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Archaeological sites spur senior faculty research

REBECA PICCARDO
Asst. News Director

Until a few weeks ago, the Miami Circle was the only archaeological site that was considered culturally significant for the history of Miami. Now, six new circles have been uncovered that reveal further findings about the Tequesta Indians.

For Professor Mary Pfeiffer, senior faculty fellow in the Honors College, this means holding off the publication date of her book about her research on the Miami Circle, which she started about 10 years ago before

she became a faculty member at the University.

"This new site might be more significant than the Miami Circle," said Pfeiffer.

Back when the Miami Circle was discovered, she participated in efforts to prevent the circle from being destroyed by developers. The "Save the Circle" movement proved to be successful. Now Pfeiffer, along with other key players in the conservation society, including Head Archaeologist of the Miami Circle Robert Carr, is looking to

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BANJO DITTY



VINCENT RIVES/THE BEACON

Keycel Pelaez (above), senior in anthropology, relaxes by playing a tune on his banjo beneath the trees.

Judaism at cutting edge: 10th annual conference to talk torah and science

CLAYTON GUTZMORE
Contributing Writer

Nathan Katz quoted Albert Einstein: "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."

These two topics are both explored through conversation by many professors, doctors and other astute Jewish intellectuals at the Torah Science Conference.

"For the last 20 years we have brought together leading rabbis and top-notch scientists for appreciation and understanding of their viewpoints on religion and science," said Katz, the director of the Program in the Study of Spirituality.

TSC is a four day conference produced by the members of The Shul, a Jewish community center located on Collins Avenue in Surfside. The conference occurs every two years and this year marks the 10th year anniversary, Katz said.

"We have invited Avraham Steinberg who is leading religious authority in medical ethics and winner of the Israel prize," said Katz, who is also one of the main organizers of the TSC.

According to Katz, the Program in the Study of Spirituality has been a co-sponsor of the conference for the past 12 to 14 years.

This year's conference is going to host 16 presenters with provoking subjects of religion and science. The conference happens around this time of the year between semesters to

allow more professors to join.

The Shul has based the criteria of the featured speakers on their topics of research. The 16 individuals come from institutions such as Columbia University, University of Maryland and colleges from Jerusalem.

"I want attendants to leave with a clearer understanding of how the Torah casts light on our lives as persons.

Joseph Bodenheimer
Professor
Jerusalem College of Technology

"I am most excited for the opportunity to discuss with colleagues various issues of Torah and Science," said Joseph Bodenheimer, a professor at the Jerusalem College of Technology and an organizer of the conference.

At the last conference, John Loike, one of the professors from the Department of Physiology at Columbia University, presented the possible reality of cloning and the implications this would have on the laws of Judaism.

Author and Rabbi Simon Jacobson's presentation used scientific concepts, like matter turning into

energy and water turning into gas, to open the question: "Does life really end?"

This year, Bodenheimer will present his own take of the opening chapters of the Torah, the sacred book of Judaism. These chapters discuss the Genesis.

"This will be my second time presenting at the conference," said Bodenheimer. "I want attendants to leave with a clearer understanding of how the Torah casts light on our lives as persons."

According to Katz, the TSC is a mind-opening experience with topics covering the origin of the universe to neuroscience.

"A large part of this conference is not to just read papers, we want people to understand the harmonized viewpoints of both science and religion from top-level scientists and rabbis," said Katz.

-news@fiusm.com

THE TORAH SCIENCE CONFERENCE

When: December 13-17
Where: The Shul
9540 Collins Avenue
Surfside, FL 33154, USA
Price: Free, open to the public
Visit <http://www.torah-scienceconference.org> for programming

Women's basketball gets first win, finishes second in Thanksgiving Classic

STEVEN ROWELL
Staff Writer

In the FIU Thanksgiving Classic the Panthers picked up their first win of the season, and finished runner-up in the Thanksgiving Classic by splitting their two contests.

On Friday Nov. 29, behind a second half surge led by senior guard Jerica Coley and junior forward Tynia McKinzie, FIU pulled away from Valparaiso University en route to a 65-47 victory.

Coley finished with a double-double tallying 30 points and 10 rebounds. McKinzie finished with 11 points and 12 rebounds recording her first career double-double.

At halftime, FIU led 29-27 and shot 39.3 percent compared to 24.2 percent for Valparaiso. The Crusaders kept the game close in the second half in large part of shooting 11-14 from the free throw line as FIU was plagued by foul trouble in the first half. Junior guard Zsafia Labady, McKinzie, junior forward Briana Wright and freshman forward Karrah Johnson each picked up two fouls in the first half.

The Panthers stayed out of foul trouble in the second half with only four team fouls and kept the Crusaders off the free throw line.

"We talked about that a lot, and in the second half I really

thought we picked up defensively, and put them on their heels," Head Coach Cindy Russo said.

With Villanova University defeating Montana State University 79-55 on Friday Nov. 29 in the FIU Thanksgiving Classic, the championship round was set between FIU and Villanova.

Villanova rallied in the second half behind junior forward Lauren Burford and senior guard Devon Kane to propel the wild-

"We talked about (foul trouble) a lot, and in the second half I really thought we picked up defensively and put them on their heels.

Cindy Russo
Head Coach
Women's Basketball

cats to a 68-61 victory over FIU.

"I think we just stopped rebounding in the second half and we broke down defensively," Russo said. "A lot of good things happened out there but we just couldn't put it together, I saw a lot of hustle and intensity but that was a tough team."

SEE CLASSIC, PAGE 7

WORLD NEWS

Long-running societal divide fuels Thai conflict

Both the protesters on the streets of Bangkok and the Thai government pleading for them to go home say they’re on the side of democracy, but that is not what their increasingly dangerous conflict is about. This is a fight about power, and who ought to have it. The unrest that has brought the capital to the brink of catastrophe this week has laid bare a societal schism pitting the majority rural poor against an urban-based elite establishment. It is a divide that has led to upheaval several times in recent years, sometimes death, even though the man at the center of it, former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, has not set foot in Thailand since 2008.

Drone on: novel uses for Amazon’s drone delivery

Amazon.com CEO Jeff Bezos wants his company to deliver goods - in 30 minutes or less - using drones. While many regulatory hurdles stand in the way, it’s not hard to imagine how such a service might change our lives. Forget home delivery. With the so-called Prime Air unmanned aircraft project, Amazon can potentially deliver goods to customers who are camped out in the middle of a field. Here are some novel ways consumer might make use of a delivery drone service.

Ukrainian protesters besiege government buildings

Thousands of Ukrainian protesters on Monday besieged government buildings in Kiev and called for the ouster of the prime minister and his Cabinet, as anger at the president’s decision to ditch a deal for closer ties with the European Union gripped other parts of the country and threatened his rule. The entrances to the Cabinet and central bank buildings were blocked, after a huge rally in the capital by hundreds of thousands Sunday. That demonstration was mostly peaceful, until a group of protesters tried to storm President Viktor Yanukovich’s office. After hours of scuffles, police chased protesters away with tear gas and truncheons, injuring dozens.

For more world news, check out FIUSM.com.

Discovery of new Miami Circles puts professor’s book on hold

RESEARCH, PAGE 1

save these new circles.

“I have a completed manuscript on the Miami Circle, a Tequesta Indian relic unearthed in 1998 on a 2.2 acre parcel of land on the south side of the Miami River where it empties into Biscayne Bay,” said Pfeiffer in a statement of significance she drafted.

Pfeiffer’s non-fiction book, which focuses on her studies and personal encounters with the uncovering on the site, is her account of the efforts to save the Miami Circle. However, the recent discovery has caused her to halt the publication of her book in order to include the new research on the new site.

“I thought the manuscript was complete and preparing for publishing when a another construction project on the north side of the Miami River called Met Square,” said Pfeiffer.

The new Met Square site revealed several perfect circles in the bedrock

with interconnected paths between them.

Since the new discovery, Pfeiffer and student volunteers from the Honors College have worked to declare a state-

most of us,” said Dominguez. She considers the new site worth preserving as a historical relic rather than allowing the developers to build more commercial property.

“This new site might be more significant than the Miami Circle.”
Mary Pfeiffer
Senior Faculty Fellow
Honors College

ment of significance to establish the cultural and historical value of these new sites along with the Miami Circle.

Florencia Dominguez, a senior and international relations major, has volunteered to help Pfeiffer with research and wrote her own statement of significance about the Tequesta sites.

“To exchange the magic of culture and history for a building is not a fair trade-off — at least not for

“There has to be a line about how much we are willing to compromise for economic gains. Our city has become over the years a place to worship diversity,” said Dominguez.

Joanna Rodriguez, a junior and criminal justice major that is another researcher, considers the value of the sites towards education about the unearthed history of Miami’s native tribes.

“Education has an enor-

mous role within this site because we can spread the knowledge of the early indigenous South Florida Tribe called the Tequesta,” said Rodriguez.

According to Pfeiffer’s written statements about the site, “the current developer had purchased the downtown parking lots with intent of revitalizing the area. Contracts are in place for retail stores and a movie theater on the Tequesta village Met Square site.”

Pfeiffer, along with the student researchers, is actively participating with other members of the preservation society to advocate to Miami-Dade County to halt the development and preserve this new site.

“Many preservationists find themselves once again working to save a unique cultural heritage site from destruction. I am revising the manuscript to include this important new discovery,” said Pfeiffer.

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Glenn Hubert Library to renovate second floor by August 2014

LIBRARY, PAGE 8

The person in the center desk will provide students with appointments to talk to tutors at one of those tables and tutoring rooms.

A multimedia section will also be available to students with two flat screens over two peninsula tables with the opportunity to seat five or more students around them, inspired by The Hub located at Modesto A. Maidique Campus’ Green Library.

Behind the multimedia section there will be offices for administration. Next to

those offices, students will have available one color

“All the students that have been part of this process had the chance to be part of the creation of their ideal library.”
Bryan Cooper
Associate Dean
Technical and Digital Services

printer, three black and white printers and an FIU OneCard machine.

The laptop bar that

will be between the six computer tables and the

multimedia section will have a counter table and matching high chairs for students to plug in their

laptops.

“Part of the renovation is to make the laptop bar attractive for students” Cooper said.

According to Cooper, the renovation will also address issues of lighting in the library. Cooper said that the library will be better lit with LED spot lighting throughout the second floor.

“The second floor will be a very clean, colorful and open space,” Cooper said.

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Are political talk shows really worth listening to?

LUIS SANTANA
Contributing Writer

A man runs from the door of his house fighting against the freezing rain to get inside his car.

He sits down, victorious, and cranks the car to life. As moves the car forward he clicks a knob and on comes on a loud commanding voice.

The words fly from the radio like flames from a furnace, burning the ears of the listener and inciting a rage in him that burns hotter than a thousand George Foreman grills.

He starts nodding his head in agreement and yelling, “Yes! He’s so right this government is in shambles!” and sometimes, “This world is going to hell in a hand basket!”

He swerves around traffic, beeping at those who have a different elected officials name on their bumper, shaking his fist wishing he could give them a piece of his mind.

The voice on the radio keeps spurring him on and on until the man is furiously agreeing and preaching a message not of his own making, but of what the voice tells him to say.

The man parks his car at his job, nods in approval towards the radio as he hears the final words of his lecturer, turns off his car and storms off, fueled by anger for the rest of the day and passing it on

to everyone he meets.

Later that night he will go home and sleep, and wake up to do the same thing tomorrow.

He will listen to a message of anger

“The problem I see with political talk radio and those who listen to it is that they really allow their emotions to be riled up by these speakers.”

and rage, one that is meant to make you paranoid and furious.

A voice that is known to us as political talk radio.

I am not a Republican. Nor am I a Democrat.

If I bring up a figure that may be affiliated with one side of politics or another, I’m not trying to bash that party. I am simply a person who has had the displeasure to have to sit in cars that have had these boisterous preaching voices for most of my life.

Out of every talk show host, I’ve had to listen to Rush Limbaugh the most. Now, I don’t have a problem with a man wanting to make money off of other

people listening to him.

Our media culture is formed on the notion that we watch these people in the glitz and glam and they inform us of how to “better our lives,” or to become “informed.”

The last word is what I’d like to harp on most especially in the realm of political talk radio.

When I’ve heard Limbaugh talk he does give you a piece of the news, he tells you about the president’s plan to advance X and Y plan.

But what he does, like most media, is give you HIS opinion. These figures spend hours inciting your emotions rather than informing you.

The problem I see with political talk radio and those who listen to it is that they really allow their emotions to be riled up by these speakers.

They purposefully play on the hyper patriotism of these Americans and use it to create anger in them.

Is it really worth it, no matter what knowledge you gather, to go around the entire day being upset?

Instead, read the news. Take the angry voices away from your ears and instead allow your own voice to develop. Inform yourself of these events rather than letting others sway their opinion.

-*opinion@fiusm.com*

THE BEACON | Editorial

Credit card acceptance moving FIU forward

Until recently, members of the FIU community had to deal with several departments having different stances on what credit card providers they accepted.

We can all agree this was a huge inconvenience, as it limited the services members of the FIU community could take advantage of.

For example, Visa was accepted at dining locations while it wasn’t accepted to pay for tuition. The largest exception to this is the Department of Parking and Transportation, which takes all credit cards.

The University has now finally made Visa a University-wide accepted credit card, and we commend them for it. It was a real hassle for several students to find out that they couldn’t pay for their classes at the cashier’s office due to Visa not being accepted. This was the biggest issue involving the acceptance of certain credit card providers, so it definitely is a good thing that the University is taking into consideration the needs of its members.

The next step for the University is to accept more cards and follow the example set forth by the Department of Parking and Transportation. As previously mentioned, parking accepts all credit cards.

We understand that each department has its own interests in mind when it comes to accepting certain credit card providers; however, the purpose of University departments that work with the FIU community is to serve their members. With that in mind, the departments need to take into account the variety of cards that the community has access to. Not everyone is given a credit card and those that are able to get one don’t always have access to Visas.

Three lessons from the bear in a flock of birds

CRISTINA GARCIA
Staff Writer

As the semester comes to a close and course evaluations are passed around, the time has come for some serious reflection. In the tradition of bodhisattvas (being in Buddhism that spreads enlightenment), I wanted to take a moment to share the three most important lessons I learned in my time at Florida International University.

Do you remember that silly-sounding three day retreat that they mention during orientation? I do.

As a surprise, my father signed me up for Panther Camp in 2008 and packed my introverted self on the next bus to the Everglades to help me transition from high school to college. After several painful introduction exercises, I started opening up. The most memorable moment came during the last day when we had a field day and had to go through various

obstacle courses.

During one event, two teams of about eight to 10 people were lined up across from each other; their objective was to retrieve a ball before their opponents and bring it across a specified line. They had us race in different directions and time after time I lost because I was a heavyset woman far from fit and running wasn’t my strong suit.

However, time and time again I tried. It wasn’t until the final round when we had to run to the end of the arena, fetch the ball, and bring it across the line that I saw my chance to shine. Seeing as we had to run in the same direction both ways, when the whistle rang, I let my opponent run to the ball.

As she did, I calmly walked to the middle of the field to the confusion of my teammates and waited for her to turn around. When she did, she stopped dead in her tracks.

Have you ever seen the look on people’s faces when a bear rears back and stands on its hind legs?

She got that expression. Suddenly, everyone realized what I was aiming at.

As she ran towards me, I blocked her from going past and hugged her tight, preventing her from moving.

When I had stabilized her, I attempted to steal the ball from her so I could take it across the finish line – they didn’t specify how we could get the ball. After five minutes of holding her in place, both to conserve my own energy and wear her out, I was able to take the ball from her and take it across the finish line.

I realized that day lesson one: we all have our strengths and our weaknesses – some of us are fast like birds, others are strong like a bear – we just have to know ourselves; once we identify our strengths and weaknesses, we can work to the best of our abilities. While I wasn’t the fastest runner, I was smart, analyzed the situation and found a way to use my

strength, literally.

Second, find a system that works for you. Use Rate My Professor or any other tools to find professors, courses or programs that fit your needs. If you know you’re not a morning person, don’t create problems for yourself by taking the 6 a.m. “Shakespearean Tragedies” class.

While volunteering at the Digital Writing Studio, I was introduced to Professor Ben Lauren, an instructor in the Writing and Rhetoric program. He introduced a completely new classroom system to me, one in which the professor only acts as a moderator, where the student is respected, where divergent thinking is encouraged and all parties realize they could learn from each other.

Divergent thinking looks a lot like brainstorming. Basically, it’s when you generate multiple solutions for any given problem. It tends to be spontaneous and organic.

During my time at the studio, I was supposed to design The Center for Women’s and Gender Studies student journal, “Making Waves.”

A typical day might look like the following: walk in, research the science behind color, reflect on the color choices of a poster in the room, talk to my colleague about the colors in the poster and those I intend to use in the journal, commence to talk about the colors of different national flags and what they mean, dip briefly into Asian history, then apply any conclusions we might reach to my work.

Some people might consider the conversation between myself and my colleagues unproductive, but it is absolutely the opposite. We at the Studio consider it productive because it ultimately helps us come up with creative new solutions to our problems or tasks.

-*To read the full column, go to fiusm.com*

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Discovering virtues of love under the sun of Ladnun

COLUMNIST



CONSUELO NARANJO

Inversing yourself in the land of colors and faiths while mourning for the momentary loss of a high-speed Internet service, meanwhile dealing with interrupted water and electric services, can be a little bit challenging.

However, those little sacrifices become priceless when you have the opportunity to discover a unique experience in your early twenties before society and daily life pressures have destroyed your hope for a better world and, one day, a peaceful society.

After my second week in Ladnun, India, the land of “either you love it or hate it,” I decided to sit in the entrance of a small library to guard myself from the midday heat. My eyes were intrigued by white fabrics that coated peaceful souls while they were walking barefoot around the hot ground. They were looking for “ahimsa,” clean food liberated from any type of pain or suffering.

Ahimsa, one of the cardinal virtues for the Jain community, refers to nonviolence and a peaceful way of living by

this is one of the basic and most important spiritual practices and duties. According to a study on nonviolence by the Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, ahimsa is the first among the five vows of Vedic, Buddhism and Jainism. Nuns and monks apply nonviolent actions and thoughts in their daily routine. A nonviolence spiritual path offers deeper implications that will directly affect the liberation of the soul. Jains believe in “the equality of the spirit regardless of faith, caste, race or different animal kind.”

Some types of violence include physical, mental, verbal and involuntary. An action can also be considered violent when it is committed by you, promoting it or others, unless it’s unintentional. Emotional and mental pains are also considered a way of violence. In addition, there is anger, pride, jealousy, greed and selfishness that can create an unfair behavior against others and ourselves.

To eliminate harm, the Jainism community promotes forgiveness, tolerance, peace, love, charity, respect, animal and human kindness, respect for the environment and honesty.

Following this peaceful path, Jains are vegetarians and do not



CONSUELO NARANJO/THE BEACON

also do not support any kind of job or action that may create harm to the Earth or others.

Jains particularly attempt to avoid doing any intentional harm; for this reason, they follow a complete vegetarian — and, some of them, vegan — diet. Any type of food that may carry animal suffering or violence is absolutely intolerable.

Jain monastic followers wear cloth masks over their mouths to avoid accidentally harming to insects. Some of them only travel barefoot to create less harm and protect the environment.

“All living beings desire life and not death. No one has the right to take away the life of any other being; to kill a living being is the greatest of sins.”

Furthermore, they allow violence in self-defense by performing a legitimate duty.

In this case, soldiers defending their country or their self are justified. The Jainism message of nonviolence has traveled all around the world and the vegan/vegetarian community have felt their support.

In my few years of vegetarianism and now veganism, “unbeatable minds” have always started the argument of where I get my protein from or they may insist that we, humans, are a stronger species so our legacy of blood and sacrifice is acceptable. However, why not for once you take the chance, have the courage and break stereotypes, depart from your comfort zone and ultimately experience the benefits of a different diet that will lead you to a different lifestyle horizon.

Today, we can obtain fruits, vegetables and seeds all year around, for instance, so there is

not a justification for a lack of variety in your meal. And if you do not care about mass production, vaccines, hormones or suffering in your plate, maybe you are concerned about your inner-self and how vegetarian diets will straighten your metabolism. Or at least step out from a shadow of ignorance and discover where your food comes from. A nonviolence lifestyle is a beautiful path that involves not just what we eat, but also how we act and what we think.

“At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love,” as according to Martin Luther King, Jr.

-life@fiusm.com

“To eliminate harm, the Jainism community promotes forgiveness, tolerance, peace, love, charity, respect, animal and human kindness, respect for the environment and honesty.”

respecting all the living creatures in the universe. In Jainism,

use any type of clothes that may hurt any living creatures. They

“Catching Fire” is a decent enough sequel

COLUMNIST



JUAN BARQUIN

I’ll be honest when I say that I remain, to the frustration of many friends, not all that impressed by “The Hunger Games: Catching Fire.” This kind of reveal is far less shocking than anything the film throws in the way of its main characters, but people seem shocked nonetheless when I bring it up.

Some may remember I was generous with the first film of the series, finding Gary Ross’ rather gritty presentation of the dystopian society in turmoil and danger in the arena to be a positive feature. It was raw and dirty, just the way it should have been. “Catching Fire,” however, has received a major makeover.

No, it’s nothing like what Effie or the denizens of the Capitol wear all over their face, but it might as well be.

A good chunk of the film takes place in the upper class sections of Panem, as Katniss (Jennifer Lawrence) and Peeta (Josh Hutcherson) embark on the Victory Tour long after winning the games. This is all, of course, before they and fellow victors are sentenced to yet another death match, in celebration of the 75th anniversary of The Hunger Games.

There’s an all too notable difference between the style of “Catching Fire” and its predecessor in that it’s all glitz and glamour. Cinematographer Jo Willems sure knows how to make a pretty movie, and I can’t fault him for that, but director Francis Lawrence should know better

than to keep the the slums looking as pristine as President Snow’s mansion. As gorgeous as it looks, though, it’s the film’s inability to spread out its acts evenly that make it less exciting than it could be.

It’s hard to judge “Catching Fire” without referencing the novel it’s based on, as writers Simon Beaufoy and Michael deBruyn try as hard as they can to keep it as close to the book as possible. While it could have used an extra half hour, filling up a two-and-a-half-hour movie properly is no easy task and these men don’t do a half-bad

“The novel has an attention to detail in throwing out clues and bringing them back later, but the film just makes everything happen — only caring about prepping the world for “Mockingjay” next year.”

job. The problem is, ultimately, the source material.

If we’re being honest, the first act of “Catching Fire” isn’t all that interesting. Most of it works as a platform for Katniss to complain about her situation during the Victory Tour while Peeta and Gale create the typical teen dream love triangle. It’s boring — and, frankly, it draws away from the more important aspects of furthering the

turmoil in the districts and setting up the arena for the other half. The novel has an attention to detail in throwing out clues and bringing them back later, but the film just makes everything happen — only caring about prepping the world for “Mockingjay” next year. Fingers crossed writer Danny Strong has a good plan on how to spread that novel out properly.

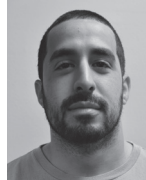
It’s entirely possible that I sound too harsh, but as much as I complain, I still think “Catching Fire” is a good enough movie. There are a lot of things to be thankful for with this adaptation, but nothing is quite as great as some of the character performances. As much as I loathe the love triangle, Liam Hemsworth and Josh Hutcherson aren’t nearly as frustrating on film as on paper, and even with Jennifer Lawrence losing most of her tan, she’s as enjoyable as usual to watch. But nobody steals the show like Jena Malone’s Johanna and Sam Claflin’s Finnick. Malone’s elevator scene and general snappiness was worth the ticket price alone.

Anyway, as a friend of mine says, “Catching Fire” is a “fandom movie,” made mostly for those hardcore fans of the books, but just as likely to please those who wanted more than what the first gave them. As critical as I am of it, the film’s a solid sequel, a definite crowd-pleaser and more than likely going to be a good fit in the series’ long run.

-juan.barquin.fiusm.com

Miami gives a false sense of identity to tourists

COLUMNIST



PATRICK CHALVIRE

Let’s just get one thing straight: there is more to Miami than South Beach. It is unknown if it has to do with the way the Magic City is portrayed in movies, or the fact that Miami Heat star LeBron James told the world he was taking his talents to South Beach, but since when did the entire city become a waterfront?

As much as I support and love LeBron James, he should’ve done his research before his hour-long special on where he will continue his NBA career.

The American Airlines Arena is in Downtown Miami, next to Bayside, along Biscayne Boulevard. Did he not know that South Beach was a drive away from where he will be contending for a championship?

Since the world seems to enjoy the glorification of celebrities and athletes, outsiders fail to do their due diligence and flock to the notion that what he says goes.

As appealing and enticing as it is for tourists, the reality is that there is more to Miami than sand and clear blue water.

Yes, Miami is known to have some of

the most beautiful women anyone can ask for, but there’s more to it.

Unfortunately, the University has also fed into the notion of outsiders and recently became a member of Miami’s newest college Bowl game, the Miami Beach

But allow me to remind those who may have forgotten: The old Orange Bowl site — and, yes, I refuse to mention the park’s real name — is not in Miami Beach.

Yet those involved in the birth of this new Bowl decided to appeal to the masses.

Unfortunately, the University has also fed into the notion of outsiders and recently became a member of Miami’s newest college Bowl game, the Miami Beach Bowl.

Bowl.

It’s been six years since the famed Orange Bowl was demolished and replaced by the lackluster Miami Marlins, so a need for college football in Little Havana was warranted.

The Bowl game will feature a team from the American Athletic Conference and Conference USA, the Mid-American Conference or the Sun Belt Conference. Since FIU is in the city and part of C-USA, they will be given preference, if they ever become Bowl-eligible again.

There are countless Bowl games, even the lesser known ones, which are named after a top sponsor or in true relevance to the area. Even the sole Bowl game FIU won was named after a small family pub chain that could only be found in 23 states. For those of you who forgot, it was the Beef ‘O’ Brady’s Bowl.

A Bowl name should be because of its location or its history. If neither of that work, then name it after the highest spending sponsor. If they can allow a Bowl game to be named the GoDaddy.com Bowl,

then I’m sure someone could’ve coughed up enough money to have a Bowl named after their company.

Having been born and raised in Miami, the fact that tourists strictly see Miami as South Beach is just sad. People should give insight to the diversity that is Miami — the cultures that make Miami what it is today.

If Billy Corben can direct a movie on the drugs and killings that took place in Miami during the ‘70s and ‘80s, then why can’t we all educate the rest of the country and the world on what else this town has to offer?

Yet we allow the stereotype to continue by naming a Bowl game the Miami Beach Bowl, when the closest team to South Beach is in fact, the University of Miami, who will not be playing in the Miami Beach Bowl since they are members of the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Don’t fall trap to the city-wide public relations. Embrace the traditions and heritage that has shaped this city, then hit the beach in the winter while the rest of the country huddles around the heater waiting for the sun to come out.

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Legoland Florida to Build New Hotel by 2015

TAMARA LUSH
AP Writer

While shoveling a ceremonial scoop of Lego bricks, Legoland Florida executives announced Thursday that the theme park will build a 152-room hotel on its property by 2015.

The news is significant for both the theme park and the area. Since opening in 2011, the park has drawn many guests from families who are staying in Orlando and visiting the area’s large theme parks like Disney or Universal.

A brightly-colored Lego-themed hotel is expected to draw more visitors for

longer stays to Winter Haven, a small city in Polk County about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from Walt Disney World.

“This shifts us from a single day visit to a multi-day destination,” said Adrian Jones, the general manager of Legoland Florida.

This will be the world’s fifth Legoland Hotel; there is currently Lego-themed lodging in California, England and Denmark. Another hotel is under construction in Malaysia.

Local Florida officials said they traveled to the California location and saw how the Legoland park and hotel has expanded the entire

area’s tourism offerings.

“This was our hope from the beginning,” said Winter Haven Mayor JP Powell, adding that he’s hoping other large hotel, restaurant and tourism companies will add outposts in the area — which was once orange groves decades ago.

Legoland Florida is located on what was once Cypress Gardens, an old-timey Florida theme park that offered water ski shows and Southern belles dressed in hoop skirts. Some of Cypress Gardens’ amenities, such as the historic botanical area, were preserved and are still on Legoland grounds.

GET LUCKY



PATRICIA SEGOVIA/THE BEACON

The time in the semester comes again where more and more students, like freshman in fine arts Kristie Aguirre, spin the cube for good luck on their exams.

Area of Walker car crash known for street racing

AP STAFF

Fans of “Fast & Furious” star Paul Walker erected a makeshift memorial near the site of his fatal automobile crash, as investigators worked to determine the cause of the fiery weekend wreck that also claimed the life of his friend.

The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department said speed was a factor in Saturday’s one-car crash, though it will take time to determine how fast the car was going.

Roger Rodas, Walker’s friend and financial adviser, also died, according to Walker’s publicist, Ame Van Iden. She said Walker was a passenger in the 2005 red Porsche Carrera GT when they drove away from a fundraiser in the community of Valencia, about 30 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles.

Sheriff’s deputies found the car engulfed in flames when they arrived at the site of the crash, near the fundraiser at Rodas’ sport car dealership. Officials have not identified either person found in the car.

Because Walker is so closely associated with the underground culture of street racing portrayed in the popular film franchise, the accident had an eerie quality — a tragic end for a Hollywood hero of speed.

On Sunday, fans of Walker, 40, gathered to leave flowers,

candles and memorabilia from the action movies. His “Fast & Furious” co-star Tyrese Gibson broke down when he visited the crash site.

“Paul is the heartbeat of this franchise and we’re gonna see to it that his energy and presence lives on forever,” Gibson later posted on his Instagram account.

Sheriff’s deputy Peter Gomez said investigators were trying to determine how fast the car was traveling and what caused it to go out of control, including whether the driver was distracted or something in the road prompted him to swerve.

After the Porsche crashed into a light pole and tree, it burst into flames. The downed light pole had a speed limit sign of 45 mph.

Walker rode the “Fast & Furious” franchise to fame, starring in all but one of the six action blockbusters, beginning with the first film in 2001. He had been on break from shooting the seventh installment; production began in September and while much of the film has been shot, it’s incomplete.

Universal Pictures has not said what it plans to do with “Fast & Furious 7,” which currently is slated for release in July.

Walker and Rodas had thrown a fundraiser benefiting victims of the recent typhoon in the Philippines. The event was held by Reach Out Worldwide, a charity Walker founded in

2010 to aid victims of natural disasters.

The fundraiser and toy drive took place at Rodas’ custom car shop, Always Evolving, in an area of warehouses and office parks. Rodas, 38, and Walker co-owned an auto racing team. Rodas competed in 10 Pirelli World Challenge GTS races this year, the racing organization said in a statement.

Attendees rushed to the crash, which was nearby but out of sight, to try to put out the flames with fire extinguishers.

One attendee of the event, Jim Torp, said he heard the loud sound of a car’s engine revving and then an explosion. Walker and Rodas planned a quick ride, Torp said.

“The last words Paul said to anybody were, ‘Hey, I’ll be back in five minutes. All right?’ And that was it,” according to Torp.

Torp said Rodas had a young son, whom he tried to stop from running to the accident scene, but could not catch him in time.

Walker left behind two completed films. He stars in the upcoming Hurricane Katrina drama “Hours,” which Lionsgate’s Pantelion Films is to release Dec. 13. He also stars in “Brick Mansions,” a remake of the French action film “District B13” that Relativity plans to release next year.

He is survived by his 15-year-old daughter.

Panthers close season with Shula Bowl loss

RHYS WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

The football program closed the book on the 2013 season with a 1-11 overall record and 1-7 in Conference USA - the first season of play in the new conference after leaving the Sun-Belt Conference - by falling to Florida Atlantic University in the annual Shula Bowl 21-6.

The Panthers gave up 431 total offensive yards to the Owls in the loss, 282 of those yards to quarterback Jaquez Johnson who had three passing touchdowns.

However, the most valuable players of the game were two defenders in Owls defensive end Martin Wright and Panthers redshirt senior linebacker Markeith Russell. He had 11 total tackles which led the Panthers on the day. Russell spoke about his final game on Instagram the day after.

“This one is going to hurt for a while,” Russell posted with his picture. “Yesterday seems so surreal...”

He also posted directly

following the game.

“Not the outcome we wanted but I can honestly say after five years I’m humbly proud to say #FiuNation #PantherNation #FiuFootball Markeith C. Russell loves you!” Russell wrote on his Instagram account.

Russell was one of 11 Panthers whose final time wearing blue and gold was on Nov. 29.

Other notables were fellow defensive players defensive tackles Isame Faciane and Greg Hickman and cornerback Sam Miller as well as offensive players tight end Zach Schaubhut and wide receiver Rockey Vann.

Faciane had five tackles and a sack for a six yard loss against the Owls. Hickman notched four tackles in his final collegiate game. Although Miller and Schaubhut did not register any statistics on the night Vann had a single reception for eight yards.

Vann was on an offense that averaged only 9.8 points per game in 2013 – which tied for last in Division 1A college football with the University of Miami (Ohio) – and got his final recep-



JASEN DELGADO/ THE BEACON

Quarterback E.J. Hilliard (right) may get a chance to be a full season starter as rumors are spreading that starter Jake Medlock may be transferring out of FIU. Hilliard started four games this season.

tion from redshirt junior quarterback Jake Medlock, who for the last few weeks of the season handled most of the punting.

That may have also been the final game as a Panther for Medlock as, according to David Neal of the Miami Herald, there is talk that he may transfer out. This would leave way for quarterback E.J. Hilliard to step in and start as he did in several games this season including against the

University of Louisville, East Carolina University, Middle Tennessee State University and his final start came in a 48-10 loss to Marshall University.

Junior cornerback Randy Harvey also posted on game day about Miller who he would be playing with for the final time.

“Today is the last day I get to ball with my bro,” Harvey wrote. “Time flies I just got here in August and didn’t have a clue

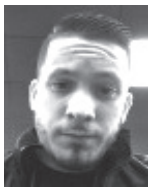
how this year would go for me and now it’s the last game. I just want to show my appreciation to my big bro who helped me get better and showed me how to grow and be more focused at cornerback. I know God has blessings after blessings for this dude. It’s goin to be bitter sweet today. #FIU”

Players and coaches were unavailable for comment.

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FIU football: Remembering the forgettable season

COLUMNIST



RUBEN PALACIOS

The fat lady has sung everyone, football season is over at FIU.

The Panthers put an end to their agonizing season with a 21-6 loss to rival Florida Atlantic University in the Shula Bowl on Nov. 30.

The loss to FAU ended the Panthers season just like it started, with a dud. One win and 11 losses is what will be remembered when this Panthers squad is talked about. Lowlights highlighted the year for FIU.

The humiliating memories from this year are endless. The first loss to an FCS school in FIU history happened with a 34-13 loss to Bethune-Cookman University in the third game of the year. That loss was followed by a 72-0 romp by the Cardinals of the University of Louisville, the worst loss in school history. A couple of weeks later, this team lost its homecoming game

to a two-win University of Alabama at Birmingham squad.

The lone bright side FIU experienced this season was its lone win. A one-point victory against Southern Mississippi University, which also finished its season 1-11, allowed the Panthers to avoid what could have ultimately been one of the worst seasons in NCAA Division-I football history.

Some would say that after such a poor season the Panthers have no choice but to get better. “It’s always darkest before dawn,” something like that. The only thing is, I don’t see the dawn anywhere in the Panthers future. FIU’s two best players this year, Greg Hickman and Isame Faciane, are both seniors and will probably be playing in the NFL next year.

“I’m sad the season’s over with. I wasn’t ready to give it up yet,” Hickman said to the Miami Herald after the loss. “Just being around the guys and enjoying my team. Next year, I don’t know what



JASEN DELGADO/THE BEACON

After a disappointing season, rumors are swirling about quarterback Jake Medlock (above) possibly transferring out of FIU.

I’m going to be doing, I have no idea. I just hope my team is able to play better next year.”

Hope is something this squad will need for next

season. The problem with this program right now is not a lack of effort, though, this team puts up a fight every Saturday. The issue is a lack of talent and an

even worse lack of depth. This team lost many of its best players to either legal or academic issues before the season. No team can be successful when its best players are off the field, it’s just that simple.

The season might have been different were the Panthers not stripped of their depth because of ineligibilities and disciplinary reasons. If Kedrick Rhodes, FIU’s projected starting running back prior to the season, had not lost his mind and shot a gun on campus the season might be different. If Willis Wright and Glenn Coleman, FIU’s top receiving core entering this season, not been academically ineligible quarterback Jake Medlock might not have seemed so pedestrian behind center. If Richard Leonard, the Panthers top return man and cornerback, kept his grades in line this defense would have been a bit more stout instead of allowing over 37 points per game.

“We’re rebuilding,” said Medlock. “We changed the whole offense. We went from five-wide spread to

now a Power I. We tried to slow the game down a little bit. Run a power game, play action passes. I feel like we’re going in the right direction.”

Medlock is completely right, the Panthers are in full-fledged rebuilding mode and won’t be done for quite a while. FIU lost so many experienced players before they even played a down this season, and that forced a lot of inexperienced players into a position where they had to play before they were ready. This is something, though, that the Panthers can use to build on for the future. Those same guys that started this year as inexperienced will start next season as experienced veterans.

Next year will still equate to a rebuilding year for the Panthers, but the second year in the remake process is almost always better than the first.

And remember, Mario Cristobal also lost 11 games in his first year as the Panthers head coach.

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Panthers headed in the right direction early in season

PATRICK CHALVIRE
Staff Writer

FIU's top player from last season hasn't missed a beat and has no plans on stopping.

Senior forward Tymell Murphy scored at least 20 points for the third straight game, after the teams 61-60 nail biter win against Georgia State University.

Murphy, who is averaging 16.3 points per game, continues to lead the new look Panthers into their inaugural year in Conference USA.

"I just try to keep my team motivated," Murphy said. "I tell them it's 40 minutes of play, not 20, so I try to be that guy that leads by example."

In just 10 games played, Murphy has already recorded six double-doubles. Going into the 2013 year, Murphy had only eight in his career.

With newcomers joining Murphy, the Panthers seem poised to continue off their success from last season. Finishing with one of the best seasons in over a decade, the Panthers added size in Miami-native, Rakeem Buckles.

Buckles leads the team with 10 rebounds per game, including a season high 17 against Georgia State. Buckles has also been key for the Panthers on the defensive side of the ball. The 6-foot-7 redshirt senior also leads the team in blocks with 19, eight of which came from their 75-66 win against Stetson.

The Panthers record, 7-3, was part of a five game winning streak. The Panthers are now undefeated at home, averaging just over 72 points per game on

the Lime Court. The Panther's ninth straight home win is the longest streak since they reached 18 in a row from Feb. 15, 1997 to Nov. 20, 1998.

Freshman taking on new role as starter

Bronx native Jason Boswell didn't expect much in his first year as a Panther, not even being given the starting position over an upperclassman.

"I feel like I'm learning, getting a lot of experience," Boswell said. "Coming in I didn't come in with any expectations. I came here ready to work hard and let it play itself out."

The NCAA has once again been focused on the Panthers, as concerns arose as to whether or not redshirt senior point guard Raymond Taylor is even eligible to play at FIU.

FIU was informed of the case prior to the team's game versus Bethune-Cookman. Due to the open investigation, Taylor was pulled from that game and has since seen the floor.

After the 2011-12 season while at Florida Atlantic University, Taylor declared for the NBA Draft. Via the NCAA manual, a deadline is set for players if they chose to withdraw. Once the NBA released their early entry list on May 3, 2012, Taylor's name appeared. His name though was the only one, among all college players, that withdrew from the list on June 20, 2012.

Taylor then transferred to FIU where he sat out a season under former head coach Richard Pitino. If Taylor is found guilty

of violating any NCAA rules, FIU may vacate the four wins earned in which is played.

The Panthers have missed the 12.2 points and 6.2 assists per game by Taylor and the speed he brings to the table, but according to Head Coach Anthony Evans, the switch is nonexistent.

"We might run something for Jason where we can get a post up for him, rather than something Ray, but that's it. Everything remains the same," Evans said.

Panthers to face tough test against FGCU and Louisville

The Panthers will hope to keep the offense prowess in check, as FIU welcomes sweet-sixteen opponent Florida Gulf Coast University and last year's national champion, the University of Louisville.

Though FGCU may have caught teams by surprise last season, the Eagles have since struggled on the hardwood. Only averaging 67.9 points per game, the Eagles may be in for a surprise come Saturday.

The Eagles are ranked number 281 in the country in points per game, the Panthers are number 184. The Eagles do have the ability to overshadow the Panthers, with three players averaging more than 13 points per game.

FIU has allowed 65.5 points per game, so the Panthers will need to rely heavily on Buckles to make himself known in the paint, as other teammates will be spread throughout the floor.

The Panthers will then face Louisville, Dec. 21, led by Rick



JASEN DELGADO/THE BEACON

Freshman guard Jason Boswell and the rest of the FIU men's basketball team have been performing at a high level leading to a 7-3 record on the season.

Pitino. Pitino has his connections to FIU, as his son coached FIU last season before heading to Minnesota. Rick Pitino also holds a strong friendship with Executive Director of Sports and Entertainment Pete Garcia.

The Cardinals have only lost one game this season, they were upset by the No. 24 ranked University of North Carolina. The Cardinals average 82.4 points per game and are number 56 in the country in rebounding.

The Panthers will need to find an answer for Senior Russ Smith, who played a big factor in last year's championship team. Smith averages 18.9 points per game.

The Cardinals are currently ranked ninth in the country and don't face a top 25 team prior to their matchup against the Panthers.

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Women's basketball picks up first win after rough start

Classic, PAGE 1

The first half saw Villanova getting open shots but unable to connect and FIU leading 25-22.

In the second half, the Panthers jumped out to their largest lead with the score 30-24.

Then FIU went nearly seven minutes without a field goal as Villanova went on a 15-3 run to go ahead for good.

After shooting 34.5 percent in the first half including 2-14 from beyond the arc, Villanova's shots started falling as the Wildcats 56 percent in the second half and 5-11 from three-point land.

Burford finished with 19 points and went 5-6 shooting in the second half and knocked down three treys as well.

Kane finished with 17 points with 15 of those coming in the second half.

For FIU, Coley struggled by going 9-26 shooting but still tallied 24 points.

Idom makes her return

While the Thanksgiving Classic saw FIU finish in second place, it also marked the return of junior guard Kamika Idom.

“

I was really impressed, she kept her composure and she played some nice defense.

Cindy Russo
Head Coach
Women's Basketball

”

After suffering a season-ending ACL injury last season, Idom appeared in both games in the FIU Thanksgiving Classic.

Against Valparaiso, the junior looked rusty and is still in the process of getting back into form.

Idom played 13 minutes, registered one point, shot 0-5, and shot 1-2 at the free throw line.

Russo was still happy with Idom's performance.

"I was real impressed, she kept her composure and she played some nice defense," Russo said.

Idom feels that she will little by little get back into form with practice and with the games.

Against Villanova, Idom looked much better finishing with 13 points on 3-8 shooting and going 2-6 from three-point land in 32 minutes of action.

Russo trying to find the right mix

So far this season after six games, Russo has had three different starting line-ups.

In the first two games against Florida

Gulf Coast University and the University of Central Florida, Russo had a starting line-up of three guards in Coley, Labady, sophomore Taylor Shade, sophomore Katrina Epnere at forward with Wright at center.

Against Harvard College saw the same line-up with the exception of Epnere being replaced by freshman forward Janka Hegedus.

Asked if it was for reasons of matching up, Russo said that it wasn't the case but more of finding the right combination.

"I am just trying to figure out what the heck we are doing," Russo said.

Perhaps Russo has found her starting lineup as for the past three games Russo has been starting Wright, Coley, Labady, junior forward Arielle Durant, and McKinzie.

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Library renovations by students for the students

ALEXANDRA MOSQUERA NETZKARSCH
Staff Writer

The Glenn Hubert Library at Biscayne Bay Campus is undergoing renovations on its second floor with an updated layout that will include new computers, services and a fresh environment with bright colors and fresh lighting – changes for students by students.

Construction will begin in February or March; renovations to the library will be paid for technology fees financed both by students and 5 percent of tuition costs per credit hour. The library also received a million dollar reward for the renovation project which is set for completion in August 2014.

However, students have a larger role in the renovations than just their fees. Bryan Cooper, associate dean of Technical and Digital Services at the library, said the renovations will be based on student input with a trial-run of furniture in January before they finalize plans and begin construction.

Cooper has collaborated over the last three years with the Student Government Association, staff members and students, such as interior design majors, to start this renovation project.

“[We want to] have a useful and fun environment on one of the floors of the library to make studying more enjoyable and easier,”

Cooper said. “All the students that have been part of this process had the chance to be part of the creation of their ideal library.”

Cooper is still open to suggestions.

“It would be great for students to be involved in the process,” Cooper said. “I would be happy to meet with students to discuss their opinions regarding the renovations.”

Cooper said the layout of the second floor will have different sections aimed to simplify students’ lives.

There will be six columns on the floor, and two of them will be used as book shelves organized for students to pick texts based on their studies, from English writing books to popular literature.

“The library wants to offer a combination of old and new books in the display area,” Cooper said.

Around one of the columns, which will be close to the center desk, there will be eight or more seats facing inside for students to read comfortably and undisturbed.

Six tables with computers will also be available for students to work on their homework – five PC computer tables and one Apple computer table.

The Apple computers will be equipped with Adobe Photoshop and different multimedia editing software. At the end of the

LIGHTING UP THE STAGE



FRANCESCA ANCHERIA/THE BEACON

The a cappella group Kazual performed at the holiday fest and tree lighting ceremony where students enjoyed a holiday meal and lights.

computer tables there will be a counter table with at least four seats for students to study in a group.

“The second floor will be an area of quiet interaction. Students will be using library voices,” Cooper said.

The center desk will provide five different services for students. There will be a technician in charge of helping Panthers with technical difficulties, there will also be a person in charge of setting up appointments for the

Center for Excellence in Writing, a representative of Student Services, a library staff member and a representative of the University Technology Services.

The Center for Excellence in Writing will have two tables and two tutoring rooms for a more quiet and private environment to help students with any questions regarding their homework.

SEE LIBRARY, PAGE 2

Student Government Association petitioning for second road access

PAOLA MOLINI
Contributing Writer

The Student Government Association is in communication with the City of Miami to open a second road to access Biscayne Bay Campus.

Richard Azimov, vice president of SGA, is urging students to get involved in the Second Road to Success Campaign. A second road access to BBC will allow students to get to class without the limited access and delays, which is a concern among students.

“We only have one road, which is 151st street,” said Azimov, who is in charge of the campaign. “Imagine if something were to happen like a fire, a flooding or even a simple accident; it would take us a very long time to get out of campus.”

The Second Road to Success Campaign was initiated by SGA’s council this year and its purpose is to raise awareness and to educate students as to why access to a second road is necessary.

“It is not fair for individuals, especially those who work or go to school here, to get out of the house an extra 30 minutes early just to make sure they don’t arrive late for

their classes,” he said. “We don’t want, but need, a second access road. Not just for us, FIU, but for our community as a whole.”

According to the Vice President of Governmental Relations Steve Sauls, the University took concern over the one road access and began exploring different routes last spring. President Mark B. Rosenberg went to the mayor of the City of North Miami and asked the Metropolitan Planning Organization to do a study.

The results: three new routes with a study on improvements needed for the existing road access.

The three new routes evaluated were from 135th Street, 143th Street and one alternative through Oleta River State Park to 163th Street. The route through the State Park was not granted and the route through 135th Street received opposition from residents.

Last spring, the University was “vetting” for 143 Street – a “straight shot” from the school entrance.

SGA has started a petition for students to sign and show their support for the campaign.

It has already been signed by more than 1,000 students

“We don’t want, but need, a second access road. Not just for us FIU, but for our community as a whole.”

Richard Azimov
Vice President
Student Government Association

and staff members. They are also setting up tables around campus where students will find more information about how they can get involved and what the worst case scenarios would be if the road is not built.

Ramon Soria, a hospitality major, says a back road would be helpful and is also necessary.

“Traffic is insane when I get out of class. I got a ticket a few days back for going five miles over the speed limit,” said Soria. “Kids tend to walk around the street when school is out. It gets very annoying.”

Rosi Guillen, a biology major, agrees that a different route to school, one that is not as crowded, is essential.

“I have to come to school an hour early just to make it to

class,” said Guillen, referring to the high school and middle school in route to BBC. “Not to mention, when I get here, I have to go at the school zone speed limit.”

SGA has tried several times to reach out to the previous council members of the City of North Miami in hopes of getting a positive response to this matter, but due to environmental and budgeting issues, they have been unsuccessful.

The student government body is now working on building relationships with the city council and showing their support by attending events, such as Haitian Awareness Day as well as attending the city’s Thanksgiving parade.

“This fight has been going on for many years,” said Azimov. “We want the student body to be educated; we want them to support us and to understand the reasons why we need a second access road. We don’t have all of the answers, so we encourage students to come give us ideas as to how we can make this campaign bigger.”

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GSA hosting its first masquerade

SOFIA GALIANO
Staff Writer

The Gay Straight Alliance at Biscayne Bay Campus is hosting a Winter Wonderland Masquerade Ball in the Wolfe University Center ballrooms on Wednesday, Dec. 4, from 7 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. The night will provide an opportunity for students to dance and relax – a common theme among University activities during this time of the semester.

GSA has participated in several Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer and Ally Initiative events, but this is the first event GSA will host since it began in July of this year.

“It’s an opportunity to network with other students on-campus,” said Gisela Vega, associate director for LGBTQA Initiatives.

A toy drive will be held at the event for the Miami-Dade Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.

Students are asked to bring unopened toys in support of the Fourth Annual Holiday Celebration and Toy Drive.

In addition to toy donations, students are encouraged to bring decorated masks from home and wear them to the ball to compete in a mask contest.

Masks will be given out at the event, however, they are limited.

Christina Sinord, treasurer of GSA and planner of the event said the first 20 guests are guaranteed a mask.

The person with the best looking mask will receive a prize.

“We’re looking for originality and creativity,” Sinord said.

According to Sinord, the event is scheduled around finals so students can attend and relieve stress from their studies. “This masquerade ball is more of a reliever,” she said.

Although the event is geared toward students, non-students may attend.

Friends and family of University students can participate in the event free of charge.

As for attire, students should dress casually to the event, excluding sneakers and sandals.

“Anybody and everyone is welcome,” Sinord said.

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EVENT INFO

Winter Wonderland
Masquerade Ball
WUC Ballrooms
Dec. 4, 7 p.m.-11:30 p.m.