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HEALTH AND WEALTH



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Shardai Thompson, senior in biology and student assistant at the Healthy Living Program, prepares some oatmeal for Crystal Caceres, junior in psychology, at the Recharge for Finals event Monday, Nov. 30 at Green Library Room 220.



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Carolina Liriano, a senior in chemistry, gets a short massage from Carla Llorca, Massage therapist at Healthy Living Program, at the Recharge for Finals event held in the Green Library Room 220 Monday, Nov. 30.

Former student found nude on campus, arrested

CAMILA FERNANDEZ
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A former student was found nude and arrested in the Management and New Growth Opportunities building Thursday, Nov. 12 around 2 p.m.

According to a flier by the University's police department, Mohamed Ads, a 35-year-old white man, was issued a trespass warning from all FIU property.

At the time arrested, he was not enrolled as a student nor was he a faculty member.

The report said a woman, Sara Lipman, gave permission to officer Francisco Torres and detectives to enter room 438 to find Ads completely nude lying on the floor.

The report said it is possible that Ads had previously been living in the office with a female student.

When officer Torres tried to help Ads get up from the floor, Ads got angry and irate over the police presence, according to the report. Ads grabbed Torres' collar to forcibly pull him down bending his

body forward in efforts to cause injury.

He was then taken into custody and was transferred to the Miami-Dade County Turner Guilford Knight Correctional Center.

Lipman refused to comment and referred student media to Cathy Akens, associate vice president and dean of students.

"Due to privacy laws, I am unable to comment on this particular case involving a former student," said Akens in an email to student media.

"The University does have multiple systems in place to respond to issues of concern with students or employees. We are committed to the safety of all members of the university community," Akens said.

Alexander Casas, chief of FIUPD, said that he is grateful that the reporter, Lipman, brought the issue to the police's attention and that nobody was hurt.

"We need the community to be our eyes and ears," said Casas.

However, according to officer David Navas, the police are always on foot patrol as much as possible.

Law Clinic launches Dannette Willory domestic violence program

YOEVELYN RODRIGUEZ
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The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence defines domestic violence as "the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another."

To help potential and actual victims of domestic violence, the Law Clinic launched a new program in honor of law student Dannette Willory, who was murdered four years ago, called the Dannette Willory Access to Justice for Victims of Domestic Violence.

"Part of my responsibilities, when

we heard she had been murdered, was to put together the memorial service for her," said Michelle Denise Mason, the Law Clinic's senior associate dean. "She was beloved by faculty and her colleagues."

Willory was about to graduate from the University's Law School when, in April 2011, she was shot by her longtime boyfriend, Andrew Colby, in the parking lot adjacent to her apartment building.

Colby then turned the gun on himself and committed suicide.

Mason said that the program in honor of Willory aims to offer legal representation and education to adults facing domestic violence.

"In the summer, we received an award to basically provide direct

representation to victims of domestic violence and to put together a series of educational programs in the community," said Mason.

According to Miami Foundation, an entity that connects philanthropists with community needs, the FIU Law Clinic, in collaboration with the Liberty City Advocates, received \$41,951 from the state attorney's Denise Moon Memorial Fund Grant.

"I want to make sure that the students know the type of services that we provide," said Ledesma. "When we are talking about domestic violence, we are also talking about stalking. Do they need injunctions? Are they being harassed? It's more than just hitting."

To read the complete story, visit fiusm.com.

Green center offers new bachelor of arts program

SUDYEN NAVARRETE
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Francisco Mora always wanted the University to offer a bachelor of arts in Latin American and Caribbean studies.

"We had a master's but not a bachelor's," he said. "This is Miami, we are really in the middle of a Latin hemisphere. It is only natural that we have this Latin American and Caribbean study sector."

The Kimberly Green

Latin American and Caribbean Center, under the Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, has now added the bachelor of arts program to the curriculum.

Mora, director of LACC, said that it was about time to add this program to the school and that the University was one of the few that didn't offer the program.

The bachelor's program will take effect spring 2016. It has been in process since Mora took

the position of directorship two and a half years ago.

When LACC had an interim director, Marifeli Perez-Stable, Mora suggested making Latin American and Caribbean studies into a bachelor's program, rather than just a master's.

"I asked her to put together the initial proposal for the B.A.," said Mora. "From there, we carried the process."

Mora said he appreciates the help he received from Perez-Stable.

The major is considered to be flexible due to its relation to many different branches of international affairs.

It will be a 120-credit hour program.

According to the Kimberly Green LACC website, students who enroll in the major will take 24 credits in courses of contemporary Latin America, international political economy of Latin America and the Caribbean

NATION & WORLD BRIEFS

Atlantic Coast cities rise up against offshore drilling plans

As the Obama administration prepares to open the Atlantic Ocean to oil and gas drilling for the first time in decades, the coast is in rebellion. Governments in more than 70 cities and counties in the Carolinas, Georgia and Florida have passed resolutions opposing oil exploration or

drilling off their coasts, pushing the president to reverse course and keep drilling rigs from the Eastern seaboard. The latest protest against Obama's plan came from the seaside town of Swansboro, N.C., which passed a resolution last week opposing offshore drilling.

Iraqi forces cut Islamic State supply lines

Iraqi forces backed by Iranian-trained militias and U.S. airstrikes have made significant progress in isolating Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province that Islamic State overran in May, according to Iraqi officials, local residents and Western military advisers. But it is uncertain that the city will soon be retaken.

Iraqi officials repeatedly have expressed optimism about progress against Islamic State, only to be unable to defeat the extremists, especially in areas such as Ramadi where Sunni Muslims are in the majority and have little trust in the Shiite-led government in Baghdad.

Florida al-Qaida commander was betrayed by 'mole,' Pakistan Taliban says

The long saga of South Florida's leading al-Qaida figure has added another chapter nearly a year after his death in Pakistan. The Pakistani Taliban announced Wednesday that a former al-Qaida operative had confessed to leaking the whereabouts of Adnan El Shukrijumah, the onetime Miramar, Fla., resident

who rose in al-Qaida's ranks to be a top commander, perhaps to chief of the terrorist groups' external operations. Shukrijumah was killed in a South Waziristan village by helicopter-borne Pakistani troops sent to capture him last December. He'd evaded detection by U.S. security agencies for more than a decade.

Student hosts concert to benefit paralysis victims

NICOLE MONTERO
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Five years ago, James "Woody" Beckham suffered a spinal cord injury during a rugby game in college. He could not move his hands and wrists and lacked a strong grip.

"Now, I've gotten a lot stronger," said Beckham.

"I did electric stimulation and therapy and, over time, I regained a little bit of wrist functioning, though I still only have like 30 percent of hand and wrist functioning. I still don't have a strong grip, but your level of paralysis depends on which muscles function and which muscles don't."

Beckham, a senior finance major, and the Woody Foundation, a not for profit organization dedicated to raising funds for people with paralysis, are now hosting a benefit concert to help raise awareness on different kinds of paralysis, like brain injuries and diseases like ALS, among many others.

"This is our third year doing the Woodstock Festival, which goes to benefit the Woody Foundation," said Beckham, namesake of the foundation.

"We're dedicating this to help [fund] research and equipment and we're trying to grow [the benefit] this year, so there's a great lineup."

The goal is to raise money for equipment and research in different aspects of paralysis -- like money for assistive devices.

As part of the event, all guests receive a "Woody Pack," a backpack with assistive devices, which range from side bags for wheelchairs, cup holders, phone cases and retractable ID holders, among other things.

"These devices have helped me a lot in my life and I just kind of put together all these things that I've used," Beckham said.

"We give away like 100 or more every year and I don't know anyone who is doing anything like this, so it's very unique and important."

The Woody Foundation has raised over \$300,000 for various causes in over four years and has donated over \$100,000 to Jackson Memorial Hospital alone, according to Beckham.

"We donate funds to buy new equipment and sponsor outpatient events at Jackson Rehabilitation Hospital, which is one the biggest hospitals for spinal cord rehabilitation in the country," he said. "Many programs are funded by having access to these funds."

Alexis Francos, a sophomore biology major, said her sister suffered a brain injury when she was younger. She thinks the benefit will be a fun and educative way to spend time together.

"We love music and we're always together, so this is the ideal place for us: a place where we can have fun and also help an amazing cause," she said.

Jason Martinez, a freshman engineering major, agrees and thinks people need to be more aware of topics of paralysis because it's something that has become "almost taboo."

"We see someone in a wheelchair or with some sort of physical disability and we get scandalized and run away from them," he said. "It's ridiculous and this benefit is a step in [changing] that. Everyone needs to take advantage because these people are usually the most humble and funniest people out there."

The Woodstock Benefit Festival will be held Saturday, Dec. 12 at 2 p.m. in Historic Virginia Key Beach in Key Biscayne. It includes art, food and live performances by The Expendables, Maxi Priest, Cris Cab and Bachaco.

Tickets are \$20 pre-sale, \$30 at the door and \$80 for VIP. They can be purchased at woodyfoundation.org.

"We just want to raise as much as possible," said Beckham. "We don't have a specific number in mind because we don't know how many people are coming, but the more people the better. We're just hoping to make the most we can so we can help programs and help fund more projects."

New bachelor of arts added to Green School

GREEN, PAGE 1

and culture.

It also includes the ability to choose an area of concentration, which requires six credits.

"The preparation students would need to have is the foreign language requirement," said Keaton Lora, academic advisor for the Green School.

The foreign language requirement is also six credits.

If students choose to take the College Level Examination Program exam, it will count toward their credit in continuing with the major, but students are still required to take two language courses from the 3000 to 4000-level as part of their required courses.

"Students can start applying by now," said Lora. "They have certain flexibility on dozens of courses to pick for their remaining 24 credits."

Mora said students can

get career opportunities in government agencies, social services, non-profit organizations and public relations and marketing, among other things.

"There's graduate and undergraduate certificates for Latin American and Caribbean studies as well," he said. "In addition to these studies, the Center also provides undergraduate Haitian studies, which is the only University in the country that offers it."

Adding a new bachelor's to the center is not part of the evolution the Green School is going through: its renaming after Steven J. Green and its current autonomy and separation from the College of Arts and Sciences.

Although the Center was endowed by the Green family, it was not part of the process for the Center to add a new bachelor program.

After students complete their bachelor degree in the Kimberly Green LACC,

they can find jobs, said Mora.

"They will be using languages and learn what is essential and interdisciplinary," said Mora. "Jobs concerned in area studies.. [They] are looking for people who have a genetic understanding of specific parts of the world."

Karen Pineda, a junior international relations and political science major, supports the new addition to the center.

"With this new bachelor, I am sure our school will grow based on its reputation," said Pineda.

"This will help students become more diverse because it teaches interdisciplinary courses. Students will become more aware of this side of the world and not only in what's going on with the terrorists' attacks."

Enrollment for the new bachelor's degree is now open.

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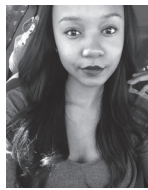
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We shouldn't live our lives through social media

TEA TIME
WITH ALIA



ALIA BENNETT

Technology has come a long way. We don't have to leave our house to shop, run errands or watch movies. Everything is now within our grasp and that includes millions of people. Time and space are no longer as big of an issue because social media is everywhere. We live in a society where there are very little limits, if any, on communicating with one another.

However, it seems that with the rise of social media, a lot of people are becoming obsessed with all the wrong things.

First and foremost, social media is great. We get to network, market ourselves or our brands and even meet new people all while keeping in touch with loved ones. But as with anything, there are always cons. One could say that social media has

also lead to more materialism and narcissism within today's society.

People are so wrapped up in the attention they seek or get from these networks that their dependence on social media seems to mirror addictive behaviors. It's almost as if we can no longer just live life, but we must tell and show everybody just how we are living it.

According to a study conducted by Harvard University, divulging information about one's self activates certain pleasure centers in our brain. This makes it a bit more understandable why social media is so enticing amongst youth.

Nonetheless, a growing problem still persists and not enough people are paying attention to it. We have a generation that was raised on technology so this is our "norm." However, it is currently being used in ways that are not facilitating to an active and enjoyable life by some.

For example, if a post doesn't get the type of attention you think it deserves, you may start to overthink

and second guess yourself. You may also begin to use your posts as a way to validate yourself or keep up with the "cool" or "rich" socialites.

Conflicting feelings about one's self or life can arise. Users see others post their lavish things or their frequent trips around the world and instantly become jealous. You might even feel like you are not successful since you are not living the same life that they are displaying.

At the same time, the average person doesn't think of all the things you don't see. They fail to realize that people are more than what they post. Life is more than what we post.

Thanksgiving just passed and I can only imagine how many of us were glued to our phones; constantly checking our feed instead of enjoying the time spent with our families. A lot of us can't even eat a meal these days without stopping and posting. After all that is done, the food probably has lost its appeal. Life's precious moments

are the same.

Although taking and posting pictures is not the problem, doing it for the wrong reason is. Some of our best moments are uncaptured or unseen by most and that doesn't necessarily nullify them or take them away forever. When you can't go a day without posting things on Instagram, Twitter or countless other apps, you might have a problem.

Life is meant to be lived and many of us are too busy trying to prove something to people that don't know us or honestly don't care. It is easy to get wrapped up in things that are here one day and gone the next. For this reason, use social networks for fun not as way to convey something you aren't.

"Tea Time" highlights social issues affecting upcoming professionals. For feedback or commentary, email Alia at opinion@fiusm.com.

BEACON | Editorial

Studying for finals is important

It's the last week before finals, which means it's time for students to hole themselves up in their rooms and cram as much information from this semester as possible. This is a stressful time for students; work is piling up, grades are being finalized and deadlines are closer than ever before.

However, students should be reminded that this last week of school doesn't have to be so intimidating. There are many simple steps that you can take right now to ensure that finals week runs as smooth as possible.

First, don't be afraid to reach out to your professor about any questions you might have. Though we encourage students to communicate frequently with their professor throughout the semester, it's better to reach out to your professors now than to never reach out at all. Check in with them to make sure you're not behind on assignments, ask them about any feedback regarding your work and any other important questions you might have. Remember, professors and their TAs are meant to guide you.

Students should also reach out to classmates. An efficient way is to form a study group or to have students who are more well-versed in the class help you understand difficult concepts. Studying with others can offer you fresh perspectives on the subject material. You may also discover new study methods, which may facilitate faster learning, instead of sticking to the technique you are used to. Studying with classmates will also make the process more fun as well as motivating.

FIU also offers resources on campus to assist with tutoring before finals. FIU's Center for Academic Success provides online tutoring at the click of button at times that are convenient for students.

It's common for college students to cram the night before an exam, but cramming isn't really all that helpful. It's important to figure out a proper study schedule that allows you time to study and to get a proper amount of sleep.

Staying in one place can exhaust the mind, so after an hour of studying, it is recommended to get up and get your body moving. The exercise will boost blood flow. It doesn't have to be a full blown work out - a quick walk will do enough to reset your mind.

Make sure to get a good night's sleep the night before an exam. Staying up to cram actually diminishes the chances of your brain retaining any information. Wake up early enough to prepare a nourishing breakfast and maybe do a quick review before the test.

Finals week doesn't have to be the most stressful week of the year. Be calm and reach out to all the resources FIU has to offer - be it tutoring, advisors, professors or your fellow students.

Sandcastle building is a form of art

PANTHER'S EYE



ANA BARRIOS

As Miami citizens, we absolutely love going to the beach. However, the current rainy season might mean we're not going as much as we'd like. Nevertheless, a fun activity that is pretty popular at the beach is sandcastle building. Children and families bring pails, shovels and different tools to use for building sandcastles.

By using their imagination, a unique sandcastle is created and children play along with their parents by pretending to be knights, pirates, princes, princesses or anything their imagination demands. However, sandcastle building isn't just an activity for children; it has also become a professional form of art.

Today, there are professional sandcastle sculptors here in Miami who create unique designs and do amazing things with their talents. Victor Leong, a professional sandcastle builder known as the Sandman, is one of two sand sculptors in the world who lights his castles on fire—the other lives in the Philippines.

Leong studied at the International Fine Arts College in the Design District of Downtown Miami to become an engineer artist. He's been building sandcastles in Miami Beach since 1993.

Describing Miami Beach as his main territory, Leong says "Sandcastle builders have their own territory."

The more sand he has, the more sections he can build to make his castles as big as 12 feet high by 40 feet wide.

The main ingredients an artist needs are sand and water; the right amount of both must be determined before construction. Wet sand is better to use because the surface tension causes sand grains to cling together to form little "bridges" between the grains.

Dry sand is too loose and not suitable for building sandcastles. When the wet sand dries after the artist finishes making a sandcastle, they can simply brush off any extra sand to polish their work.

The amount of sand needed varies and is based on however many sections they wish to add to a castle. According to Victor

Leong, a builder might need about 40 tons of sand to build a sandcastle or perhaps even more depending on their idea.

Ideas for creating a sandcastle can come from one's imagination, but the artists can also be inspired by castles they have seen from traveling. The variety of architectural styles of buildings inspires the artists to sketch out a design for a castle. From paper, many sandcastles are designed uniquely according to the artist's style.

Competitions have been developed to give sand sculptors a chance at showing off their skill. One of the biggest sand sculpting competitions is the World Championship in Sand Sculpture that takes place every year in Harrison Hot Springs, British Columbia.

Sandcastle building has truly evolved into new form of art for artist to create a three-dimensional piece from a two-dimensional idea. It is a great way for those who are good at building things to show their skills to others and share their ideas to inspire onlookers. Entering a competition is a good idea for a builder to be recognized, but many are hired by people to build sandcastles for special occasions like wedding proposals or birthday celebrations.

If you are a creative person, try your hand at sandcastle building. You may discover you have a talent for building something incredible out of sand.

"Panther's Eye" is a commentary on interesting things here in the U.S. and around the world. Ana Barrios is a Contributing Writer for FIU Student Media. For more commentary, contact her at opinion@fiusm.com.

MR. FIX-IT



SAMUEL PRITCHARD-TORRES/THE BEACON

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'25' is Adele's 'best possible comeback'

COLUMNIST



JOSEPH
CARDENAS

It would be an understatement to say that the year 2011 was a storm of unexpected waves of emotions when Adele's album showed up out of nowhere and gave the "Titanic" soundtrack a run for its money.

Still, it is true, and anyone who says otherwise are either hipsters or classic rockheads that pretend classic rock is the only real music with meaning these days. Debatably, Adele helped bring pop back to its traditional roots, vocally driven, and rock-pop heavy rather than relying on synthesizers and EDM producers.

"21" was a refreshing record during a time when pop music ceased being genuine and unique, and was really the first time in several years to add variety to the genre.

Four, long, miserable, agonizing years later, Adele delivers once again. While we no longer live in a music era drowning in EDM and candy pop, that doesn't mean Adele's new album isn't fresh.

If anything, it's expanded upon "21" and gone further, sounding like a pop record while still keeping a traditional approach. "Hello" was

released and destroyed the Internet for a week or two. It's really the best possible surprise comeback, even topping "Beyonce" in 2013.

"When We Were Young" is bittersweet, and good rhythm matched to a haunting and melancholy melody. It's excellent following the vocally brilliant and dynamic "Hello."

The rest of the album is just as much of an enchanting experience. "Water Under The Bridge" has cool beats and chords and a fantastic chorus. This song is about a relationship that hasn't reached closure or a finite end. The somber piano melody of "Remedy" hits you deeply.

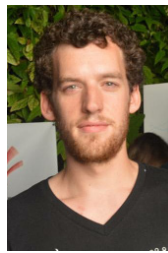
"All I Ask" is completely raw, and a powerful vocal performance. "Sweetest Devotion" is almost psychedelic and infectious, and an excellent closing to the album's standard edition. Other beautiful songs include "Send My Love (To Your New Lover)" and "River Lea."

Few artists can make a massive album with widespread reception that lasts for years and come back from it equally as strong. Adele defies the common notion of the one-hit-wonder in "25." The album has released this past week, and has already broken records, which just says so much of Adele's power as an artist of the century.

life@fiusm.com

'Brooklyn' delivers Oscar-worthy performances

SICK FLICKS



DAVID SEELEY

Every once in a while a movie comes along, often under the radar and overlooked, that makes you believe in the power of cinema again.

Films that are precise in every aspect of production can draw you into its world of make believe and will not let go no matter how hard you try and fight against it.

A fine example of this rare type experience for moviegoers is "Brooklyn," which is an astounding historical period drama directed by Irish newcomer John Crowley.

From the screenplay and the acting, to the costumes and the set design, "Brooklyn" is dripping wet with 50s nostalgia that will leave you wanting more once the lights go up and you return to the present day.

As you may have guessed from the title, New York City plays a vital role here. However, the film is Irish through and through. It is based on Colm Toibin's novel of the same name, and features a subtle yet deeply moving lead performance by Irish actress Saoirse Ronan from "Atonement" and "The Lovely Bones."

Set in the early 1950s, "Brooklyn" tells the story of Eilis Lacey, a young woman from a small country town in Ireland who is in search of a more fulfilling and exciting life. When her sister gives her the chance to leave her and her mother behind to start a new life in the United States, Lacey jumps at the opportunity.

Upon arriving in Brooklyn she starts to feel the guilt of leaving everything she has ever known behind in Ireland. However, she also begins to realize all of the possibilities that her new situation has to offer. Lacey soon meets a young Italian man named Tony, played by Emory Cohen, and immediately becomes infatuated with his fresh and charming demeanor.

When it comes time for Lacey to make a visit back to her home country, her and Tony make a promise to be faithful to one another no matter what. Upon returning to Ireland she is introduced to another man named Jim, played by Domhnall Gleeson, and is

caught in a crossroads of love and loyalty; trying to decide which life she is truly made for.

As the awards season rapidly approaches we start to become aware of smaller, more independently produced films that are laced with talent and packed with golden statue worthy content. "Brooklyn" is no different, as it is filled with some of the best acting and production design that you have seen all year. The movie was an instant hit after it premiered at Sundance Film Festival in January.

Following the premiere, Brooklyn was at the center of a bidding war between movie studios, which was eventually won by Fox Searchlight Pictures, who paid \$9 million for the distribution rights. This was one of the biggest deals to ever come out of the prestigious film festival.

The screenplay, which was adapted by Nick Hornby, is incredibly delicate and nuanced. Every word that pours out of the characters mouths feels genuine and accessible. The rather simplistic plot is wrapped up in realism and filled with emotion. I dare you to watch this film and not get teary eyed while you think about a love long lost, or while you relate to the feeling of homesickness that is prevalent throughout the film.

Be on the lookout for nominations at both the Golden Globes and Oscars this year for Ronan's powerhouse performance, the memorable costume design and Hornby's adapted screenplay. "Brooklyn" is a perfect collaboration between Irish, English and American filmmakers who have a passion for telling a story that transcends time and is poignant for viewers' young and old. It is filled with moments of sadness as well as joy and manages to be both heartbreaking and heartwarming at the same time.

While you're waiting for the bigger blockbusters to come out later this holiday season, give "Brooklyn" a chance and you won't be disappointed.

Sick Flicks is a weekly column that provides movie reviews on newly released obscure or independent films. To offer suggestions for David, send an email to life@fiusm.com

'Vampire Academy' author visits Miami



COLLIN SIMPSON/THE BEACON

Fantasy fiction author Richelle Mead, who may be best known for writing "Vampire Academy", speaks at Books and Books to promote her upcoming novel, "Soundless," Sunday, Nov. 15.

WRITERS EVENTS



COLLIN SIMPSON

Sunday, Nov. 15, Books and Books hosted best-selling fantasy fiction author Richelle Mead.

Mead is known for writing the "Vampire Academy" series, a six book collection which tells the story of Rose Hathaway as she trains at St. Vladimir's Academy to be a guardian of her best friend, vampire Vasilisa "Lissa" Dragomir. The series was critically acclaimed, and was adapted into a film in 2014. Mead is also well known for writing the "Georgina Kincaid" series, "Dark Swan," "Bloodlines" and "Age of X" series.

Mead came to Books and Books as part of her book tour to promote her newest novel, "Soundless." This is her first stand-alone novel. To the delight of the audience, Mead outlined the basics of her new novel.

Mead explained that Fei, an artist in training, has never left her village, which faces multiple hardships. One hardship is the fact that no one has been able to hear in her village for

generations and villagers are forced to live in a world based on sign language and written communication. Villagers are now mysteriously becoming blind, and Fei's sister may be the next victim.

"When Fei suddenly wakes one day with her hearing restored, she learns she has the ability to save her village and unlock the secret of their mysterious history," said Mead. "But first, Fei must find a way to descend the treacherous mountain--a task complicated by both her new ability to hear and the company of an old love interest."

Books and Books was filled with excited fans. After a brief presentation of her new book, Mead opened the room up and answered questions about her experiences writing "Vampire Academy," her involvement on the set of the 2014 movie and her plans for future novels and series. The next novel in the "Age of X" series was one of these.

Mead also announced her next novel, "The Glittering Court," which will be released in April 2016. The first 11 chapters were released in a complimentary packet for fans for free with a copy of "Soundless."

"We were able to have Richelle and the girls meet and mingle before the event, and discuss her newest book," said Ketsia Julmes, the event coordinator at Books and Books. "She's a great author as she really understands urban fantasy and I'm actually looking forward to getting lost in Glittering Court."

After her presentation, Mead signed books for fans, although she had a limit of three books per customer. Fortunately, Books and Books had plenty of copies of all the "Vampire Academy" books available, as well as the spin-off series "Bloodlines" available for purchase.

Mead also had some inspirational words for the FIU community, especially those hoping to become authors.

"Write what you're passionate about, don't overthink it. It doesn't take much more than that. Don't worry about it being great or if people will like it. Write what you love and that's how you get started."

Writers Events is a weekly column published on Wednesdays. To provide suggested events for Collin, send an email to life@fiusm.com

Taco Maker ‘convenient and simple’

BEACON BITES



GABBY ARZOLA

I don't know about you, but with all the leftover thanksgiving food, I need a break.

Luckily, my aunt told me that there is a great taco joint next to FIU where students get a 10 percent discount.

Great tacos? Discount? This is a no brainer.

Just across the street from the MMC campus on 1665 SW 107 Ave, anyone can walk there with ease. Personally, I like the drive.

Inside, the establishment is clean--super clean. I didn't see a crumb on any of the tables, and that is extremely important to me because I'm a partial germaphobe.

With its grey and sunshine yellow decor, Taco Maker was simple and broke free from any traditional Mexican scheme. The menu is also simple and includes tacos, burritos, bowls, salads and nachos.

And I get to put any toppings I want? I like it!

I ordered a Mexican grill bowl with white cilantro rice, pinto beans, fajita chicken, pico de gallo, lettuce and cheese.

The chicken was fresh and warm. There was a

slight spice to it that wasn't overwhelming and it complimented the warm fluffy rice.

The pinto beans also carried a spice, but the shredded cheddar and Monterey cheese helped cool it down.

The pico de gallo was cold, refreshing and tasted homemade. The juiciness of the tomato, the crunch of the onion and the earthy notes of the cilantro was the perfect addition to my meal.

Taco Maker has no frills; just downright good food.

Being so close to campus, I'm definitely coming back with my friends to try their burritos. My friends would love it because they also sell beer!

Keep in mind that every Wednesday is "Taco Wednesday," where all tacos are just one dollar!

I know with finals coming up, I'll be buying these by the dozen. Enjoy!

Beacon Bits is a weekly column about food for the college student on the weekends. Gabby Arzola was not given free food, she paid for it. For suggestions of nearby restaurants, please email Gabby at gabby.arzola.com



GABBY ARZOLA/THE BEACON

The Mexican grill bowl with white cilantro rice, pinto beans, fajita chicken, pico de gallo, lettuce and cheese from Taco Maker Mexican Grill, which can be found across the street from Modesto Maidique Campus.

Student's career blooms on Capitol Hill

ADRIANNE RICHARDSON
Miami Herald
TNS Staff

Choosing a political science major and career path was easy for 21-year-old Darryl Perez. But gaining experience on the Hill before earning his bachelor's degree was priceless.

Perez, a Florida International University student, gained an internship with Sen. Marco Rubio through the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute's (CHCI) Congressional Internship Program.

"It was an eye-opening experience and I appreciate the CHCI," Perez said. "Without them, I wouldn't have been working on the hill."

Perez is one of 22 students chosen to work in the nation's capital for 12 weeks through the Congressional Internship Program, which aims to increase the presence of Hispanics on Capitol Hill by exposing young students to the legislative process and strengthening their leadership skills. The program also includes diversity, work experience and community service by giving interns a peek into a political career.

That was important for Perez, who decided to pursue political science in the seventh grade at Miami Lakes Educational Center.

"I fell in love with politics and the possibility of making

a difference," Perez said.

Now a senior, Perez has decided to make a few changes as he embarks on political career, advocating for equal access to education, helping undocumented students getting in-state tuition, and assisting low-income communities.

Perez finished his internship on Nov. 13, but for the Miami native, his service continues at home.

Through his involvement in the Global Community Engagement Organization at FIU, Perez visits the Dominican Republic with a group of 20 students each spring break.

"Many children there live in poor conditions and don't know anything different," Perez said. "Through the organization, we teach about safe sex and common health issues to both raise awareness and prevention rates."

With a 3.2 GPA, Perez is preparing for graduation next spring and has decided to eventually attend law school to open career opportunities for his political career.

For now, he has settled in joining either the Peace Corp or Teach for America.

"Joining either of these organizations will help me to see a different side of the country and serve students there," Perez said.

"Teachers are the next best thing to parents, and that is the best way to further a child's education."

Live performance a big part of Miami Art Week

ADRIANNE RICHARDSON
Miami Herald
TNS Staff

Live performance has become an accepted and vital part of the art world's continuing expansion far beyond paintings on walls and sculptures in parks. And Miami Art Week includes a range of performance offerings that bring art to life in new ways.

The most dramatic, accessible and relevant to South Florida is Holoscenes, a giant aquarium on the plaza of Miami Dade College's downtown campus, with people inside going through the motions of daily life as water rises and falls around them. Presented by MDC Live Arts, which will also host discussions and events with the college's Earth Ethics Institute and other environmental groups, Holoscenes aims to bring sea-level rise to immediate, surreal life.

"It's taking the small patterns of our daily lives, that become our lives and how we spend our time, and put that in conversation with these longer-term patterns symbolized by water rising and falling," says , the director and media artist who created Holoscenes. The piece will run six hours a day, Wednesday to Saturday.

Jan, 37, got the idea for Holoscenes about five years ago, as news of floods and extreme weather events became increasingly common. An image became stuck in his mind, of a man reading a newspaper in a transparent room that filled with water, which the man ignored, turning the pages until they disintegrated and the water covered him. For Jan, it was a metaphor for the way habit allowed people to ignore overwhelming changes.

"Obviously, it was about flooding and mundane behavior and myopia," he says. "But it also became about the hubris of adaptation, the double-edged nature of our beautiful capacity to adapt. But it's also dangerous, in the sense that now we're affecting the environment in a way we never have before."

Holoscenes, which premiered last year in Toronto, took several years to put together. Jan brought in architects and hydraulic and structural engineers to design and build the elevator-sized tank, which takes hours to fill. The four performers trained with a free diver to learn to hold their breath longer, as they dance or or while water fills their environment.

At one performance, Jan overheard two children arguing about Holoscenes, with one saying it was about dreaming and death, and the other about mermaids. Both are right, he says.

"There are ways to attach abstract ideas to reality, if you think it's life and death or mermaids," he says. "That may be a fanciful idea of people who evolved to live in water, but metaphorically it's something to think about in the real world."

Performance's capacity to bring abstract ideas to kinetic life is part of its allure for the art world. In the past half-dozen years, dance has become a prominent part of that mix, a refreshing change from more static, conceptual forms of performance art.

One prominent name in this hybrid realm of dance and art is Ryan McNamara, who with musician Devonté Hynes has created Dimensions, a performance that is part of Pérez Art Museum Miami's celebration on Thursday. McNamara, who started as a photographer and visual artist, became fascinated with dance approximately a decade ago.

"I was excited by the immediacy of it," McNamara, 36, says from his home in Brooklyn. "The fact that you can't know what's going to happen keeps me excited, and it also drives me crazy."

Now McNamara, who has no dance training, choreographs and stages performances for leading museums and galleries. For Dimensions, which is inspired by fantastical Miami sites such as Vizcaya and Coral Castle, he is working with eight dancers from Miami, New York and L.A. while eight musicians play Hynes' score.

"I show things, and they refine them on their more virtuosic bodies," McNamara

says. "It reminds me of sculpture, but it's more exciting because the sculpture can give you feedback."

Sculpture and dance unite in Pore at Locust Projects, the adventurous nonprofit gallery in the Design District. Creators Martha Friedman, a sculptor, and Silas Riener, a choreographer formerly with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, began working together in 2011 when she created a set for a Cunningham "Event" (a type of structured improvisation) that Riener was staging at Princeton University, where Friedman teaches.

Friedman, who works with liquid rubber that she molds in different forms, was already fascinated with tactile materials, force and the contrast between stillness and movement. She found new inspiration in Riener.

"He has such control over his body; that makes it really interesting and exciting for me," she says. "He became a kind of muse ... there's a new part of my practice that I now get to explore that is performative and durational and choreographic."

For Pore, Friedman created giant rubber backdrops with extensions that Riener uses as both costumes and props, draping, manipulating and interacting with them as the audience follows him through the gallery. The piece was inspired by the medieval concept of the body's four "humors." When Riener told her about George Balanchine's The Four Temperaments, based on the same idea, Friedman added musical collages of that ballet's Hindemith score.

In Ryan Gander's Ernest Hawker, a fictional character, based on Gander, plays a drunken, washed-up artist. And Pope.L's The Beautiful features black men with skateboards on their backs who crawl onto a stage to sing America the Beautiful. All will pop up unannounced from among the crowd at the park.

"Performance ... like theater, is exaggerated," Pope.L said in an email. "It's made more extreme or strange to show the fears, flaws and silliness in what we do."

BEACH VOLLEYBALL

Two Panthers named champions in Panama

STEFANO RIVERA
Contributing Writer
sports@fiusm.com

Two members of the University beach volleyball team were crowned champions at the 2015 U21 Women's Central Beach Volleyball Championships on Friday, Nov. 27.

Sophomores, Natalia Giron and Estephanie Bethancourt, represented the country of Guatemala as they traveled to Panama to compete in the tournament. Both Giron and Bethancourt are from Guatemala City and attended the same school, Colegio Interamericano, prior to FIU.

Last season, Giron competed with Giovanna Pasos, who was a sophomore at the time and juniors, Anabela Sataric and Marina Boulanger. She finished with a combined record of 4-2 with them. She defeated duos from Louisiana State University, University of South Carolina and University of North Florida.

Bethancourt only played in exhibition matches last season. Unfortunately, she finished 0-2 in these exhibition games while partnered with Giron. However, she got her first victory with Alexandra

Lilliquist against Carson-Newman University.

Giron and Bethancourt went into the tournament as Guatemala's No. 1 team. The duo cruised through group play as it defeated Nicaragua 2-0, host nation, Panama 2-0 and Costa Rica 2-1, giving them the top-seed in the tournament. Matches moving forward were single elimination.

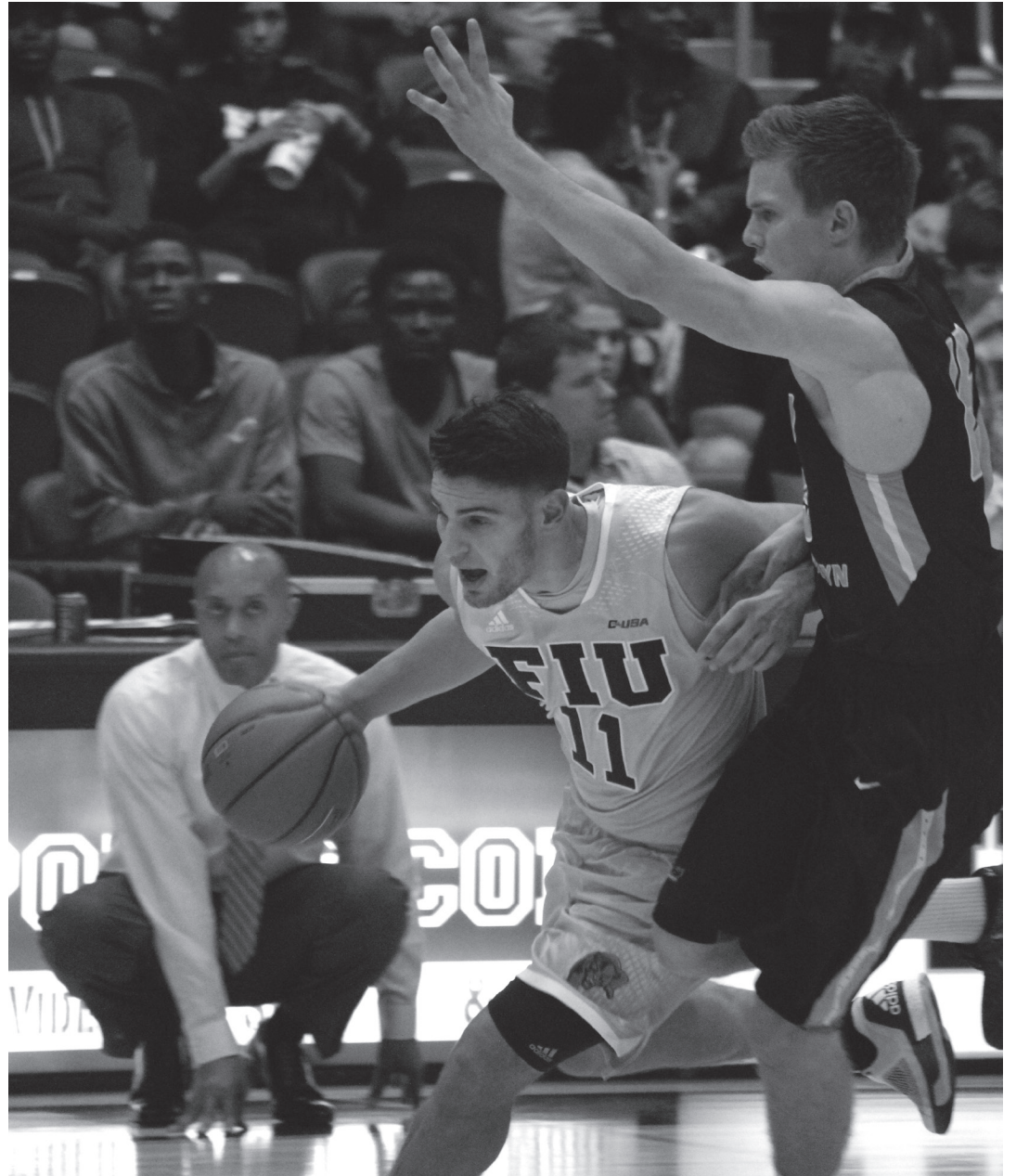
They later matched up against Guatemala's No. 2 team but cruised once again to a 2-0 set victory. In the semi-finals, the duo was set to face off against Costa Rica. Last year in El Salvador, Costa Rica defeated Giron and Bethancourt in the finals.

Giron and Bethancourt bested the duo from Costa Rica in two sets with a final score of 21-6, 21-15. They were set to face off against Nicaragua in the finals.

The duo dominated once again as it defeated Nicaragua in two sets 21-11, 21-14, to take the Championship and earn its first gold medal.

Giron and Bethancourt, Guatemala's No. 1 team, is currently ranked eighth in the NORCECAs (North, Central American and Caribbean Volleyball Confederation), which is composed of 40 nations.

HARD IN THE PAINT



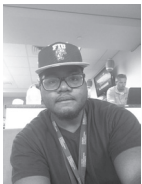
MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Guard Ray Rodriguez protects the ball from a Brooklyn Blackbird at the match against Long Island University, Wednesday, Nov. 25, where FIU won with a score of 80-72.

FOOTBALL

5-7 season a 'low note,' fails to meet expectations

PETE'S PICKS



PETER HOLLAND, JR.

bowl eligibility.

The last two games against the C-USA heavy weights Marshall University and Western Kentucky University were basically the climax of the season, and the Panthers were outscored 115-7.

Where do the Panthers go from here? Well there are some positives and negatives sides as they begin their off-season.

Positives

The offense, despite not finishing strong and only scoring seven points in two games, has a bright future.

Starting quarterback Alex McGough, only a sophomore, can get better as a QB during his junior year in 2016. The Tampa native finished the season with 2722 yards, 21 touchdowns and eight interceptions.

Another year and another missed postseason, the 2015 football season ended on a low note at 5-7 (3-5 in Conference USA) and just one game shy of

His progression has been superb, whether he's breaking touchdown records in a single season, which happened at the homecoming game, or being ranked No. 17 nationally in pass completions.

Additionally, McGough has an arsenal young weapons returning with him; running back Alex Gardner, wide receiver Anthony Jones, running back Napoleon Maxwell when he's fully healthy, wide receiver Thomas Owens, wide receiver Dennis Turner and wide receiver Julian Williams are all expected to don blue and gold again next year.

An added bonus will be starting tight end Jonnu Smith, if he returns for his senior season. It's 50/50 if he decides to stay one more year or declare for the NFL draft as an underclassmen - his resume from his breakout sophomore season alone could definitely give him some NFL looks. At the same time, he can return fully healthy and help lead the team to a postseason for the first time since 2011.

Head Coach Ron Turner has built an establishment for this team and has been improving

every year. He's come a long way from 1-11 his first year, improving to 4-8 his second year and 5-7 this year.

One game improvement and missing another bowl bid three year straight is a small feat, yet the Panthers are going forward as a team rather than going backwards.

Despite a blowout loss on senior day against Western Kentucky and a low home attendance, winning at home has been huge for the Panthers and they should take advantage of that next season.

FIU also has 23 high school players verbally committing to play for FIU, a majority from Florida, which could prove to be another huge boost for this program.

Negatives

Being the most talented FIU football team we've seen in years came with high expectations, which unfortunately resulted in having the most underachieved team we've seen.

This is especially true on defense, which was pretty average against the pass but struggled against the run.

In their defense, injury

definitely played a key role during the season, as the Panthers lost a few key players in the back seven on defense.

The safety position was the weak point for the defense due to the injuries. This season they had to rely on true freshman Tyree Johnson to start at free safety when two safeties ahead of him went down.

In addition to improving defense, the next task for this off season is replacing the seniors, including team captains Michael Wakefield and Richard Leonard. There are going to be many holes that will need to be filled.

Expect to see some brand new faces and not much experience.

This season lacked consistency when it came to winning games. Even though they finished 4-1 at home, they also finished 1-6 on the road.

Instead of back to back wins, which they didn't have this year, it was either a win followed by a loss, or back to back losses in two weeks. Their losses to below average teams like Florida Atlantic University and University of Massachusetts really hurt the Panthers' chances of bowl eligibility.

The scheduling itself had really set the Panthers up for failure. Even being 4-1 at home doesn't seem so impressive now because of the mediocre team they played and the lack of home attendance from the FIU fan base, or somewhat of a fan base.

Overall Summary

The Panthers are looking towards the future and are not looking back. What to expect for next season all depends what happens this offseason. This is now the time to recruit more talent before national signing day.

I expect no major changes this offseason.

Turner and Executive Director of Sports and Entertainment Pete Garcia are not going anywhere anytime soon, even though some critics believe that they are both on the hot seat. As for the returning players, this will be an even younger team with a lot up for grabs next year.

"Pete's Picks" offers commentary on the University's football team. For suggestions or commentary, send an email to sports@fiusm.com.

BASKETBALL

Miami Heat has 'OK' start

MANNY NAVARRO
Miami Herald
TNS Staff

When it comes to grading the way the Heat has played through its first 15 games, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh pretty much see eye-to-eye.

"We're doing OK for the first 15," Wade said Sunday after practice. "We saw some good things. We saw some not-so-good things. But for the first 15, I'd grade us as a low B."

Said Bosh: "[I'd give us] a B. I'm a little more lenient than he is. I'm a lot nicer guy. I think we're doing OK. Of course, within the 15 games there have been a couple letdowns. But we have to learn from that."

One thing everyone can agree on: The schedule over the next couple weeks is going to get a lot tougher for Miami (10-5). After Monday night's game against the Boston Celtics, who went into Orlando on Sunday night with a 9-7 record, the Heat will host Kevin Durant and the Oklahoma City Thunder on Thursday and then LeBron James and the Cleveland

Cavaliers on Saturday.

After that, the Heat's next five opponents — Washington, Charlotte, Indiana, Memphis and Atlanta — either made the playoffs last year or are much improved.

"That's why it's a big week man," Bosh said. "KD is back and looked like he hasn't missed a step. He came right back and inserted himself right back into the swing of things. [Russell Westbrook] is playing at the highest level he's been playing at for the last two years. And, of course, Bron, we know what he can do."

"It's important that we're at 100 percent. These are the games that I think are very important for us because we consider ourselves an elite team, or at least working to be an elite team. And the head-to-head matchups are very important. You always want to measure yourselves against the best."

The Celtics, the No. 8 seed in the East last year, clearly don't have the star power Oklahoma City and Cleveland does. But Boston leads the league in steals (11.3 per game),

points off turnovers (22.0 per game) and ranks third in the NBA behind San Antonio and Miami in overall defensive rating.

Bosh said the Heat was preparing Sunday in practice to deal with the way the Celtics use quick hands in the passing lanes to create turnovers and the pressure they put on the ball. Bosh

said the fact the Celtics can spread the floor and have all five players on the court make three-pointers is a challenge. He said although Boston is young and still trying to figure things out, they "have the makings of a very good team."

"Very good team, a team we respect a lot," Wade said. "They're going to compete on the defensive end

of the floor. They're going to make you work. They're going to make you think. It's going to be a great challenge for us.

"You don't play the game not to play in competitive games, especially at home. This is going to be a great week for our fans all week to come out and support us."

TWO BIRDS, ONE BALL



MEGAN TAIT/THE BEACON

Forward Cameron Smith aims for the hoop at the game against Long Island University at the FIU Arena, Wednesday, Nov. 25. The next home game will be against Elon Friday, Dec. 4.

HOCKEY

Panthers come back with two goals to beat Detroit

GEORGE RICHARDS
Miami Herald
TNS Staff

Whether it's the chili-covered coney dogs or the abundance of cheap Little Caesars pizza, the Panthers really seem to enjoy their visits to Detroit.

On Sunday, the Panthers kept their Motor City winning streak going as Brian Campbell scored 80 seconds into overtime to lift Florida to a 2-1 win over the Red Wings.

Florida has won five consecutive games at Joe Louis Arena and has earned at least a point (6-0-1) in its past seven here.

Before beating the Red Wings 2-1 on Nov. 20, 2009, on a Bryan McCabe overtime goal, Florida had only won in Detroit once before in franchise history.

Now, winning is commonplace for the Panthers in Detroit.

"We did what we had to do," said Campbell, who cashed in on a nice Jonathan Huberdeau feed in overtime. "We worked hard, played a strong game throughout and had a bit of a bad break. Those things happen, but we found a way to gut it out."

The Panthers, kicking off the opener of a five-game trip with a victory, appeared to take the first lead just 28 seconds into the game when Reilly Smith cleaned up a loose puck as Huberdeau got hit from behind and rolled into goalie Petr Mrazek.

Although officials initially gave Smith a goal, after a group discussion, they waved off the goal because of Huberdeau's goalie interference.

Coach Gerard Gallant challenged the call, but it stood and the game remained scoreless.

"It was close, a 50-50 call but it was early in the game," Gallant said. "I wanted to get that momentum. It just didn't go our way. I thought it was a good goal."

Said Huberdeau: "I think it was the right call, I don't think it was a goal. I may have gotten tripped, I tried to make a move."

The game remained a goalie battle throughout with Roberto Luongo and Mrazek

making one save after another.

The first goal to stick came from the Wings after Sasha Barkov made a rare mistake by coughing up the puck in the Florida zone. Dylan Larkin jumped all over it, drove in and beat Luongo for his 10th goal of the year.

Luongo didn't give up anything else after that.

"We thought we were playing well so we went into the third wanting to do what we had been doing," said Luongo, who made 28 saves. "We knew we needed a lucky bounce to tie it, and that's what we got. I was trying to do my job, make the save when needed. It was nice to tie it in the third, get rewarded a little."

Down 1-0, the Panthers kept coming at Mrazek (30 saves) but kept getting turned away.

Late in the third, defenseman Aaron Ekblad -- who grew up across the Detroit River in Windsor, Ontario -- fired a shot from 40 feet out toward the net.

Smith, who had that goal taken away in the opening minute, was in front of the cage, got a piece of the puck and deflected it into the net.

"It kind of happens that way, you get one taken away from you early and then you get good bounces afterward," Smith said. "This really helped the team. We haven't been scoring much, but if we can get two or three, we're in the thick of things."

Florida kept the defensive pressure up in the final five-plus minutes of the third to force overtime for a second consecutive game.

Instead of going to a shootout as they did Saturday, the Panthers took the win after Jussi Jokinen and Huberdeau broke free with Huberdeau leaving the puck for a trailing Campbell, who buried the pass.

The Panthers are now 3-4 in overtime with Sunday's win their first in the new 3-on-3 format.

Florida's previous overtime wins this season came in the shootout.

"We won a game, and we're moving forward," Campbell said.

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Bill Hansen has been in the catering business in South Florida since 1980. Over the course of 35 years, he has cultivated numerous relationships within the foodservice industry.

Every year for the last 20 years, Hansen has put these relationships to good use for the purpose of charity. Hansen has served as the host and manager of a yearly catered event that organized to raise funds for a different charity.

This year's event, Palette of Taste, will feature catering from a variety of foodservice

professionals whom Hansen has come to know personally in his 35 years in the business.

"I have had the opportunity to make a lot of friends and help a lot of people over the years," said Hansen. "Once a year, I reach out to my friends, colleagues, associates, vendors, everyone I know, and ask them to help support me as I've helped support them over the years."

In addition to utilizing the relationships he has acquired, Hansen recruits students from his catering management classes to assist him in organizing the events.

"Each student has a particular job prior to the event," said Hansen. "We create a management team of

students who want to participate more in the event and learn how to manage, promote, run a silent auction, run a bar and things of that nature."

According to Hansen, this is a unique experience that students cannot derive from reading a textbook or having a discussion in class.

"It's really interesting for a professor who believes teaching out in the student's field of study instead of theorizing about it in some classroom," said Julen Marin, a senior majoring in dietetics and nutrition.

Palette of Taste will be raising funds for Touching Miami with Love, a non-profit foundation

that provides resources and opportunities to the underprivileged children of Overtown.

"I'm particularly fond of taking care of people and the inner city because not so many people are blessed and weren't born into the right family or spot," said Hansen. "Those of us who are blessed, who are given so much, it's up to us to share what we have with others."

In addition to its catering, Palette of Taste will feature a silent auction.

Guests will have the chance to bid on prizes that range from restaurant gift certificates, custom-made shirts and a weekend in Bimini.

Palette of Taste is set to cater to approximately 300 guests, which could raise enough funds to surpass last year's grand total of \$28,000.

Hansen would like to teach his students and anyone participating in the event an important lesson.

"You get so much more satisfaction out of giving and helping someone than you do from getting," said Hansen. "Life is all about loving other people. And one way to love others is to help people who need it."

Palette of Taste will take place Wednesday, Dec. 2 at the Chaplin School of Hospitality's Wine Spectator's Restaurant Management Lab.

Tickets are \$20.

FIU at I-75 offers students free massages

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Most college students are stressed because of classes, exams, work and relationships, according to a survey conducted for The Associated Press.

Four in 10 students say they endure stress often, according to the survey. Nearly one in five say they feel it all or most of the time.

To help students cope with stress during finals week, FIU at I-75 is hosting a series of events Monday, Nov. 30 to Saturday, Dec. 5 as part of their Stress Relief Week.

There will be massage therapists, food and music provided during the week.

"Students absolutely love it, and they really appreciate it," said Diana Arcentales, Student Life coordinator at the I-75 campus.

According to Arcentales, students enrolled at the campus are mainly third and fourth year undergraduate students. She said this is the fifth year that Stress Relief Week has been held during both fall and spring semesters.

"With work and then having to go to class after, the stress can catch up to them, so we offer the massages to help with the stress," said Arcentales.

The Anxiety and Depression Association of America proves that massages for college students lower heart rates, relax tight and painful muscles and lower stress levels.

Massages, exercising and laughter help to shift thoughts away from everyday worries and allows the body and mind to relax, according to ADA.

Estefania Calzada, Student Life assistant at the I-75 campus, said massages are good to help support students mentally during finals.

"The massages are a mini-break before or even after their exams, and they say they always feel relieved," Calzada said. "Even if it's five minutes, this has a positive effect on them because it helps them with their exams."

"From a student's perspective, it's so relaxing to get a free a message after all the stress finals and assignments put you through," Calzada said.

Arcentales said that students who don't go to classes during the day often go to the Miramar campus to get a massage.

"Students come earlier or even students who don't have class come to get a massage and be relaxed," Arcentales said. "We love doing this for students because we know that it's a stressful time for them, and we love that students really take advantage of it."

Stephanie Castro, a senior studying education, said she participated in Stress Relief Week last year and that she is excited to go again.

"It's honestly so nice to see how FIU notices how hard we all work all semester and gives us a week to have some massages. It actually did take some of the stress off," Castro said.

Castro said that she manages her stress by meditating.

"I try to take a few minutes out of my day, and inhale and exhale as a way to let it all out. I also try to take a nap, even if it's 15 minutes to help me have energy for the rest of the day."

US and Cuba discuss how to contain oil spills

WILLIAM E. GIBSON

Sun Sentinel

TNS Staff

Florida's coral reefs and delicate marine environment could become less vulnerable to pollution from potential oil spills under an agreement taking shape between the United States and Cuba.

The agreement would clear the way for American companies to provide the latest blowout preventers and other pollution controls to help stave off spills in Cuban waters and contain slicks before they ride the ocean currents to Florida.

The breakthrough would ease years of anxiety about oil exploration off the north coast of Cuba and help avoid a giant spill less than 50 miles from the Florida Keys.

Environmentalists and oil-cleanup experts hope the two old adversaries complete the cooperative arrangement before Cuba resumes its hunt for oil late next year or in 2017.

"Having the best technology sitting on the seafloor 5,000 feet down in the middle of the Florida Straits is the most sensible approach to preventing harm to the environment and the economy, both in the U.S. and in Cuba," said Lee Hunt, former president of the International Association of Drilling Contractors, who is advising both sides.

Contingency plans to deal with a spill were discussed informally at a high-level U.S.-Cuban symposium in October. Both sides are moving toward a joint spill-

response strategy — the latest example of attempts to find ways around the U.S. embargo, in this case to protect the watery environment.

Recent attempts to tap underwater oil deposits north of the island raised fears of a spill near the Gulf Stream, a powerful current that rushes north along South Florida's coral reefs and beaches.

Those fears were heightened by the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, which caused lasting damage to sea life. Some who helped clean up that spill attended last month's symposium in Havana.

"A spill would impact the U.S. just like it would impact Cuba. Nobody wants a spill, and everybody wants to be safe. So it was a mutual goal," said Richard Dodge, dean of oceanography at Nova Southeastern University. He advised the symposium participants on ocean currents and where they would carry an oil slick.

"Depending on where the spill occurs, it will either get sucked into the Loop Current and go into the Gulf of Mexico or spin off the Florida Keys and go as far north as the east coast of the United States," Dodge said in an interview afterward.

Participants included officials from the U.S. Coast Guard and the Cuban Civil Defense and Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment.

They discussed the possibility of labeling American products sent

to Cuba, such as blowout preventers, as "pollution controls" rather than "drilling equipment" to avoid embargo restrictions.

The cooperative arrangement, still in the planning stage, would be modeled after a U.S. agreement with Mexico, which allows for joint planning exercises to prepare for potential offshore disasters.

The oil-drilling talks extend from other collaborative measures, including a sister marine sanctuary pact, approved by U.S. officials this past week, to preserve the habitat of endangered fish that migrate from Cuba to South Florida and the Gulf.

Exploratory drilling off Cuba was suspended two years ago after initial attempts failed to find enough oil to be worth extracting. Low oil prices and tempting targets in other parts of the world have chilled the search near Cuba.

But Cuban officials, eager to tap an income source and meet Cuba's energy needs, have made it clear they intend to keep trying. Hunt said the Cubans are talking with energy companies from Venezuela and Angola to resume the search.

"They have a whole environment to protect too, so they are not going into this blindly," Dodge said.

"They will be drilling in deep water, just like Deepwater Horizon. It's on everyone's mind. Accidents can happen. It means you take as much care as you can."