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Study Abroad
Prepare for an educational voyage

By VILMARIE ESTRELLA
Contributing Writer

Studying abroad is something many students dream of doing at some point in their college career.

Thanks to university studying abroad programs, that dream is now a reality. According to Christine Jarchow, Director of the Office of International Studies, 308 FIU students are abroad for Summer A and Summer C semesters alone. That number is bound to increase once the Summer B term is finalized.

“We are very busy this time of year because this is the period when most of our students are abroad or preparing to go on their trip,” Jarchow said. “We are like every office in the university all in one — we do financial aid, scholarships, and my dad

Getting ready for Summer B term
FIU offers programs in over 15 countries including Italy, Mexico, Australia, England, China and Brazil. According to Jarchow, the most popular program is at Salamanca, Spain because of high enrollment in Spanish courses and because it’s one of the most established programs — it’s been running for over 12 years.

“[If one is] looking for a cultural experience, my advice is to get out of Paris and other big cities and go to a province where Americans aren’t a dime a dozen,” said Peter Machonis, director of summer study abroad in Angers, France. Application deadlines lie between February and March, so all the research and most of the preparation should be done before then. Ideally, students should plan their study abroad experience a year in advance, Jarchow said.

Money is a major factor when it comes to studying abroad. Programs are costly and, on average, can range anywhere from $2,500 to $5,000. Applying for scholarships, getting a loan and opening a savings account a year or two in advance can help ease the load when the deadlines approach.

“I did not let money become an issue,” said Ana Valeria Almendarez, majoring in nursing.

“Thankfully, I received financial aid and scholarships, and my dad will give me the rest.”

Before seeing an adviser, students can research the programs through the Internet to become familiar with the classes offered abroad and the prices of the program. If the student finds that there are not enough choices at FIU, programs with other universities as a transfer student can be an option.

“Coming from the University of Florida, the whole application process was very long and tedious,” said Margaret Truitt, studying in Angers, France during Summer B. “However, I have no doubt that it will be worth it and I’m excited about living the European lifestyle this summer.”

Fire safety code requires pit balcony enclosure

By ANA SANCHEZ
News Editor

At the heart of the Graham Center, an open area known to students as the pit was found enclosed during Summer A with dry walls covering the area on the first and second floors. An unavoidable part of campus life, numerous music and interactive events take place at the pit are currently put on hold. The enclosure of the pit is due to fire safety violation codes, which where not implemented during the construction of GC. In case of a fire on the first floor, the barriers under construction will insure the protection of people on the second and third floors by eliminating the possibility of smoke rising from below. The pit is scheduled to re-open mid-August.

“This has been a fire marshal’s criticism which we have been contending with for several years, [we have] the ability to get the work done now,” said James R. Wassenar, executive director of Student Affairs Operations and Auxiliary Services.

Another option besides enclosing the top part of the pit was installing a ventilation system on the second floor. However, price difference was significant. While the cost of the enclosure was $30 to $45,000, a smoke evacuation system would cost an estimated $1.2 million. The Student Government Association was unaware of the reasoning behind the construction when it began.

“Like many students, we did not know what was going on until we set a meeting with President Modesto Maidique,” said Christine Denton, SGA vice president. “We saw construction starting without notification of the students and notification of us, so we asked to stop [construction] until we were completely informed and we did not want to continue until we knew all the solutions possible we could work with.”

SGA was concerned with the first floor of the pit being closed off, but the closure is for the second floor in the balcony area. The closure, seen now on the first floor of GC, is a temporary barrier for the construction to take place.

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“We discussed the bottom part of the balcony where the stairs are [so that it may] remain [and] people can still stand there. The way they are going to close off the smoke is that [they are going to have] doors at the top of the stairs that close with magnets and the magnets will release in case of a fire,” said Alex Prado, SGA president.

“Instead of people being able to lean over the balcony, they will have to look through the glass covering the Pit to view the first floor.”

“Supposedly, it won’t take away from the noise, so you can still hear what’s going on in the pit, it’s just the aspect of leaning over the balcony that won’t be there anymore. It was the best we could do,” Prado said.

Funding for the construction is coming out of Capital Improvement Funds, a state fund provided to universities for projects such as fire safety improvements.

“We wanted to make sure that it was the right decision for students and they apologized for not informing SGA as much as they should have, but they did include us in the decision making process,” Denton said.
The construction delay of the new Biscayne Bay Campus gym is finally over, but students will have to sweat it out just a little while longer before the grand opening.

An update from Gregory Olson, Senior Director of Student Affairs at BBC, assured that the problem that caused the delay for several months has been rectified. After construction began in August of 2004, an inaccurate design of the underground structure of pipes and communication lines forced the development to be postponed.

What has changed since the delay is the first budget of $1.7 million for the construction—a sum taken from the school’s trust fund reserved for school property improvement.

“The cost to complete [the gym] has increased,” Olson said.

The original 2,400 square-foot gym, located on the third floor of the Wolfe Center, currently has 33 different types of dance machines, 35 free weight stations and over 4,000 pounds of dumbbells.

However, since students have requested more cardio, free-weight and resistance equipment, the new gym will have plenty of state of the art machines to burn off those extra pounds.

However, a few of the 45 machines available for use at the new gym will be refurbished from the current gym.

In addition, the original blueprint of the 10,000 square foot facility, which will offer six offices, a conference room, dance studio, locker rooms and an aerobics room, was not altered despite the delay of the project.

Once the doors open for the new gym, students could face new membership fees. Student Affairs will increase the price each semester for non-students, while students registered for classes will get to work out for free. If the fee sounds too pricey, then guests can purchase a one-day pass for three dollars.

Although Olson explained that it is not likely that the new gym will be completed by the expected date of 2006, students are just glad that the construction has resumed. If the price is right, senior and frequent user Fabiola Saint-Jean is looking forward to working out at the new gym long after graduation.

“Even if I am no longer a student, I am coming back. If the membership fee is still the same, it’s cheaper than Bally’s,” Saint-Jean said.

“But they need to hurry. We need more machines and this [current gym] is like a closet.”

While the day does come when all the machines have been cleared out, Olson explained that there is no final decision as to what will happen to the empty gym.

“It is possible that the Wellness Center could move from its current location near the Health Center to that area, but it has not been established yet.”

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**Construction of Fitness Center resumes**

By DAMIAN GRASS
Assistant News Editor

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**Paid positions are now available for Beat Reporters**

Hurry in and pick up an application today! Stop by GC 210 or WUC 124.
Problem Solved:
Professor creates program to halt hackers

By BETSY MARTINEZ
BBC Editor
After working eight years to solve a math problem that has been overwhelming mathematicians since the early 1800s, FIU professor Frantz Olivier now sighs with relief knowing he has accomplished just that.

For years, mathematicians have been unable to factor large numbers. Olivier, who teaches Business Calculus and College Algebra at the Biscayne Bay Campus, has developed a computer program utilizing a mathematical formula that is able to factor numbers over 2,000 digits long.

“That’s about five pages,” Olivier said.

According to Olivier, the relevance of solving this ancient math problem in modern times is to revolutionize the banking industry by lowering fraud and increasing the number of customers.

In theory, the computer program he developed will send an encrypted message from the bank to the customer via e-mail. The original message from the bank will be a series of numbers and the message the customer receives will be the factors of those numbers.

The program, which remains unnamed, will serve as the base program for the process. Olivier hopes to develop other programs in the future.

“The reason you can do this is because of cryptography,” said Olivier, a graduate of Columbia University.

According to Olivier, the program used by banks today sends the customer the original series of numbers, thus making it easier for hackers to tap into the system.

“With the current program, there’s a potential to access your information by tapping into your information,” he said.

Olivier appeared at the Hawaii International Conference held September 13, 2004 in front of 20 mathematicians to present his math solution during a 30-minute paper session and a 90-minute workshop.

“The ‘Purge Equation,’ which Olivier created, is the main process for finding factors because, true to its name, it purges all of the wrong solutions and signals out the right one. The program also uses the quadratic formula and a number of mathematical proofs.

“Hackers go through the backdoor and try to access different accounts by factoring. They don’t know this method of factoring so they do trial and error until something with a large number works,” said Olivier.

Math students will also benefit from this program because once it is available for mass consumption, it can be installed into a computer or graphing calculator and used to find factors of large numbers.

“He’s a great teacher, and he’s done a great job,” said Robert Holmes, a junior majoring in business administration who is currently taking Calculus with Professor Olivier.

Olivier is in the process of writing a grant that will aid FIU students with scholarships and facilitate future math research projects.

“Mathematics is not a forgiving field. You have to practice. Don’t let past experiences stop you from studying the field you like,” said Olivier.

By DIANA SEMPERE
Contributing Writer

The Beacon recently sat down with Natkisha Jean-Baptiste, the Biscayne Bay Campus president, to discuss changes, improvements in the communications system and events expected from SGA this year.

Q: What are your plans for SGA at BBC?

The first plan is getting our presence out there. I want students to know who the rest of my cabinet is. We’re looking for new faces. We’re starting a new interim program and I’m welcoming people to come and talk to me. I might be busy, but I’m always willing to work with people.

Q: What do you plan on doing different from your predecessor?

We are primarily the same. I have the same focus, but with a touch of my own creativity. My strategies for approaching things are more ‘out of the box.’

Q: What was your campaign strategy and what do you believe helped you win the presidency?

The big part of my win was that I ran for Homecoming Princess. I was already in SGA and students knew I was a hard worker.

Q: What is your major and do you feel that it has helped you during your campaign?

My major is television management. It helped me be like a TV personality, always being confident with enough energy to be in the spotlight.

Q: What do you feel needs the most change at BBC?

The internal aspect of things, as far as the way people are treated, we don’t just need to be unified with University Park; we must be unified up here as well. Administrators and students need to get along and respect each other. We must support each other and go to each other’s events and support each organization. That’s essential in establishing a unified campus.

Q: When should students expect to see change?

Immediate. We’ve already started planning things. During Summer B you’ll start to see SGA events. We’re also going forward to Welcome Week in the fall. We’re going to be doing an event called Got Questions? It’s for all people who are new to BBC. They will have the opportunity to ask SGA members whichever questions they might have. It will take place around the cashier’s office, on the first two days of Fall semester and the first two days of Spring semester.

Q: How do you feel about the Biscayne Landings construction site, and do you think it will affect BBC students?

I look at that everyday that I come in. I think it’s an opportunity for us and we need to use it to our advantage. I’m hoping it will attract more students to come live at FIU.

Q: What changes have you done that they’re going to build is another opportunity for us; I’d like to introduce the idea of establishing a day care at BBC. It will be very convenient for parents who attend classes.

Q: What can students expect from the new BBC gym?

It’s going to be very nice. There’s a lot of money going into it. As far as I know, there will be more space and more equipment.

Q: Are there any future plans for construction at BBC, if so, what role would you play in that?

Well, I know work has begun on the marine biology building. I’ve looked at the plans; it’ll be one of our nicest buildings.

Q: The current cafeteria for BBC does not offer much variety of food, what will the new facility offer to students?

We’re deciding now if we’re going to stick to ARAMARK, which are the [current] vendors. We want to start a meal plan like the one at University Park.

Q: What characteristics of yourself do you believe helped you earn your position in SGA?

My openness; I’m open to meeting with people. Keeping an open mind is a challenge for some people, but it definitely isn’t one for me.

NEW SGA YEAR: Jean-Baptiste has been giving away t-shirts and welcoming students at BBC orientations this summer.

By ISIDRO PENTZKE/THE BEACON

FIU Board of Trustees Meeting: 6:00 p.m., Ballroom, WUC
AdScene General Meeting: 7:45 p.m., WUC 159

WEDNESDAY • JUNE 29
Summer B Begins
BBC Wellness Center Yoga Class: 11:30 a.m., BBC Wellness Center.
FIU Board of Trustees Meeting: 9:00 a.m., Ballroom, WUC

THURSDAY • JUNE 30
Black Students’ Association Meeting: 5:00 p.m., WUC 245
Campus Crusade for Christ Impact Movement: 7:30 p.m., Ballroom A, WUC

FRIDAY • JULY 1
FIU Role Players Club Meeting: 6:00 p.m., WUC 199

--- Compiled by Betsy Martinez
Overrated, “Star Wars” is

By GERMAN SILVERIO
Staff Writer

“Star Wars” sucks, and I make this claim unapologetically. I have seen the movies, read the plots and understand all the characters and the roles they are supposed to play. It still sucks. But don’t get me wrong, the “Star Wars” movies, especially the last three to be released, were very much eye-candy for the viewer; the special effects were amazing and much originality was needed to create some of the landscapes that appear in the movies. Yet when it comes to things such as the plot, characters, dialogue and acting, I think it’s generous to say that in this respect, the movies were mediocre at best.

This summer, we finally got to see the final piece of the Star Wars franchise, “Episode III: Revenge of the Sith,” and the anticipation of a surprisingly global audience for this movie was more than what I had ever witnessed for any other movie, be it for any of the “Lord of the Rings” or “The Matrix” movies. It was capitalism, Americanization and pop culture at its best. The saga, extending almost three decades, was now gloriously coming to an end.

“Star Wars” fans from all over the world made lines, some of which extended for miles, just to be one of those first people to see the movie. Enthusiasts from Hamburg, Germany to Lima, Peru were dressing up to go to the theater with their equally-costumed friends to partake in this mass-movie event. The movie, which was released worldwide by May 19, reeled in $70.7 million in the United States alone, while in the rest of the world, a staggering $504 million. Isn’t it unbelievable, all this, and for a movie with no real plot?

Director George Lucas didn’t succeed in creating a masterpiece, he succeeded in creating the equivalent of crack for popular culture. Like student Sean Nicolle said, who is majoring in psychology, “The whole thing has become commercialized.” This in itself is the only conceivable reason to explain the frenzy that arises every time one of these movies comes out.

Any person who takes an objective look at any of the films will realize how lacking they are in essence, making them very superficial, albeit amusing pictures. The films, which are not produced to become Oscar-winners but rather crowd-pleasers, tend to have simple, linear plots which don’t make any movie particularly interesting to watch. Instead, they all try to blend in to supplement the greater theme and plot of the franchise.

What one is left with are child-like stories that make up a bigger one. Characterization isn’t a goal of the “Star Wars” series, when most characters lack any significant depth and tend to be somewhat shallow.

In the case of Anakin Skywalker, or Darth Vader, an attempt is made to give him a complex nature and to inspire in the viewer some sympathy for him, but to be frank, only a “Star Wars” aficionado would find the failure of a protagonist to be believable.

The dialogue is equally unconvincing, owing gratitude in part to the fact that the movies are so riddled with stupid catch-phrases (such as “I have a bad feeling about this”) that anyone earnestly giving these movies a shot will find himself turned off by how ridiculous the conversations between characters can get. It becomes more than obvious that the actors are simply repeating memorized lines and not actually engaging each other in any real dialogue.

Finally, when it comes to acting, I admit, I’m not erudite in this art; suffice it to say that I remained unconvincingly by the performance delivered in any of the franchise’s films.

I’ve seen the movies, not with the intentions of downplaying them, but because I would enjoy watching them. In this same way, I’m sure I would enjoy crack, but that doesn’t mean that crack is a good thing. Film-wise, the “Star Wars” franchise is a bad product and the mini-culture that has derived from its ridiculous.


See what movies like these have to offer, and compare them to what’s been mistakenly labeled as a masterpiece. You’ll get the picture.

Harry Coleman Editor In Chief • Leoncio Alvarez Managing Editor • Michelle Ferre Opinion Editor

The Force will always be with us

By LUIS NIN
Graphic Designer

The storm troopers blasted into the bridge of the fugitive starship with their laser guns blazing, and the rebels blasted back. The battle ended, bodies littered the floor, and as the smoke cleared, a tall, caped figure wearing black armor and breathing heavily walked onto the scene and forever changed the face of American cinema.

Still, many people quickly wrote the series off as a juvenile fantasy that was nothing more than an entertaining action movie and therefore not worthy of any consideration.

They could look past the movie’s faults and see what has enthralled millions of audiences around the world.

Despite its overwhelming popularity, there are those who cannot put a movie with laser swords, flamboyant golden robots and planet-destroying death rays on the same level as “Casablanca,” “Gone with the Wind,” and “Citizen Kane.”

Ironically, one of “Star Wars” largest critics is also the actor that played one of the movie’s most beloved characters – the original Obi Wan Kenobi.

Throughout his career, Alec Guinness established himself as one of the greatest actors of his time. Ranging from an enigmatic Middle Eastern prince in “Lawrence of Arabia” to an Oscar-award winning role as a British colonial trapped in a Japanese internment camp in “Bridge on the River Kwai,” he played an enormous list of unforgettable characters, but the world would forever only remember him as a character whom he would come to despise.

“I showed up every time someone mentions ‘Star Wars’ to me,” Guinness said.

The refined British actor admitted that he tried to convince Lucas to kill off Obi Wan Kenobi in the first film.

“And he agreed with me. What I didn’t tell him was that I just couldn’t go speaking to those bloody awful, banal lines. I’d had enough of the mumbo jumbo,” Guinness said.

Guinness failed to see what made “Star Wars” so special. Like many elitist movie critics, he refused to consider “Star Wars” anything more than an action movie. They can’t look past its unconventional setting and bizarre characters and see the originality behind it. They couldn’t put aside their elitist preconceptions and just have fun. Star Wars is about imagination. Its strange worlds, weird aliens and epic grandeur capture the audience’s thoughts and never let go.

A city in the clouds, a space station the size of moon, an evil Empire and a dying order of knights that strive to save the universe. Not to mention, “Star Wars” entertains and enthralls.

It’s just plain fun.

“Star Wars” is not irrelevant. In many ways it is a truly classic story. I think Roger Ebert said it best, “The stories that seem immortal— “The Odyssey,” “Don Quixote,” “David Copperfield,” “Huckleberry Finn” —are all the same. A brave but flawed hero, a quest, colorful people and places, sidekicks, the discovery of life’s underlying truths.”

If I was asked to say with certainty which movies will still be widely-known a century or two from now, I would list “2001: A Space Odyssey,” “The Wizard of Oz,” and Keaton and Chaplin, and Astaire and Rogers, and probably “Casablanca,” … and “Star Wars” for sure.

And besides, “Star Wars” has swords made out of freaking lasers! That has to count for something.
Graduating senior dispenses advice to incoming freshman

By JUAN CARLOS PEREZ
Contributing Writer

In a little under two months, my years as an FIU student will come to an end. I still remember my first year as a transfer student walking around campus and dauntingly approaching students to ask the question “Excuse me, where can I find PC 214?” Four years later, I’m now being asked that same question almost daily.

I look back on my time as a Golden Panther and can’t help but wish I’d listened to some of the advice I received when I first walked through the doors of the Graham Center. Had I not been so stubborn and so presumptuous (I thought at 18 that I had figured it out), I would’ve definitely tried to pay closer attention to what my parents, teachers and peers had to say.

As a graduating senior, I feel that sharing the wisdom I’ve gained over the last four years is the least I can do for all incoming students.

To begin with, it is very important to understand something that probably no one has ever told you in your entire life—so far, you have accomplished nothing. You’ve gotten into college, congratulations, but–so far, you have accomplished nothing.

It’s not just enough to get to this level, but to graduate with a degree and go out into the world a better person for society, should be your goal.

Whether it takes you four years, or you adhere to the Van Wilder motto “Don’t be a fool, stay in school,” doesn’t really matter as long as when you walk away from FIU, you are better prepared to have a successful life.

As far as choosing a major goes, unless you are 100 percent sure that you know what you want to do with your life, and only a small minority do, it is simply better to get your core courses out of the way and decide later.

I promise that although you may think you know yourself now, your idea of who you are will change as you progress through college.

I started off as a major in psychology before realizing that there was no way that I was going to retake Statistics! I’ve since switched my major to English. Trust me when I say it’s better to keep your options open than to jump into a major without really knowing if that’s what you want to do.

It’s a common thing for students to feel very confused during these four years of school. Don’t stress yourself out by thinking, “Oh my God, I’m the only one of all my friends that has no idea what they’re doing with their lives” because nothing could be further from the truth. The majority of people around you are experiencing the same exact thing.

If you think that you might want to be a lawyer, there is nothing wrong with organizations on campus such as Phi Alpha Delta that can help you get a feel for what a career in law might be like. You might also want to try and get an internship with a company dealing with your planned major.

The experience definitely won’t hurt and it’ll look great on your resume.

If you realize that what you’ve been studying isn’t for you, don’t fret about changing majors. It’s better to change your major and stay in school by doing something that is true to you, a career that you’re not happy with and then experience a mid-life crisis somewhere down the road.

Another thing you need to remember is not to forget to college. Life is supposed to be fun. You should look back on your time at FIU and remember it being a pleasurable experience.

There is nothing wrong with partying hard with friends, however, make sure you’re doing it responsibly.

If you’re drinking, make sure you’re not driving. A DUI on your record will close a lot of doors you haven’t even yet knocked on.

Also, recognize when it’s time to stop. Of course, drinking games can be fun, they can easily turn into bad experiences. If you’re new to this city and don’t know many people, there are tons of organizations on campus that you can join that will allow you to make new acquaintances that may end up becoming some of your best friends.

Whether it’s a fraternity or sorority (don’t pay attention to those who tell you that you’re paying for friends) or some other organization such as Panther Rage or Student Council, it’s good to be involved on campus somewhere. You’ll meet people, you’ll work on your net-working skills and you’ll feel like you’re a vital part of something.

Whatever you do, don’t become a Graham Center zombie. Go to class and then find something else to do with your time. You’ll find that if you become a “GC rat”, you’ll end up becoming Pollo Tropical’s best customer, gain weight and never do anything productive (people have extended their time at FIU by three or four years by sitting in Grace’s Grill doing nothing all day).

Believe people when they tell you about the “Freshman 15.” It is not a myth. My friends and I feel ashamed of ourselves when we look at our high school pictures. There’s no such thing as a perfect body. If you find that you don’t find things to do with your time, you end up eating more than usual. So take advantage of the gym (it’s free), bring food from home and keep yourself busy.

It’s mind blowing, really, that just a few years from now you’ll be entering the real world. It doesn’t seem like a reality to you now, just as it didn’t seem like one to me when I was 18, but now that I just finished applying for graduation, I know that this is really it.

So take your time, listen to what others have to say, believe it or not, you might use some of the advice that people give you and try to make wise decisions. If you do in these next few years may very well define who you’ll be in the future.

So far you have accomplished nothing. You’ve gotten into college, congratulations, but this is just the beginning.

Letters to the Editor must be dropped off in GC 210 at the University Park campus, WUC 124 at the Biscayne Bay Campus or sent to beaconopinion@yahoo.edu. Letters must include the writer’s full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. If brought in to an office, a legitimate ID may be accepted instead of a phone number. The Beacon reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 400 words.
By RAYNEL KINCHEN
Contributing Writer

On June 17, the Frost Art Museum at University Park campus held an opening reception for the Florida Artists Series. Associate art professors Kate Kretz and Tori Arpad are displaying exhibits, *Grace and Shame* and *confl uence*, respectively. The exhibits are a refreshing and honest look into human emotion and life, as well as the crucial balance of the environment and our place within it.

Karen Kretz’s *Grace and Shame* features a mixed media exploration of emotion. Some presented works include the impressive “Defense Mechanism Coat,” an ordinary wool coat turned into a striking and thought-provoking type of armor. The outside of the coat is covered entirely in roofing nails, representing the hard exterior many members of society may wear at one time or another. The inner lining is blood red with detailed embroidery of actual veins, representing the insides that must be protected at all costs.

Kretz also displayed other articles of clothing with bold and poignant statements represented on them. For example, in “Bled,” two shrunken leather gloves in a dyed dull red are outstretched, as though asking for something crucial to existence.

Her piece entitled “Summer Night Breeze” is an elegant tribute to her childhood memories of falling asleep outside while watching the leaves rustle in the trees. “Fertilization Dress” is a sedate little black dress adorned with embroidered sperm with faux pearl heads all aiming towards the area of reproductive organs, except for one that is aiming for the embroidered replica of a human heart. It implies that fertility definitely affects us in more than just a physical way.

“Sacred Ovaries” is a painting that takes a stark look at the decision of whether or not to have a child when your position in life is not beneficial to the child at all. “[This painting] is filled with symbols of human frailty. It’s about the questions ‘Do you bring a child into the world when you know that no matter how hard you try, you’re going to bring some baggage with you…’ and ‘Will I bring a child into this world when I know there are ways in which I’m going to mess it up no matter how hard I try, no matter how much I educate myself?’ And so that’s sort of what it’s about,” Kretz said. “The symbol of the sacred heart of Jesus is what it’s appropriated from, and that’s a symbol of redemptive love and I thought what love is more redemptive than reproductive love?”

Kretz’s “Fate of a Technicolor Romantic” is a sentimental look at the differences between the real and the ideal. An acrylic, oil and canvas painting, it draws you in immediately with its impressive size and relatable features. With nail polish and nail polish remover on a table, stuffed animals everywhere, books...
Dazed & Confused
Starting your college career off right

get the most out of your first semester in the "real world."

MAJOR MANIA

Rule of thumb: if you can’t pronounce the name of the building that houses your potential major, then you don’t need to be thinking about that major yet. Take classes that appeal to you. College is about expanding your mind, so don’t be afraid to explore what FIU has to offer. Watch out for the underwater basket-weaving class, it’s harder than you think.

NO CLASSES BEFORE NOON

It’s been said many times, “I went to school at 7:30 a.m. every day, logically, a 9 a.m. class wouldn’t kill me.” Wrong! It will. Unless you are one of the few ‘morning people’ that exist (college makes you nocturnal), it is highly recommended that you stick to midday or later classes.

MEAL PLANS ARE FOR SUCKERS

The taste of the food in the cafeteria is unreliable at best. The repackaging of food is also slightly unnerving. Tuesday’s grouper fillet will turn into Wednesday’s grouper gumbo and Thursday’s grouper ’surprise.’ Now, I don’t know what the shelf life is for grouper, but I do know that college students have better things to think about.

HAVE YOU MET MY GOOD FRIEND, DROP DATE?

Above all other important academic dates, the drop date is paramount. Dropping classes isn’t really admirable, or always the best choice, but if you see that after three weeks of notes all you have written is “anthropology: the study of ants,” it’s nice to have that date handy.

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS: A LESSON IN FUTILITY

Finding help and advice at FIU can be as difficult as … finding help and advice at FIU. Take matters into your own hands. It’s important to be on top of your own education’s path. From course loads to classroom location, it’s important to be self-reliant. If you’re lost, look at a map.

If anything, you can always look to your peers for help. Most of them will be more than happy to reluctantly stop, only to sigh, roll their eyes and point in a vague direction that leaves you more confused than where you started. Hey, we’re here to help.

EXTRA, EXTRA!

Sometimes the summer term can seem like a good time to jump into some extracurricular activities. Be careful of overloading yourself while you have lots of time on your hands. Before you know it, it will be Fall semester and you’ll have six classes, student government meetings, rush week, tap dancing lessons and ninja sparring matches to attend.

MARKS OF INTELLIGENCE

The first semester of college may seem overwhelming, but in a blink of an eye it will be your third year of school and you’ll be a pro. Clearly, you have somewhat of a good head on your shoulders. You are reading The Beacon, aren’t you?

Batman Begins soars over expectations

By LeONCIO ALVAREZ
Managing Editor

The Batman extravaganza has returned, and this time in the form of a long-awaited prequel. Being a fan of the original Batman comic book series by Bob Kane ever since I was young, I was not looking forward to the film that much. The thought of seeing yet another mainstream actor take on the role of the caped crusader enraged me, but after watching the film, I knew exactly why Christian Bale was chosen to play Batman.

Bale recently lost over seventy pounds for his role on “The Machinist,” but he certainly becught up for

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GONE BATTY: “Batman Begins,” starring Christian Bale, has grossed a total of $72.9 million since its U.S. release on June 17.
Dave Matthews Band evolves with new album

By STEPHANIE MACHADO
Contributing Writer

Standing on their 14th year together, the Dave Matthews Band have made a name for themselves in the indie/pop/rock scene. Heard pulsating throughout the many frat houses of America, this quintet took their mellow, feel-good tunes, straight to the top and have since held on to the limelight with a strong fan base.

Their latest album, Stand Up, is a bit of a reinvention of the signature Matthews sound. This album is much jazzier than their earlier efforts and incorporates elements of funk-inspired riffs and a much-improved sound as a whole.

This might have something to do with the producer swap that took place during the recording of this album. For the famous Everyday album, the band had producer Glen Ballard, but for Stand Up, Mark Batson – best known for working with artists such as Seal, India Arie, 50 Cent, The Game and Eminem, – took on the challenge. The band basically jammed for hours, and through these sessions, Stand Up was born. A skilled producer like Batson, who could sort through hours of music and pick the best clips, was definitely an asset to the band.

The album tries to appeal to a more mature audience. If you are a die-hard Dave fan and a little afraid of change, you may shake your head and cross your arms and want nothing to do with this Dave Matthews makeover. For those more open-minded fans and pretty much anyone who can recognize well-written music, in the very least will appreciate Stand Up.

This album is about love, life, God, death and sex,” Matthews told Rolling Stone Magazine. All are evident throughout the tracks.

A highly democratic group, DMB included several politically charged songs on Stand Up. At first I scoffed at the so-called sincerity of these tracks, seeing as there is an obvious trend of rock stars playing their guitars as political analysts in order to gain popularity, a la Green Day or Eminem.

However, “American Baby” has a sweet summer-time feel to it and a catchy melody. “Everybody Wake Up,” is a bit more direct in its anti-war message, including a line that says “see the man with the bomb in his hands,” but the song is well developed and the lyrics are convincingly sincere.

Stand Up has its great moments, like the classic sounding songs like “Dream Girl,” a “backyard barbecue” song, and the satisfying lullaby “Out of My Hands.” “Stolen away on 55th and 3rd” has an impressive funk quality to it and was the highlight of the album. But there are also the lamer notes on the album such as “Steady as We Go,” which left much to be desired. The extremely simplistic drums of Carter Beauford, though less cluttered, were a definite disappointment.

For a band who tends to be much better live than in the studio, this was a wonderful achievement for the Dave Matthews Band. It was a step in the right direction, and hopefully DMB will continue to surprise us for years to come.

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Exhibits offer honest look into human emotion, environment

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scattered on shelves, a picture of Jesus on the wall and “The Sound of Music” popped into the VCR, it could easily be anyone’s home.

“It took a year to paint and it’s a kind of self portrait. It has the romanticism or the idealism of the television set versus the reality of a 40-watt light bulb dimly lighting this interior. It has children’s books and movies that helped form my ideals, that make it kind of tough to live in the world because I have this very idealistic notion of how I want people to be,” Arpad said.

Confluence by Tori Arpad is a journey into Florida’s own backyard. It is an elaborate mixed-media exhibit that immerses the mind. The main portion of this exhibit is a diminutive room with a multi-projected projection of eight different aspects of the Everglades.

The different sections included the sky, footage from underneath the clear green canopy and moving through the pond, various plants and waves against a sandy shore. Sur-}

rounding these ever-changing images are about 8,000 clear Solo cups.

When asked about the cups, Professor Arpad said, “Part of it is meant to be a physical spectacle. You go in there and that is really a lot of cups. And so you’re struck by that.” Arpad also made it clear that she plans on reusing the cups in a new project that she is currently developing.

During the reception, graduate student Anna Callner performed a piece cello named “A beautiful sound to the images that the audience was born. A skilled producer like Batson, who could sort through hours of music and pick the best clips, was definitely an asset to the band.

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“Haunted” is not an ordinary novel. Then again, Chuck Palahniuk is not an ordinary author. Palahniuk, who also wrote “Fight Club”, has a reputation for writing dark, nihilistic and often gruesome novels documenting the darkest aspects of human life. His novels are harsh and disturbing, but also surprisingly realistic in their depiction of human emotion and thought. “Haunted” is no different.

Eighteen strangers answer an ad promising three-months cut-off from the outside world in a quiet, distraction-free environment where they can produce their next masterpiece, whether it is a screenplay, novel or poem. They are told to bring only descriptive nicknames. These strangers expect to leave with their life’s greatest achievement, but instead, get more than they bargained for. Before the novel is over, all of them suffer self-inflicted injuries, accidentally kill themselves or are killed by someone else.

Palahniuk creates an interesting and unforgettable cast of characters, all of which have shady and troubled pasts. Nicknames like Saint Gut-Free, Chef Assassin and the Reverend Godless hint at the dark secrets each person holds, also the things they are trying to escape from.

Due to the unusual format the novel has – it begins with the main plot, followed by a free verse poem about a certain character, followed by that character’s “story” – one gets to catch a glimpse into each character’s life in a way other novels could not afford to do without sacrificing relevance to the main plot. But in “Haunted”, the main plot and the individual tales flow together and compliment each other so well that without the main plot, the plot would be nothing.

This novel is not for the faint of heart. “Haunted” is at times disgusting – deliberately amputation of limbs, cannibalism, etc. – but there is something about this novel that won’t let the reader put it down. It lures one in with three-dimensional characters and a suspenseful plot, and pulls the reader into its trap. Much like the characters’ plight in the book, once one begins “Haunted”, there is no way out until it’s finished.

Let’s face it – not all families are cookie-cutter perfect. They have faults and flaws, have gone through difficult times and aren’t always complete with a mother, father, daughter and son. Sometimes, events that would usually destroy a family could ultimately bring them together.

In “All Families are Psychotic”, one family, each member with his or her own problems, struggle to stay together even when they are at the breaking point. Douglas Coupland has created a completely realistic family, even through nothing about this one is ‘normal.’ Mother, Janet Drummond, and father, Ted Drummond, divorced years ago; Ted later married a younger woman. Janet and Ted’s daughter, Sarah, is an astronaut, their son, Bryan, is manic-depressive and the other, Wade, has AIDS. In a twisted set of events, Janet herself contracts AIDS and copes with her ill health throughout the novel. With their own distractions – affairs, pregnancies, and illnesses – the Drummond family somehow pulls it together in order to support Sarah and watch her first shuttle mission into space.

The whole novel revolves around that one event and side-tracks into the various individual situations family members get themselves into. “All Families are Psychotic” is funny, scary and touching all at once.

All family members are accessible, even though most people will never go through what some of the family members went through. Even though some characters deserve what they get, one finds himself caring about their plight. This novel is an easy read, but not for those who frown upon foul language and racy subject matter.

“All Families are Psychotic” is exactly what the title says. Sometimes, families are insane and on the verge of meltdown, but with love and understanding, even the most troubled families can be saved.
While We WERE GONE

University to address water resource problems

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) signed a $3.75 million, 5-year cooperative agreement with a consortium, led by FIU, to address water resource problems around the world through technical assistance and training.

The Global Water for Sustainability program (GLOWS) engages in a multitude of water-related issues ranging from improved water supply and sanitation to protecting important aquatic ecosystem services that sustain human communities.

FIU environmental studies professor and GLOWS project director Michael McClain endorses the concept that water must be managed from the perspective of entire river basins.

GLOWS is mounting pilot projects in three of the world’s most important river systems: the Mara River tributary to the Nile River system in East Africa, the Pastaza River tributary to the Amazon River in Peru and a third project currently under design in Asia.

FIU will provide special expertise in the studies required to guide management plans and higher level government actions. These include analyses of water resource quantity and quality, assessments of institutional strengths and weaknesses and the evaluation of creative financial mechanisms to facilitate improved water management.

ANOTHER MILESTONE:
The College of Law graduated its first class last month, with 52 students walking away with law degrees on May 22 at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center. Reportedly, about half of the new graduates have landed jobs. However, Leonard Strickman, dean of the law school, told The Miami Herald that he expects 90 percent of the students to have jobs by the time the school takes the official count early next year.

FIU fought for some 12 years to open the College of Law, the only public law school south of Orlando.

The law school has a temporary accreditation. The school can’t attain full accreditation until the $34 million Rafael Diaz-Balart College of Law Building, currently under construction, is complete.

Meanwhile, students have been taking classes in the library and other office spaces.

When it’s finished, the new building will be in front of the Pharmed Arena.

The Beacon is searching for talented and dedicated individuals to become part of our team.

Positions include: Writers, Copy Editors, Advertising Representatives and Photographers.

Stop by our offices in GC 210 or WUC 124 to apply.
LeBron James and Carmelo side note in a draft that included Miami Heat in 2003, but was a his team in scoring, he also led playoffs. Not only did he lead 18.0 points-per-game in the regular season to a team-high 16.2 points-per-game during the ing his scoring average from on his young shoulders by rais-

In spite of recent trends to skip college and head straight to the pros for the immediate gratification of a million dollar paycheck, Wade instead chose to attend Marquette University, where he maintained a grade point average over a 4.0. Not an easy task at a Jesuit school. After his junior year, Wade was drafted fifth overall by the Miami Heat in 2003, but was a wide note in a draft that included Lebron James and Carmelo Anthony. Yet, Wade was the only one whose team advanced to the second round in last year's playoffs. Wade carried the Miami Heat on his young shoulders by rais-

It's not surprising that many people have become disen-

After the Heat acquired Sha-

Not too shabby for a guy no one had ever heard about two years ago. After the Heat acquired Sha-

That is the type of person and player that Wade is. He does not have the ego of your typical athlete. He is humble and friendly. He is selfless, as he proved in Game 7 of the Eastern Conference Finals when he took not one, but two injections in order to play through an injury and attempt to give his team an opportunity to win. Wade did the best he could do with a strained rib muscle that stole his biggest assets: his athleticism and his ability to drive the lane and draw fouls. After the game, when he was battered and in unbearable pain, Wade didn't have the heart to tell his son, Zaire, that daddy was too tired to play. Instead, he stayed up until three in the morning playing with his son.

This NBA season, Wade ranked in the top ten in points per game (24.1), free-throw attempts (762.0), free-throw attempts per game (12.3) and assists per game (6.8). He was named to the All-NBA Second Team as well as the All-NBA Defensive Second Team. So much for that s o p h o m o r e s l u m p . Wade wasn't a popular draft pick at first, but fans who ques-

Given all these factors, it should come as no surprise to sports fans that the NBA's plan for the future is to market more guys like Dwyane Wade. He goes about his business quietly and is a good father and husband. Wade may not be as flashy as Allen Iverson and he isn't as hyped as Lebron James. Instead, he's respectful and demonstrates great maturity for his age. It surely doesn't hurt that he was named one of People Magazine's 50 Most Beautiful People. How's that for marketability? When Wade put on the number three jersey for the Heat, you'd be surprised to learn that he chose the number out of respect for the Christian belief in the Trinity. At the age of 23, with plenty more to offer us, we should be thanking the basketball gods that this is the type of player that will lead the NBA into the 21st century.
The NCAA placed FIU's football team on a three-year probationary period after the school's own internal investigation discovered that a former assistant coach committed off-season work-out violations that occurred between 2002 and 2004.

"It is my sense that the NCAA's decision was to give us one year of probation for every season in which the violations occurred. Even though the violations were a total of 85 hours," said Athletic Director Rick Mello.

The violation occurred when a former assistant coach knowingly violated NCAA rules when he conducted and supervised off-season workouts – when coach-supervised workouts aren’t allowed – before spring practice and during July in 2002, 2003 and 2004, according to FIU's report to the NCAA.

According to an article in the Miami Herald, the coach named in FIU’s report to the NCAA was former offensive line coach Steve Smith.

Smith was fired last summer, two days after FIU discovered the violations. Mello would not confirm the coach’s name.

"We’re going to run a clean program ... When things get out of line, action must be taken strongly and quickly.

"We’re going to run a clean program here," Mello said. "This is our first violation, so when things get out of line, action must be taken strongly and quickly."

Mello and his staff took some self-imposed measures of corrective action which included some of the following:

- Hiring A.C. Tellison, assistant athletic director for student-athlete development.
- Increasing the frequency of compliance meetings for all coaches and athletics administrators, which will be videotaped for review purposes.
- Adding a dedicated educational period specific to NCAA rules compliance for the monthly Student Athlete Advisory Committee, which consists of athlete-representatives from each of FIU’s 17 intercollegiate sports teams.
- Hiring an administrative assistant dedicated solely to athletics compliance.

The Golden Panthers are in their second year of a transition period to Division I-A and will join the Sun Belt Conference this fall.

The team will open its 2005 season on the road against a pair of Big 12 teams: Kansas State on Sept. 3 and Texas Tech on Sept. 10.

Their first game in Miami is scheduled for Oct. 1, the 69th annual Orange Blossom Classic against FAMU.