George Takei talks equality

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George Takei, famous for playing Lt. Hikaru Sulu on “Star Trek” and admired for his work on “Futurama” as a disembodied talking head, visited FIU last week in the U.S. Century Bank Arena.

In the first row were members of Stonewall; behind them were SGA members, and filtered throughout the grid of chairs were people with “Star Trek” shirts and snapbacks. It resembled what Takei called, “infinite diversity in infinite combinations.”

A representative came out and introduced the event. He flubbed the name and introduced George Takei as George Takee—a mistake never corrected.

Takei walked out with his catchphrase, “Oh, my!” His gruff, baritone voice echoed across the arena. Even without the microphone, he would have been easy to hear.

He began by speaking about equality. Speaking about the founding fathers, the first functionaries of egalitarianism, but “who kept other people as slaves.” Equality was not done yet, Takei explained - a theme of his speech.

He spoke about the inequality he had experienced in his life. When he was five years old, he and his family were sent to a Japanese-American internment camp during World War II.

“Our bank accounts were frozen...and they began rounding us up.”

Americans, rounding up people based on their ethnicity, resembled their enemies. He recalled the day they took him. An officer stood outside their home while the family scrambled to get their belongings.

“My mother took the longest,” he said. “She came out holding my baby sister in one arm, crying, while wheeling a suitcase with all her belongings.”

The Japanese-Americans in the camp were described as “enemy non-aliens” and had to forswear their allegiance to the Emperor of Japan.

“As if we had some genetic loyalty to the emperor,” Takei explained. “And if we forswear our ‘allegiance’ we would be admitting to having one, which we didn’t.”

Takei’s family was just as American as any other family; both of his parents had been born in the United States.

“We need to hold democracy’s feet to the fire.”

George Takei
Actor (Helmsman)
Star Trek (USS Enterprise)

The Japanese-Americans who volunteered to fight in the European theater during WWII were placed in a segregated, all Japanese-American unit. This was the 442nd Infantry Regiment, which after the war received 21 Medals of Honor. Their motto was “go for broke” because of their indefatigable desire to prove their loyalty to the United States. Takei described the unit’s heroism during the battle at the Gothic Line. The allies had been

stalemated and could not push forward into the Italian territory. The 442nd Unit decided to scale the cliff behind the enemy battalion because they knew a surprise attack from behind would guarantee victory.

“The members who fell off, fell silently, each and everyone, as to not give away their position,” Takei said. “We not only fought the enemy, but prejudice, and we won.”

The discussion then shifted to another form of inequality.

“I knew I was different,” Takei said.

He explained how no one in Hollywood would hire a gay actor and thus his silence began. “I loved my career,” Takei repeated as he explained his reason for not being openly gay. He met an older gay man who told him about the raids that would occur at gay bars. Police would raid, arrest, and fingerprint the men. “They ruined many people’s lives...some even killed themselves.” These men and women were publicly shamed and humiliated.

The first time Takei publically presented himself as a gay man was after Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed the same-sex marriage bill that would have legalized gay marriage in California.

“We need to hold democracy’s feet to the fire,” Takei said.

He concluded his speech by announcing, “At the age of 77, I will be making my Broadway debut.”

The musical is titled “Allegiance” and focuses on a romance in a Japanese-American internment camp. The message of the musical, which connects with the theme of Takei’s speech, is “being able to find joy even in the harshest of circumstances.”



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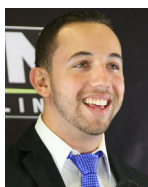
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‘Arrow’ ends with right amount of action, emotion

DC ON TV



CHRIS SANTIAGO

Talk about a great way to leave the show with a 2-week cliffhanger! Ra's Al Ghul actually wants Oliver to be the next leader of the League of Assassins?

And from what the previews show, it seems like Oliver agrees to that deal! My mind is still boggled by all of this.

I give this episode of “Arrow” an 8.5/10. It had the right amount of action for a usual episode, it had the emotion in there that keeps the audience’s attention.

But what it didn’t have was more A.T.O.M. time which really irked me because the trailer for this episode really hyped him up and I was looking forward to seeing him in real action.

Besides that being the only negative in this episode, I was in awe at the choreography of the fighting in this episode. The fights between Oliver and Nyssa Al Ghul and Malcolm Merlyn and Nyssa were ones to really pay attention to. It was nearly flawless with every move and kick.

It always excites me to see Katrina Law come back to the “Arrow” episodes as Nyssa Al Ghul because I met her last summer and she’s such a sweetheart.

This episode in particular is a gut-wrenching one for a couple of reasons: This episode shows how Thea’s angrily dealing with her newfound grief by going around and blabbing to everyone in the gang about what she did when Oliver specifically told her to keep it to herself.

She told Roy, Laurel and worse, she told Nyssa and gave her back her sword, to only

leave that standoff unanswered. Now, let’s take an actual look at Nyssa Al Ghul. All I’ve talked about her thus far is her fighting and how beautiful she is. But I haven’t yet touched on how they actually bring in a character into a superhero show and make her homosexual. I find that dynamic to be very inspiring and intriguing, too. It shows the progression of the superhero movement and how it involves more than just race, but it involves sexuality, also. And Katrina Law plays the character with such respect and it’s just perfectly believable.

Now we get a real glimpse into the brotherhood that Diggle and Oliver share with one another. When they are captured by the League of Assassins and are chained in a prison cell together really allows them to show one another how they feel as if the other is family.

Diggle goes as far as asking Oliver how he’d feel about being his best man at his next wedding and Oliver agrees.

Brotherhood truly is a powerful force to be reckoned with.

To finish, Ray Palmer has finally become the hero we all know as the A.T.O.M. The only thing I’m left wondering is, will he have his ability to shrink to subatomic sizes or not.

Patience, my DC soldiers. Our heroes will come back bigger and better than ever!

“DC on TV” with Chris is a column covering the latest episodes of the ongoing series The Flash and Arrow.

For the full story see fiusm.com.

chris.santiago@fiusm.com

The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum

FROST ART MUSEUM

THE STEVEN & DOROTHEA GREEN
CRITICS' LECTURE SERIES:

DR. MELISSA CHIU



Dr. Melissa Chiu, Director of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Photography by Ashley Gilbertson

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4 | 6:00 PM

The Steven and Dorothea Green Critics' Lecture Series announces the launch of its 34th season at the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum FIU with guest-lecturer Melissa Chiu's presentation of “Making A Museum in the 21st Century” on Wednesday, March 4 at 6:00 p.m. at the Frost Museum with a reception immediately following.

Dr. Chiu is the new director of the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. The Hirshhorn is part of the Smithsonian Institution, and is considered one of the “big five” modern arts museums in the United States. Chiu has published numerous books on Chinese contemporary art, and is one of the world's leading authorities on modern and contemporary Asian art. She is a board member of the Association of Art Museum Directors, the American Alliance of Museums, and the Museum Association of New York.

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FOOTBALL

Athletics announces changes to spring football practice schedule

JACOB SPIWAK

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FIU announced Friday morning that they would be slightly altering the original spring practice schedule that was released last week.

The new opening date for the practices has been pushed back a few days to Thursday, March 19th, with a start time 9:00 AM.

There will be practices held at Ocean Bank Field at FIU Stadium multiple times every week through all of March and the first half of April, leading up to the Spring Game on Friday, April 17th.

After the extremely active offseason, it will be very interesting to see the new-look Panthers take the field for the first time this spring. FIU had their

highest rated Signing Day class in years this season, and this will be the first time all the new coaches are working with the team on the field.

Defensive coordinator Matt House and running backs coach Tim Harris Jr. are among the new additions to the staff, with the spring practices giving them a chance to coach and build chemistry with their

new players.

Some of the other storylines heading into spring practices are whether or not Alex McGough will start at quarterback next season after adding Christian and Maurice Alexander to the roster, seeing how Alex Gardner looks after the shoulder injury that cut his freshman campaign in the 2014 season short, and

if the returning Richard Leonard can duplicate his tremendous performance last season that led him to the All-Conference USA team.

The Spring Game that caps off the practice schedule will also carry a lot of excitement, as the live scrimmage will see everybody on the roster playing at full game speed.

Each spring practice

will be open to the public, and FIU encourages their fans to come out and watch the team in their first organized practices of the offseason.

There are a few rules for those attending, as still photography, video recording, and live reporting of the practices through social media are all prohibited.

BASEBALL

Panthers take on Marlins in friendly exhibition

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The Miami Marlins are two weeks into their Spring Training and prepare to compete for a run to the playoffs. One thing they do to get game- to be ready for the start of the season is they host an exhibition game with the FIU baseball team. The game is on March 2 at 1:05 p.m.

name that will stand out for everyone is Giancarlo Stanton.

Even though this is considered a “friendly” exhibition, FIU should not hold back when playing against the Fish to truly show that they won’t be intimidated by a professional team.

Expect FIU to come out aggressive with a “small ball” mentality since they do not have those big bats in the lineup like the Marlins have.

“One thing I’ll be looking forward to and I am sure the baseball team will as well, is they will have the chance to play against future hall of famer and new free agent pickup for the Marlins, Ichiro.”

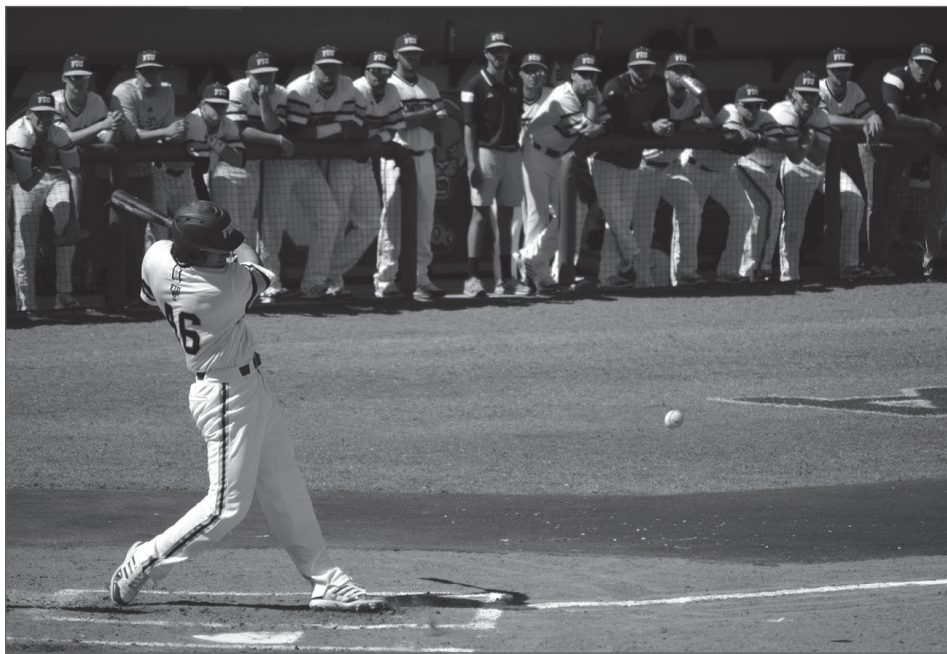
The Marlins have hosted this game for the past few years and it is a great way for the FIU players to face major league players. The Panthers will be able to experience a game that has a “big league” feel to it and which could be the only time some players on the roster will ever be part of that type of atmosphere.

The game will be held in the Marlins’ spring training complex in Jupiter, Florida and it will take place in Roger Dean Stadium which is located in the complex.

The FIU baseball team will have this tremendous opportunity to play against rising stars on the Marlins and one

In the past, when I have gone to these games the Marlins have their projected opening day starters on the field just to keep the crowd into the game. Once the third or fourth inning starts expect all the starters for the Marlins to come out and be subbed in for minor leaguers or spring training invitees that are battling it out for a spot on the big league roster.

Another aspect of this game that could be interesting for FIU is that they will be playing this game using wood bats. In case you’re wondering, at the collegiate level players do not use wood bats and even before that at the high school level.



KRONO LESCANO/THE BEACON

Senior outfielder Brian Portelli fouls off a pitch

In spending a long period of time hitting with an aluminum bat it could be difficult adjusting to hit with a wood bat.

One thing I’ll be looking forward to and I am sure the baseball team will as well, is they will have the chance to play against future hall of famer and new free agent pickup for the Marlins, Ichiro.

Not many players or even fans can say they had the chance to witness a baseball legend who was dominant in two different countries and is a worldwide icon.

Expect this game to be low scoring just like in years past. This can a moment

for these FIU players to keep with them forever. They will play against some of the best young talents in the game today like Christian Yelich, Marcell Ozuna and Adeiny Hechavarria all who are getting better year after year and will be heavily depended on this season for the fighting Fish.

The Panthers are playing in a game in which some people dream to have that chance and expect them to make the most of it and hopefully come out with the win.

Major League Baseball responds to pace of play complaints with new rule changes

JACOB SPIWAK

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In recent years, Major League Baseball has begun to lose popularity, and has had a lot of trouble attracting younger audiences. Despite being America’s national pastime, for various reasons baseball has been unable to

attain the success it once had.

The MLB is still reeling in a tremendous amount of revenue every year, so on the surface it looks as if the sport is fine. However, ratings continue to drop seemingly every year, and leagues like the National Football League and National Basketball Association draw higher numbers.

One of the reasons that is always pointed to for the

MLB’s decline is the pace of play. MLB games take significantly longer to finish than other major sports with all the down-time between pitches, and the league is finally doing something about it.

It was announced to teams after they started Spring

SEE MLB, PAGE 7

SWIMMING

C-USA Champion swim and dive team deserves attention

DRUCKER DIGEST



DAVID DRUCKER

The women’s swimming and diving team made history in every way possible Saturday night.

They became the first team at Florida International University to bring a Conference USA title to Miami.

The team claimed their first ever championship in any sort of league since their founding in 2003. The student athletes set 11 new University records over the course of the four-day event. In the words of Head Coach Randy Horney, the women truly “competed like champions all week and earned this title.”

Where is the recognition for these girls?

It is no secret that FIU has a history of struggling to draw out fans to sporting events. But for a crew of C-USA champions and rapid record-breakers, will there be an exception?

The one time I went to a FIU swimming and diving event this season, it felt like watching Netflix; the collective event is made of individual episodes that can be digested by themselves, one at a time, yet are all part of a bigger picture.

FIU’s athletes touched the wall before their opposition (Florida Gulf Coast in this meet) in a variety of events and the excitement grew with each victory.

Like diving into a show, there are moments where I was completely confused – I didn’t get the intense “oo-ing” and “ah-ing” sounds that the parents and coaches produced - but there was an understood atmosphere about the meet.

“

If the team had the support that a champion typically does, the crowd would stretch into Biscayne Bay.

I understood that the swimming and diving team was for real just by being there. The parents, coaches and players were more intense and more involved than at any other sporting event I’ve seen on campus.

Not a single fan at the event left or went inside when the weather turned to rain. The people who were there to support were going to stay there, even if that meant getting a little wet.

Now, the University’s swimming and diving team can call themselves champions. Will more fans turn up to the pool next season? I believe that there are no excuses for them not to.

Here’s a popular excuse: it takes a hike for many students to watch the team. Swimming and diving is based at the University’s Biscayne Bay Campus.

Few people want to drive through the heart of Miami traffic to go see the team, but then again, how many students who attend FIU aren’t used to the horrid Miami traffic? The C-USA champions deserve a commute.

Another reason that swimming and diving deserves more fan attention is that it’s not a terribly difficult sport to grasp. Sure, there are technical aspects to the sports, but it boils down to who touches the wall first. Even the most casual sports fan can root for this.

The followers of FIU swimming and diving already fill up the small poolside bleacher section allotted for them, but this isn’t enough. The University should have to add another set of bleachers.

If the team had the support that a champion typically does, the crowd would stretch into Biscayne Bay. In the meantime, just a few more fans at the University’s first C-USA champions’ meets next year won’t hurt.

MLB introduces new rule changes

MLB, PAGE 6

Training that there would be new rules regarding pace of play. These changes, presumably drawn up by the recently formed “pace of play committee”, aim to keep the game moving at a somewhat quick pace.

The changes for 2015 will be that managers must initiate all instant replay challenges from the dugout, batters must keep one foot in the batter’s box at all times, and the rule that games will resume “promptly” after commercial breaks will be more closely enforced.

They tested rules like this (as well as a few others, including a play clock for pitchers) in the Arizona Fall League, which decreased the time of games significantly.

There’s been a lot of trial and error with the modern rule changes, but the further this goes on the closer MLB will be to figuring out and fixing the issues.

I’m personally somebody who never

had a problem with the time of games. I grew up religiously playing and watching baseball, and to me the down-time between pitches was part of the enjoyment of the game.

Despite this, I personally think those publicly bashing the MLB for making an attempt to speed up the game need to open their eyes.

In a world of increasing technology, the average person’s attention spans are decreasing significantly. Baseball needs to appeal to younger people in order to have sustained success, and if the game isn’t keeping children’s attention then something needs to be done

The MLB has always been the last to adapt and evolve, and while it’s unfortunate to baseball purists like myself who loved the game the way it was, a change like this to improve baseball’s longevity is necessary.

Not all of the rule changes are great; I’ll never be convinced that instant replay (which was

implemented in 2014) has a place in the MLB. Some of the changes may not work, but me is extremely upset that rule changes like this have to happen. I understand the

“

I personally think those publicly bashing the MLB for making an attempt to speed up the game need to open their eyes.

but that’s okay as long as progress is being made. I’ll always love baseball no matter what, and part of necessity, though, and soon even the most old-school baseball purists will adapt to the changes as well.

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Award-winning journalist sheds light at BBC

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Award-winning television anchor and correspondent Soledad O'Brien said she experienced discrimination growing up. Now, she brings questions about prejudice and police brutality into light through her national Black in America tour.

Making her last stop at the University's Biscayne Bay Campus, the BBC Student Government Council invited O'Brien last Wednesday, Feb. 25 as part of its lecture series, to talk about these issues, especially for student black minority groups.

Students and community members applauded O'Brien's effort to discuss personal stories of how policing impacts the lives of all races and politics. She presented detailed analysis of racial profiling and brought evidence through different videos from her documentary, Black & Blue. A panel of experts and academics, including SJMC assistant professor Robert 'Ted' Gutsche, formed part of

the conversation.

"I grew up in Long Island, [New York] on the north shore which was 99 percent white community," said O'Brien in an interview with Student Media. "My full name is María de la Soledad Teresa O'Brien, which is not exactly blending in."

O'Brien comes from a mixed family descent of Afro-Cubans and Irish Australians. She said she always felt isolated from others and was often made to feel like she didn't fit in.

"When you make people feel like they don't belong, you make them feel like 'other.' It's very much a way of having mastery over them," O'Brien said. "The minute you start saying that there's 'us' and there's 'them,' then it's easier to say that they're bad."

According to O'Brien, 2014 was a year of strong confrontations about race in America, such as police brutality in the killing of Eric Garner in NY, as well as the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Thus the Black in America tour - a way for college communities

to talk about this issue.

"I'm not sure we've ever had a really honest conversation about race in this country," O'Brien said. "It's a very uncomfortable thing to want to do, and I think it is required before you can really hope to move forward on any kind of racial issue."

O'Brien compared the United States to a metaphorically large boat. She said that if part of the boat has sprung a leak like unjust policing, economic disempowerment and overincarceration, everyone will be affected at some point by the leak.

"I think young people just want to be heard. I think they have questions and they want to be able to bring those questions to a larger audience," O'Brien said. "Often conversations sort of put people into categories of oppressed and oppressor, and nobody wants to be part of that conversation. I don't want to join that conversation."

O'Brien has also shed light on gays, Latinos and Muslims in America. She



MARIA SOLEDAD LORENZINO/THE BEACON

Broadcast journalist Soledad O'Brien speaks about police brutality and race issues during her Black in America tour at the FIU Biscayne Bay campus on Wednesday, Feb. 25.

said many Americans look at all Latinos in the same way, without thinking about their different histories in the country. Through documentaries, she hopes to reveal their individual stories.

"If you're a journalist, you want to bring stories that others really haven't told and a great way to do that is to go into populations and say, 'I know you think this,

but did you actually know this,'" O'Brien said. "When everyone is running for a story, I'm going the other way. I like going the opposite direction and look for the individual and finding their personal story and seeing if I can bring that out."

O'Brien believes that the history of different populations are generally ignored in schools and that

everyone should educate themselves around issues of race and the story of different communities.

"I think what [Black in America] did was, we realized that by giving a voice to a group, in this case African Americans, [they] kind of tell their own stories about their community. It's actually pretty empowering," O'Brien said.

Renovations for theater are underway

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As part of a partnership with the Office of Academic Affairs, the Biscayne Bay Campus Wolfe University Theater will be undergoing construction on one of its major establishments.

The Mary Ann Wolfe Theater has commenced renovations, with new seats, new paint and new theatrical lighting, as well as a new lobby.

"We partnered with academic affairs in the offering of courses in WUC last year," said Scott Jones, director of WUC. "Through that partnership, we needed to upgrade the facility to meet the instruction needs."

The interior of the theater will

be redesigned and the layout of the seats will be changed from a center aisle to two aisles directly off the lobby doorway. The seats will also host power and USB capabilities, like plug-in means for students, to meet the requirements for the partnership.

"We've done a variety of things relating to the classroom, with course capturing and other things that academic affairs has indicated they need," said Jones. "We've completely reimaged BBC and it's important that we make sure the facilities remain up to date and meet all student needs."

According to Jones, the plans for the renovations began when he first came to the University – roughly two years ago. The funding came from the Student

Government Association, the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Academic Affairs.

Angelica Johnson, a junior public relations major, is particularly excited about the new plug-in capabilities that the theatre will offer.

"I really can't tell you how many times I've looked for an available plug in that theatre," she said. "There's like maybe five plugs in that room and, when you have a class full of students that all use computers to take notes, that isn't enough."

Johnson also thinks that the renovations for the theatre should have started a long time ago.

"It's just that, compared to the MMC campus, I feel like we're always a step behind," she said. "I'm really happy to see that

BBC is stepping up and is ready to make a more-modern building – kind of like what they did with Panther Square."

Panther Square, the area just outside of WUC, was renovated a little over a year ago.

Demitri Aristil, a senior journalism major, wasn't too fond of the renovations for the square. Nonetheless, he thinks that the theatre needed much improvement.

"It was just old, you know?" he said. "It wasn't modern at all and I think that BBC needed to fix that. I didn't want them to renovate Panther Square at the time because I thought it was unnecessary. But I think this is necessary."

According to Jones, some of the same elements and themes that were used for the Panther

Square renovation will be used for the construction of the theatre.

"It's not going to look like two separate spaces," he said. "We had such success with the renovations of Panther Square and we're really looking to carry that energy forward in pantherizing the Mary Ann Wolfe Center."

Demolition of the theatre has already begun. The project is scheduled to be completed by Aug. 17.

Jones asks students and the surrounding BBC community to stay clear of the theatre, lobby and backstage area during the construction phase.

"I think it's going to be a wonderful project," he said. "I'm really looking forward to see how students will utilize the space once we're completed with it."

Panther Power Council hosts week-long Spirit Fest

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To shake up Panther spirit at the Biscayne Bay Campus, the BBC Panther Power Council will host its first ever week-long Spirit Fest.

Starting Monday, March 2 until Saturday, March 7, students will participate at different events with food, giveaways, games and music. All free of charge.

To kick off the dynamic week, Monday will be a carnival-themed day from noon to 2 p.m. at Panther Square.

On Tuesday, there will be a Panthers' Cafe hosted by the Creative Photography Video and Fashion Club from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Panther Square. Students are encouraged to come out and relax with entertainment from FIU students.

Wednesday is expected to be a movie day where students are welcomed to watch award-winning film "Beyond the

Lights", starring Gugu Mbatha-Raw and Nate Parker. There will be two showings with one at noon and another at 5 p.m. The event is hosted by the Student Programming Council and it will be held in Room 157 of the Wolfe University Center.

On Thursday, students will go back in time at FIU Flashback. Students are encouraged to wear their favorite decade attire as they relive University BBC memories. There will also be a session of t-shirt tie-dye. The event will take place at Panther

Square and Panther Plaza from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Hosted by the BBC Recreation Center, there will be a Yoga by the Bay Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the lawns by the bay. Finally, on Saturday, there will be a Councils vs Staff Field Day hosted by the BBC Student Government Council.

Students are encouraged to come out and network with student leaders and staff. Food and games are included.