More than 3,800 FIU students voted in the Student Government Association elections April 5 and 6, to elect a new slate of council officials, which were announced on April 7.

With a waterfall of red, white and blue balloons and “Hail to the Chief” blaring through speakers, “The Pit” at University Park looked more like a U.S. presidential campaign victory party.

Alex Prado and Christine Denton stood in front of a cheering crowd as newly elected UP SGA president and vice president, respectively. The two will lead the SGA during the 2005-2006 school year.

Prado, a member of Pi Kappa Phi, was serenaded by a group of fraternity brothers shortly after the announcement ceremony.

“It feels amazing,” Prado shouted over the music. “I would have never been here if it weren’t for my supporters.”

Winning by only 234 votes, 1696 to 1462, over their opponents, Aurelio “PJ” Rivera and Chaz-Lit Droguett, Prado and Denton are eager to start their new jobs right away … well just after a much awaited victory party.

“We’re ready to start working, but first … celebration!” Denton yelled along with a group of fans.

Prado and Denton are anxious to develop an off-campus meal plan with the Panthercard, establish a better relationship between the Student Athlete Advisory Council and SGA, create an all-faith room for prayer, prohibit the implementation of block tuition and protect the Florida Bright Futures scholarship program.

This platform won over many students, but Victoria Lerma, a senior and Rivera/Droguett supporter, worries that the winners will not focus on what is most needed.

“I hope (Prado) remembers that it’s not all about sports,” she said. “I hope he uses the money towards academic programs that really need it.”

The students, however, shouted over the music. “I would have never been here if it weren’t for my supporters.”

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“Alfie” receives most rep at large votes

ELECTIONS, from page 1

didn’t forget about the other candidates.

For UP Representatives at Large, Alfonso “Alfie” Leon won with 1,406 votes, Mari Cabrera with 1,242 votes and Omer “Bill” Buchanan III with 793 votes.

Marbely Hernandez and Arthur “AJ” Meyer each received over 700 votes to win their newly appointed roles as UP Lower Division Representatatives.

“So far so excited,” Hernandez said. “I can’t wait to start working with teachers, students and organizations.”

Armando Aragon was voted Architecture Representative with 82 percent of the votes, Nidia Cruz was voted Honors College Representative with 68 percent and Judene Elesha Tulloch was voted Housing Representative with 54 percent.

While running unopposed, Cesar Quinznada received 69 votes for UP Graduate Student Representative, Anthony Delgado with 237 votes for Arts and Sciences Representative and Carlos Velasco with 109 votes for Business Representative.

Other unopposed winners included Chereen de Boehmker for Education Representative with 40 votes, Santiago Bermudez with 38 votes for Engineering Representative and Kimberly Castillo with 75 votes for Health and Urban Affairs Representative.

Athletic fee among highest in nation

By HARRY COLEMAN News Editor

Student athletic fees at FIU are 68 percent higher than the national average for Division I-A schools, according to the NCAA annual report Revenues and Expenses of Intercollegiate Athletics.

Under the budget, revealed on March 29, FIU students next year would pay $101.0 million of the school’s $13.8 million athletic budget, or 74 percent.

“That is unusually high, and the magnitude concerns me,” said Daniel Fulks, who compiles the NCAA annual report, in an interview with the South Florida Sun-Sentinel.

“The national average is about 5 percent,” he said. Florida Atlantic University is facing the same issue. At FAU, student fees provide $7.9 million of this year’s $10.87 million athletic budget, also 73 percent.

Last year, after a student vote, FIU raised the athletic fee by $1.38, the maximum amount allowed following a student vote.

“We had to go to the students and they answered yes. As we continue to mature, it is my hope that our budget is dependent on an outside income,” said Athletic Director Rick Mello.

“If the students had not agreed to [the raise], we would not be here to talk about it,” Mello said.

Students at FIU were notified of the raise in an athletic department newsletter.

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Over 500 students cast vote, Jean-Baptiste wins presidency

By ANA SANCHEZ
BBC Editor

It looks like the students at the Biscayne Bay Campus wanted to make a difference in this year’s Student Government elections. 664 students voted, opposed to less than 100 students who voted last year. N a t k i sh a Jean-Baptiste was elected as the new president. She defeated Alina Balean by 172 votes.

Lemar Linton was elected as Jean-Baptiste’s vice president; at BBC candidates for president and vice president do not run as one ticket, as they do at University Park Campus. Last year, the BBC presidential candidate ran unopposed. Some say the reason students voted this year was the candidates improved interaction with students and promotion campaigns.

“This year was the candidates’ first year,” said Rafael Zapata, assistant director for Campus Life. “Jean-Baptiste and I were a good team. We worked well together and were very successful.”

Jean-Baptiste’s platform included increased student interaction and events, better food at the cafeteria, and a variety of entertaining activities for the student body. She also promised to work with the SGA to improve student representation at the University Park Campus.

The election results were as follows:

- Jean-Baptiste: 418 votes
- Rafael Zapata: 196 votes

The election was a resounding success for Jean-Baptiste, who promised to work hard to improve the student experience at BBC.

Pines Center students celebrate with cruise

By MICHAEL HAINES
Contributing Writer

This year’s annual spring event sponsored by the Broward-Pines Student Government Association brought together FIU students, alumni, employees and their guests on a Vegas-style casino cruise April 2.

The cruise departed from the Broward County Courthouse on a trip along the New River in Ft. Lauderdale. The casino opened its doors as the cruise left the dock. Games included fake gambling such as craps, blackjack, Texas hold ’em poker and roulette. Broward County recently voted to allow slots in its pari-mutuel facilities, but there were none on this cruise.

Everyone aboard received a voucher for $5,000 worth of chips. People with the most chips were awarded first, second and third place prizes.

Those who were not interested in gambling were entertained by the views of the houses along the New River and the Intracoastal Waterway. The people in attendance savored an array of appetizers including coconut shrimp and Beef Wellington. For dinner, guests were served teriyaki chicken, tri-color tortellini in a tomato basil sauce, sides of medley of rice and green beans and a salad. A fruit display was displayed and served everywhere on board.

“Absolutely no one was going to go hungry,” said Karen Jensen, of the wide variety and amounts of foods on the cruise. Tickets for Muvico Theaters and Flamingo Gardens, calculators and airboat rides were raffled.

For Janet Fisher, guest of an FIU student, preferred a chocolate mouse layer cake over a prize she won. “I’ve got to go downstairs and eat my desert,” she said, instead of checking the contents of the gift pack she won in the raffle.

The announcement of the top three gamblers capped off the evening. Guest Merrick Kalan took the grand prize of a two-night stay at a Marriott hotel along with his incredible $163,000 in winnings which came from playing roulette most of the night. Ivy Siegel, a campus life employee, helped arrange the event According to Siegel, the cruise guests reflected the students of the Broward-Pines Center campus, a slightly older group with a median age of 30.

“We attract an older, working student body,” said Siegel, of the Pines Center, which offers mostly morning and evening classes.

The Broward Pines Center is located on 17195 Sheridan St in Pembroke Pines.

The center targets working adult students, who take courses in the evenings and on Saturdays.

Approximately 2000 students are enrolled per semester. The campus offers undergraduate, graduate and professional programs.
CELEBRATION

2005 POST ELECTION PHOTOS

IT’S ALL OVER: SGA candidates and students celebrated on April 7 at the University Park Graham Center “Pit” after the election results were announced. (Above left) Alex Prado and Christine Denton supporters pat Prado on the back after being newly elected UP SGA president. (Top right) Prado and Denton anxiously await the election results. (Center right) Arthur “AJ” Meyer and Marbely Hernandez were newly announced the UP SGA lower division representatives. (Bottom) Nidia Cruz huddles for joy with supporters after winning Honors College representative.

All photos by Alex Hernandez/The Beacon
Wanna get away? Now you can. Fly Southwest Airlines for just $39 — $149 one-way when you purchase at southwest.com. Be sure to purchase your ticket at least 14 days in advance and by April 21, 2005. Seats are limited. Fares may vary by destination and day of travel and won’t be available on some flights that operate during very busy travel times.

SOME OF THE PLACES WE FLY

Albuquerque
(Just an hour away from Santa Fe)

Austin

Baltimore/Washington (BWI)
(29 miles to downtown Washington, D.C.)

Chicago (Midway)

Ft. Lauderdale
(22 miles to downtown Miami)

Harlingen/South Padre Island

Las Vegas

Los Angeles (LAX)

New Orleans

Oakland
(18 miles to downtown San Francisco)

Philadelphia

Phoenix

Providence
(A better way to Boston)

Reno/Tahoe

Salt Lake City

San Diego

Seattle/Tacoma

Tampa Bay

West Palm Beach

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Fares are subject to change until ticketed. Any change in itinerary may result in an increase in fare. Service to and from Orange County airport not included. Fares are combinable with other Southwest Airlines fares. If combining with other fares, all ticketing restrictions apply. ©2002, 2005 Southwest Airlines Co.

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ALAN MOORE’S WATCHMEN

By C. JOEL MARINO
Senior Staff Writer

An ex-superhero called the Comedian is murdered. He is thrown out of a window from his high-rise apartment and falls to his death. The police are clueless, and it is up to the psychopathic, vigilante-superhero, Rorschach, to find the murderer. But, the conspiracy that leads to the Comedian’s murder extends further than he ever imagined. Is Rorschach in over his head?

FRANK MILLER’S SIN CITY

Gangsters, crooked cops, mobsters and hookers all come center stage in this ultra-violent comic book. Author and illustrator Frank Miller employs a very unique style – pure black and white with no shades of grey. His unique art brings the gritty underbelly of the crime-ridden Basin City to life with unbelievable style. Recently adapted to a major motion picture, “Sin City” is achieving an unbelievable level of popularity.

NEIL GAIMAN’S SANDMAN

Morpheus, the Lord of Dreams, is more than just a god, he is one of the Endless. The Endless are a family of supernatural beings who embody the fundamental aspects of the universe. Neil Gaiman’s “Sandman” is a collection of stories about Morpheus and his realm, the Dreaming. With allusions to literature, mythology and history, Gaiman’s “Sandman” reaches a level of sophistication that leaves other comics in the dust.

Though I’ve loved to read since I was a kid, comic books in particular have always held a special place in my heart. Some of my best childhood memories feature me sitting beside my father on Buenos Aires buses on our way to piano class, with copies of “The Flash,” “Uncanny X-Men” or the latest “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles” cradled hungrily between my hands. Growing up, I was the butt of jokes by other kids and adults who would label comics as “baby stuff,” “books for the immature” (as an English teacher of mine once put it) and “plain garbage;” the argument was that anything with pictures and word bubbles could not capture the reality of everyday life.

It was a surprise then that, walking through the University Park Bookstore a few weeks ago, I came across a table display marked “Graphic Novels” (a modern term for adult-oriented comic books), lined with some of the volumes I’ve loved so much for the past few years.

However, after the happy surprise and shock subsided, questions began to present themselves: What were comic books doing on display in a university bookstore? Nearby I could see a display of Maya Angelou’s works, a collection of world classics and poetry. So why place those “immature” comic books smack in the middle of such a selection?

While thinking about this question for the last few weeks, I’ve been amazed to notice that unlike the reactions I received years ago, comic books are now being seen in a new light.

For the 2004 Miami-Dade College Book Festival, the annual print Mecca held at the school’s downtown Wolfson Campus, the event’s coordinating council chose none other than graphic novels as last year’s theme.

People are discovering a sense of storytelling, emotions and even poetry that have been evident to me since I began reading this under-appreciated art form. Modern comic book and graphic novel writers introduce themes into their work that could easily be compared to Greek dramas and Victorian prose.

Satripi and Spiegelman have introduced autobiographical sincerity to their pieces. The first was through “Persepolis,” a chronicle of Satripi’s childhood in chaotic Iran during the revolutions of the 1980s. The second was through “Maus,” a poignant account of Spiegelman’s father’s ordeals in German concentration camps, which became the only comic book to ever win a Pulitzer Prize.

In the ’80s and early ‘90s, the three most popular writers of comic book fiction (Alan Moore, Frank Miller and Neil Gaiman) brought a true-life style to the form that shook the concepts of what a comic should be.

Moore’s most famous creation, “Watchmen,” portrayed an alternate universe where superheroes seemed to cause more harm than good and were banned from saving the day (a theme borrowed by last year’s hit movie “The Incredibles”) against the backdrop of an imminent nuclear showdown between Russia and the United States.

Miller’s, “The Dark Knight Returns,” reinvented the image of one of America’s most famous heroes, Batman. Miller portrayed the caped crusader as an aging and violent vigilante in a world overrun by crime and insanity.

Hence, the series I cherish the most and consider to have elevated modern comic books to the status of literature is Neil Gaiman’s “The Sandman.”

Throughout its seven-year run, Gaiman packed his masterpiece about the King of Dreams and his dysfunctional family with enough literary, mythological, historical and religious references to fill a library of commentary. I found poetry encased in word bubbles, an epic story of love and death and sacrifice wrapped around an inked pen.

A comic book is art about life the same way that books and movies are. I’m happy the form is making a comeback and reaching a new, wider audience.

Maybe now people will see the beauty I saw many years ago while I sat on those torn Buenos Aires bus seats on my way to piano class.
By DARA BRAMSON
Staff Writer

Death penalty, necessary justice for criminals found guilty

It may be the most ominous walk in the world. A mere 20 years from a stark death row cell to the death chamber – arguably the loneliest and most despairing juncture in a person’s life.

Now, the moments preceding this annihilation of a life are bizarre, at best.

The accused is offered a last meal of his choice: lobster, steak, pheasant and truffles? He is kindly given some solace while talking to a spiritual advisor or religious leader of his faith.

Finally, he is offered an opportunity to unite with friends and loved ones.

Now, the convict solemnly walks final walk down the bare hallway leading to the place where he knows, with an almost inescapable degree of certainty, he will take his last breath.

This is the place he will die.

How can a supposedly civilized society extract its justice from a system of vengeance like this? It’s simple.

These people, convicted beyond a reasonable doubt, will die in a way that neither they nor we are ever likely to be so lucky, or entitled to experience.

Assorted methods are used across the country to carry out executions.

At Raiford, Florida’s execution site, convicts enter the room and are strapped to a gurney.

After being asked if they have any last words and the final order from an official is given, they are injected with a painkiller and anesthesia to render them unconscious and ensure they feel absolutely no pain.

They drift off into a peaceful, painless slumber. A fatal mixture of drugs then begins its journey into their veins to stop the heart and force the cessation of life.

It is quiet, peaceful, serene and absolutely painless. The offender’s exodus from the world is a luxury.

A luxury that their victims – who may have begged for their lives, who may have been tortured or abused – never had.

There are those bleeding hearts who will tell you that the death penalty has never served as a deterrent to crime.

Statistics tell me that not a single executed convict has ever committed another crime. That is proof enough for me.

“The death penalty should not only be kept in place, but also enforced more quickly. Those sentenced to the death penalty that spend years, if not decades, on death row are spending taxpayers money to stay in almost luxurious prisons,” said sophomore Lindsey Donaldson.

With the current state of criminology, DNA and forensic science, it is a virtual certainty that the convicted are, in reality, the perpetrators.

Of the prisoners exonerated in the last five years, the majority were convicted prior to the 1990s.

This fact proves that while there still may be a margin for error, it is dwindling with time and remarkable technological breakthroughs.

On Feb. 26, an article in The Boston Globe stated that a group of lawmakers in Springfield are aiming to terminate Illinois’ moratorium on death penalty executions.

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GOOD MORNING STARSHINE:
The opening night of “Hair: The Musical” was April 7 at Wertheim Performing Arts Center. The show featured Aaron Millis, Roger Benavides and Sarah Brohee as its main characters. The show will run until Apr 17 and show time is 8 p.m.

By ALICIA BUSTAMANTE
and LUIS NIN
Beacon Staff

The spirit of the ’60s came alive as “Hair: The Musical” debuted at the Wertheim Center of the Performing Arts on Apr. 7.

As the last production of the University Park Theatre and Dance department’s season, it was apparent that a lot of time and effort was placed in making the “love-rock musical” authentic and effectively lighthearted while thought provoking. This was accomplished most of the time.

“Hair” takes place during the Vietnam War and follows a group of hippies as they get high, make love and party. Claude (Aaron Millis), a young man from Oklahoma, has just moved into New York; he befriends a group of hippies and soon finds himself in the middle of the 1960’s peace movement. But when Claude receives a draft letter in the mail, he knows that it’s only a matter of time before the government sends him to Vietnam.

Unfortunately, audio problems made the plot difficult to follow, especially in the first half of the play.

While the chemistry felt solid, the miscommunication between the cast and the musical ensemble accompanying it led to some of the lowest points in the musical. Even in the title song, it took nearly an entire verse for the actors and musicians to get in sync. More audio malfunctions plagued the play. Accompaniment was either too loud or too soft; one actor’s voice blaring or a soloist’s voice barely audible.

The choreography of the musical numbers was also ineffective. While in theory it was elaborate and playful, its execution its was unintentionally chaotic. All the frantic energy of the opening acts only added to the confusion. However, many of these problems can be attributed to the fact that it was the opening night performance.

While performances were uneven at best, there were some wonderful moments in which the cast showed its strength as a unit. This was shown with the strong opening number “Age of Aquarius,” “Let the Sunshine” and its somber reprise at the end of the show.

There were also standout personal performances from Millis as a confused and scared draft-dodger; Jonathan Gonzalez and Carlos “Casper” Machado as sexually charged comic relief. Sentell McDonald also provided some of the better and more soulful vocals.

The excellent costumes and stage design perfectly reflected the fashion and the feel of the era. Bell bottoms, headbands, halter tops and bare feet were in no short supply. The stage looked like a sort of mock playground. A tire swing hung off to the side of the stage, while a carousel spun in the middle. The actors effectively used the playground-like stage to convey the playful innocence of youth.

As the cast sang, “Let the Sunshine,” the lights turned unbelievably bright and blinded the audience. The amazing lighting was particularly effective at making the stage incredibly dynamic.

In the second act, energy resurfaced and characters became more believable. The thoughtful yet blank stares of the cast in “Where Do I Go?” truly expressed a sense of longing for organization within chaos – a sentiment that many college students feel – making “Hair” a good choice of material for a college theatre department.

Ultimately, the powerful ending essentially showed the true talent of the cast and their dedication to the production. Not to mention “Let the Sunshine” is a hell of a catchy song.
Yomarie Silva and Isabel Moros-Rigau showcase their master works at FIU

By ANA SANCHEZ
BBC Editor

With her sculpture, Yomarie Silva exhibits what she found on her search for perfect beauty. And what did she find? Nature.

In her photography, Isabel Moros-Rigau uses natural light to display the relationship that is most important to her – family.

These artists are among the 2005 graduates who received a Master of Fine Arts at FIU.

As part of the graduate program, the students must display a portfolio of their work in the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum. Silva and Moros-Rigau had the opportunity to do so on April 1 at the reception of the annual MFA Spring Exhibition.

Before the reception, the students discussed their work during the Wednesday After Hours, a program in which the museum stays open an extra three hours after closing.

The MFA graduates gave a brief description of their work and then answered questions from peers and professors. Art history Professor Manuel Torres reflected on the progress his two students have made.

“They both have demonstrated real persistence and have pursued their own direction without letting anything distract them,” said Torres.

Organic leaves are a central part of Silva’s aluminum sculptures, because she believes that perfection is already in nature. One of her other pieces that followed the nature theme, displayed jellyfish tentacles painted on pillars with what looked like a copper fish.

During her demonstration, Silva was critical of her work and, explained that she lacked simplicity.

“We need to understand that the work is never finished. It does us no good to be complacent,” said Silva.

Moros-Rigau photographs under available natural light. Her subjects include her children – Kasper and Odyseya – and her nephew, Sebastian. She said in her description of her work, that self is “reflected in a relationship with the object of her photo.”

One of the photos show her daughter’s scraped knee. Another shows the children in a car with Kasper in a baby seat grabbing his foot with Odyseya sitting next to him. The photos are presented in black-framed squares.

“This is not like traditional family photographs,” said Moros-Rigau.

Along with the photos, she had a video that showed the children being themselves – hitting keys on a piano.

Geoffrey Olsen, associate professor for Art and Art History, most admires Moros-Rigau’s work for its realism and lack of artifice.

“She’s got a horse and buggy in Washington, DC. As the frontman for several successful lo-fi indie pop bands, including The Magnetic Fields, The 6ths, The Gothic Archies and The Future Bible Heroes, Merri is the golden boy of bands that start with “the.” His wry lyrics and distinct monotone never fail to put me in a good mood.

2. DAVID SEDARIS

You don’t have the most screwed up family/boyfriend/job ever. David Sedaris does. Sedars has it worse than you do, and in his collections of autobiographical stories, he’ll tell you exactly why – in hilarious detail.

3. THE BOONDOCKS

Aaron McGruder’s weekly comic strip, which focuses on a group of African American kids growing up in white suburbia, is constantly pulled from papers for satirizing controversial subjects such as terrorism and drugs – proof it’s the only funny strip left.

EXEMPLARY EXHIBIT: Graduate students Yomarie Silva and Isabel Moros-Rigau displayed their artwork in the 2005 MFA Art Exhibit. Original art pieces included simple family photographs and different sculptures. Themes of the works ranged from nature to underwater imagery painted on pillars.

4. COLD STONE CREAMERY

This place makes the best ice cream! It’s crazy combinations of toppings and flavors, like Our Strawberry Blonde and Candy Land, make my mouth smile and my yummy dance.

THE BOONDOCKS COURTESY PHOTO

5. “THE LAST KISS” (“L’ULTIMO BACIO”)

This Italian film weaves together the stories of couples trying to navigate love and fidelity. The acting is wonderfully honest, and it has one of the best, most believable endings I’ve seen in a long time.

DIID YOU KNOW

Ulysses S. Grant, president number 18, was arrested for speeding while driving a horse and buggy in Washington, DC. He had to pay a fine of $20.00 and walk back to the White House.  

http://www2.lhric.org/pocantico/presidents/know.htm
Percussion concert stands out at Spring Music Festival

By ELENA BELLON
Staff Writer

FIU’s School of Music Spring Music Festival is an event that deserves praise and merit from all.

Throughout the semester, a variety of events have taken place that portrayed different musicians performing different styles of music.

The musical genre you encounter will depend on the evening in which you attend.

Events include ensembles ranging from the FIU Big Band, Wind Ensemble Compelling, harmonious and majestic, the performances delivered fall nothing short of purely impressive.

One of those performances was the Percussion Ensemble Concert, coordinated by Michael Lunnus and taking place in April.

The whole evening was comprised of five separate, yet equally engaging numbers.

The first was entitled “Celebration and Choral,” composed by Neil DePonte.

This piece was fun, fast and set the mood for a lively and enjoyable night.

“Percussion Quartet,” by Lukas Foss, was the second piece performed.

It differed from the first in that it started off a little slower but soon picked up pace.

As soon as the listener thought the whole song was going to be slow, tempo picked up pace and the rest of the song went flying by.

Following “Percussion Quartet,” was “Between the Lines,” a piece by Lynn Glassock which was more intricate and dramatic than the rest.

The sounds seemed to be more complex, yielding emotions a little deeper than those prompted by the first two numbers.

The reactions of the audience seemed unreal when they realized how much feeling the musicians possessed.

After a short intermission, piece number four, Joso Gottry’s “Shifting Waves,” was performed by both current students and alumni members.

This offered the chance for both current and former students to do what they love on stage and as a result, made for a fantastic piece of perfectly timed music.

Piece number five seemed to be the more animated of the pieces. “Transformatisticms,” by Phillip J. Mikula, had twists, up and downs and one could not pinpoint the direction the music was to take at any given point. The conclusion of this piece ended the evening on a perfect note, containing bits and pieces of every prior song.

The talent witnessed on stage Tuesday evening was striking and relentless.

Students included Michelle Calvo, Zachary Eldridge, Teresa Flores, Ashley Vorestm, Jennifer Perez and Raul Perez.

Alumni members included Brandon Cruz, Felipe Diaz, Dennis Llanas and Adam Martinez.

It is undeniable that each musician possessed outstanding talent and passion for musicianship.

Watching them perform with acute concentration and stamina, begged the question: “How did they do that?”

The listener could easily sense that timing was everything throughout the ensemble.

Never lagging behind or skipping a beat, the players were quite alert and precise.

It was obvious they knew their instruments well and anticipated every move and note necessary.

To watch them perform was truly fascinating.

One does not need to be musically inclined or very learned in the area to know that Tuesday evening’s performance was music at its best.

More performances showcasing the remaining ensembles will be taking place from now until June 5 in the Wertheim Performing Arts Center.

DRUM ROLL PLEASE: The FIU School of Music annual Spring Music Festival is currently underway and will continue throughout the rest of the Spring semester. One of the festival’s events was the Percussion Ensemble Concert, coordinated by Michael Lunnus. The concert featured current percussion students, as well as alumni members.

AUX PROMOTIONS/The Beacon
No one ever said being a director was easy. The past several years, Morgan has had to deal with budget cuts, enrollment issues and no single position she has taken over the years has been an easy one.

Morgan described her first lecture to the university as "pretty ignorant." That self-proclaimed ignorance took Morgan around the world, traveling to places like Europe where art and history blend.

"It just enhanced and enriched my education and my empathy and my understanding of the world. I'm very passionate about it," she said.

The university is equally passionate about her. In a memorandum to the university community, Provost and Executive Vice President Mark de la Grana as acting director of the museum, which was then called the Visual Arts Gallery.

With a budget of a mere $2,000, Morgan immediately began planning a critics’ lecture series. She personally made 500 phone calls inviting people to the first lecture.

That persistence and determination made her a local celebrity in the art scene, and the response was immediate. "From there, I was very fortunate because I got to know people... Finally, those people came to me and said they thought we should start a support group for the museum. I made it my frenzy," Morgan said.

Years later, local newspapers took an interest in Morgan's life and career. In September 2003, The Miami Herald praised Morgan for the way she spoke to crowds, calling her "an academic with the attitude of a generous friend," and saying she "could just as easily be welcoming visitors into her living room to share a bowl of her favorite strawberry fruit salad."

"I think it's because I feel very directly to the art... and I may have a gift to be able to communicate what the art is about to the general public in a manner that they can easily understand," Morgan said. "There is a direct line between the object and the person. Sometimes you just need an intermediary, and that's how I see myself. In order to understand the art, you must understand what the intention of the artist was, and that's where I come in."

Morgan's largest accomplishment is currently under construction: a 45,000 square foot museum being built across from the Wertz Performing Arts Center. Morgan's fund raising techniques helped her raise over $2 million for its development; she said the new four-story museum will be a historic addition to the campus.

"Every great university has a museum, and we had all the ingredients, because I was here long enough to understand the community and to have received so much community support. I convinced [the administration] that if we attempted a fund raising campaign for a major university museum, that we would be successful, and I was correct," Morgan said. Her presence will always be felt in the new structure, as Morgan said the members lounge will be in her name. On display: a list of all the visitors who were part of the original museum's nationally acclaimed lecture series.

Even though Morgan has decided to retire, she looks back at her years as director of the museum and remembers exactly why she took the job in the first place.

"Our student body is incredible. Kids from all over the world – so smart, so interesting, so wanting to learn that it made me a better professor and a better director and made it possible to fundraise, because the people could see that, and they wanted a great museum," Morgan said.

While her official tenure has ended, Morgan said she plans to stay in South Florida and continue to help the university in the development of the new Frost Art Museum, which is expected to open in early 2006.

In the meantime, the university has appointed Assistant Director Stacey de la Grana as acting director of the museum.

By GIOVANI BENITEZ
Staff Writer

She embraces brush strokes and sculptures, and for 25 years, her love of artwork and students has revealed a passion to teach, listen and serve.

Upon retirement, nothing will change. Dahila Morgan’s quarter-century legacy as director for FIU’s Frost Art Museum ended when she retired in late March.

Under Morgan’s leadership, the museum was home to nearly 200 exhibitions and hosted countless lectures by artists and museum directors like Pierre Rosenberg of France’s Louvre Museum and Philippe de Montebello of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

But the passion to attract such speakers hasn’t always been there. In fact, Morgan remembered the days and nights she couldn’t even understand art.

"I realized as a young person that I really didn’t know what I was looking at," said Morgan, as she remembered some of the first pieces of art she tried to analyze.

“I didn’t understand what I was seeing. At least I knew enough to know I was pretty ignorant.”

That self-proclaimed ignorance took Morgan around the world, traveling to places like Europe where art and history blend.

“It just enhanced and enriched my education and my empathy and my understanding of the world. I’m very passionate about it,” she said.

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Join FIU’s fastest-growing student organization.

Membership benefits (we call ‘em Panther Perks):
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- 10 percent discount on FIU-logo merchandise*
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- Free food and drink at all Panther Pit football tailgate parties
- “The Box” – filled with FREE stuff!

Networking opportunities with great people:
- attend free dinners hosted by alumni
- establish a mentor/mentee relationship with members of the Alumni Association
- attend members-only activities and events

* This discount available on the UP campus only.
Local band Legion hypes up crowd at Art Temple

By PAOLA ECHEGARAY
Contributing Writer

The Art Temple in Miami Beach is a gutted Jewish temple showcasing local musical talent. Once serving the community as a place of worship, the temple now attracts a local young crowd with musical talent and artistic ability.

Charles Vasquez is responsible for gathering the talent, scouting local bands. “We’re trying to build a good reputation. I go to see each of the bands play in their own homes before they come here,” said Vasquez.

When I arrived at The Art Temple, the band performing was too forceful with their instruments and each musician seemed to be overpowering the other. It might have been the poor acoustics or their style, but whatever it was, I needed a break.

On my way out I bumped into Alex Garcia, the lead guitarist for Legion who had set up an interview the band. I was introduced to FIU student Yahotech Kokayi, an Everglades Hall resident, who plays drums for Legion.

Kokayi said recording, jazz performance influences the band’s music even though the band mostly plays rock. Garry Rodriguez, who plays bass for Legion, has roots in jazz and plays plenty of sulsa and merengue, said that Incubus mostly influences him.

Legion lead singer Leandro Onofrio who plays the piano and guitar described the band as a mix of Pearl Jam, Led Zeppelin, Nirvana and a bit of Creed – an influence the band down-plays (“Miniscule, really,” Onofrio assured me).

Legion plays powerful and emotional rock, not just through their instruments, but through their body language and facial expressions. It’s hard not to because most of Legion’s songs have a very similar feel about life in general, usually a passionate subject. “I’m not a professional writer,” said Onofrio. “I write randomly about random things. There are times when I can pour out eight songs and other times when I’m completely dry.”

Rafael Moya, a Legion fan, said the band’s sound was “controlled.”

“You could tell it was music and actual singing and not just shouting,” said Moya. “There was range control.”

After hearing such praise, I was afraid I was getting my hopes up too high, especially after hearing the band before Legion play. The difference in caliber was obvious from the first note.

Unlike the band before them, Legion played as one. It’s not enough to say they played in unison because that’s too obvious, but they were harmonious and complemented each other. No one was trying to overpower the other.

Unfortunately, you couldn’t hear Onofrio very well, but you could make out his vocal range and control. Onofrio didn’t compete with the instruments, but let himself be carried by the music.

“The fact that they played well didn’t blow me away; it was the passion with which they did so. It wasn’t until the second song titled “Used To This” that I, along with the rest of the audience, was thoroughly impressed.

I surveyed the room and saw everyone staring intently at the band. Onofrio belted out long and soulful vocals that were difficult to hear, but with such emotion you could not help but be moved by what you could make out.

Garcia led smoothly into his solos, which he played with patience and control. He wasn’t overpowered and did not try to overpower the band.

Rodriguez played the bass as an extension of his body. He twisted and writhed with the music and truly seemed to be enjoying it.

When I asked Vasquez what led him to ask Legion to perform at The Art Temple, he answered, “They were extremely professional in their set up and their songs are catchy. They’re ready for radio.”

Though catchy isn’t the most beloved of adjectives to describe a rock band, it does describe one aspect of Legion’s songs that grab and keep your attention.

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Though catchy isn’t the most beloved of adjectives to describe a rock band, it does describe one aspect of Legion’s songs that grab and keep your attention.

So catch Legion at a venue near you before they make it to radio, and we’re left with uncontrolled punk bands.

Chilli Pepper perfects solo voice on new record

By CARLOS JORDI
Staff Writer

Living under the influence of drugs has forced Red Hot Chili Peppers’ guitarist, John Frusciante, to live a life of sorrow and reclusion.

After recording the album Blood Sugar Sex Magik in the early ’90s, Frusciante quit the Chili Peppers and took six different sides of Frusciante. The desire and love he holds for the music is obvious and audible throughout the album. The feeling he creates into his art creates a magical intensity.

It is through albums like Curtains that Frusciante proves his musical affluence. The desire and love he holds toward his music is obvious and audible throughout the album. The feeling he incorporates into his art creates a magical intensity.

Although Curtains is the perfect ending to six months of consecutive releases, there is no doubt that Frusciante will continue to release powerful music.
BANKE, from page 1

gone up to see a launch at three or four in the morning,” Banke said. “I’d drive back, pull on to campus at 9:15 a.m., park in the dorms and head to my 9:30 a.m. class. Those are some of the best memories of my life, those late night road trips.”

Banke has seen 19 successful shuttle launches and been to over 40 attempts, so he’s seen his fair share of miscues. After witnessing a failed launch at Kennedy Space Center in May of 2002, Banke was invited to go to a restaurant at Port Canaveral with other members of the press. He considered them his “buddies” even though they were over twice his age.

At the restaurant he was introduced to Rick Husband, future commander of STS-107, Space Shuttle Columbia, and talked to him for over two hours, picking his brain on different topics regarding space missions.

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Banke said, “I admire Jon. I think he leads by example… He’s got a very dry sense on humor that keeps the team amused,” said senior relief pitcher Frank Gonzalez.

Is there anything Banke doesn’t do well?

“I don’t paint,” Banke said. “But I am learning to play the guitar, even though I’m struggling with it a bit.”

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Welcome to our newest stars from Florida International University.

Kenneth Duarte
Dania Gonzalez
Karen Hernandez
Damian Santo, intern
Diego Suarez, intern
Vannellia Velez
ey.com/us/careers
Athletes should receive monthly stipend

OREKHOV, from page 16

on to the athletes. But, they continuously make up that claim. On “Outside the Lines,” an ESPN program, the NCAA President Myles Brand explained that only 12 or so athletic programs are able to break even, when it comes to revenue. He also mentioned that the NCAA’s annual revenue is not as great as often perceived.

It sounds comical, especially when you hear that CBS and NCAA have just agreed on a $6 billion, an 11-year contract that will expand the network’s exclusive right to televise the NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament, according to CNN.

That is approximately $545 million that NCAA will earn per year. Plus, all the revenue that is made from the football bowl games and television contracts cannot be ignored.

We’re not talking about making these student-athletes millionaire, but giving them a reasonable monthly stipend of around $500, which would help them survive college life.

This is a very difficult subject and it can be argued either way. The simplified version of the NCAA’s main argument against wages for student athletes is that the athletes are getting a free education and that playing sports in college is not a profession or a business.

College sports are only entertainment for the viewers and fans. It is not as fun as the outsiders perceive it to be, just like in professional sports.

NCAA athletes devote all their energy to this business. Anyone who knows first hand about college athletics knows that it is a tough job and not just a game.

GONZALEZ, from page 16

degree in three years.

Even though Williams can barely walk, he has his degree, and that stays with him for the rest of his life.

By paying college athletes, the point is being completely missed.

The purpose of giving them scholarships is so they can attend a university and study.

A very small percentage of college athletes actually make it pro. We need to keep the players’ minds on their books, not money.

You can argue that professional sports have been tarnished in some way during recent years.

The influx of high school basketball players jumping to the NBA has become preposterous.

Pro scouts are looking at kids in middle school to someday get them on their team.

When those kids go to high school, do you think they’re going to worry about how well they do on their SATs? They’re going to get an easy ride through high school, jump straight to the pros and be another statistic for undereducated Americans (and you wonder where the stereotypes come from).

This money enterprise in sports keeps growing, and we need to put a stop to it before it gets out of control (if it already hasn’t).

Student-athletes are given more than enough to make it through.

They don’t need to be given a salary. We would completely ruin all that college athletics stands for and ruin the minds of our next generation.
VERSATILE THIRD BASEMAN

By ALDEN GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

With the month of March concluded, the FIU baseball team is off to one of its best starts in recent years.

The baseball program holds a 22-11 record and is geared toward a successful second half, thanks in large part to the productive play of newcomer Nick Cadena. After playing for Arizona State University under current assistant coach Chris Hollick, Cadena has had to deal with many new obstacles during his move to Miami.

Growing up in Phoenix, Cadena has openly accepted the challenges of a new city, new teammates and most of all, new positions.

This season Cadena has made the switch to third base and recently, catcher (a position he claims he hasn’t played more than 20 innings his whole life).

It has been Cadena’s flexibility and acceptance of new challenges that has made this season successful.

The Beacon recently sat down with FIU’s third baseman to chat about baseball, life and everything surrounding them.

Q: What is something about your game that has always come naturally to you?
A: Definitely my competitiveness. I am a very hard worker, and I’ve always had that drive to want to succeed. It has really led to my success.

Q: What has been the toughest challenge for you thus far?
A: Basically running different positions. I was originally a shortstop, and then I got moved to right field and then third base. Now just recently with the injury to [Cody] Jacobs, I’ve had to [play catcher].

Q: What was it about FIU that made you decide to attend?
A: I know that they struggled last year and I could see that they really wanted to win. [Chris] Hollick had some very good things to say about the program, and I was really intrigued.

Q: Of all the positions you’ve played, which is your favorite?
A: Right now I like third base. I’m getting much better at it. The thing about me is that I like challenges. Whenever something new comes up, I’m excited, and I want to do it. This whole [playing catcher] thing is new to me, but it was a challenge, and I was excited to take it on.

Q: Which teammate have you learned the most from since coming here?
A: Probably [junior first baseman] Mike Lopez. Like me, he’s a real hard worker, and he’s just a competitor [He and I] would do anything to win.

Q: What is one thing Coach Danny Price has taught you?
A: Just enjoying the game again. Back at home I really wasn’t having fun anymore, but Price taught me how to enjoy the game again. I am extremely thankful to all the coaches for bringing me here and giving me this opportunity.

Q: What is one thing Coach Danny Price has taught you?
A: Leadership and drive. The good thing about us is that it’s not just one guy stepping up and being the leader. It’s a total group effort and everybody has contributed. Danny Price also instills a lot of drive in us. He just gets us all on the same page.

Q: Who is your favorite baseball player?
A: Pete Rose. That guy gave a hundred percent everyday. He’s what a baseball player should be.

Q: Whom do you most admire and why?
A: My mom and dad. They’ve gone through a lot and gave up a lot of things for me to be where I am. I also like the way they raised me.

Q: Who do you think is winning the World Series?
Should NCAA athletes receive salaries?

COMMENTARY

By NIKOLAY OREKHOV
Assistant Sports Editor

Any time the topic of the NCAA comes up, it often deals with the issue of college boosters, illegal privileges and whether or not the college athletes should get paid. If college athletes were paid, then many problems and illegal wrong doings would decrease substantially.

Let’s make it clear right away. These students put forth maximum time and effort into the athletic programs, yet they are not rewarded. And someone will try to justify that as fair. Give me a break. That is absolutely ridiculous! These student-athletes deserve much better. Yes, they get free education and that’s great. But, while in school, they must also have the financial resources to be able to feed and clothe themselves and still have a chance to have some fun. Now, to some this may sound a bit too dramatic and difficult to believe. It’s not.

Former college athletes have told many stories about how difficult it was for them to make ends meet while in college. One story that stands out the most, for me, is that of former UCLA standout linebacker Donnie Edwards, who currently plays for the San Diego Chargers. While at UCLA, he was an All-American football player who was suspended for a game because he accepted a gift.

The gift wasn’t a car with shiny rims on it, or an all expense paid trip out of town and would do just about anything to go to the moon, but a way to stop the college athletes from getting paid. And someone will try to justify that as fair.

Today’s sports world is so competitive that loopholes are constantly being searched to gain an edge on competition. A plan has to be flawless so it doesn’t get torn apart, and I believe that’s the current NCAA plan.

The sports world should give a message for athletes to stay in school. We want athletes to get their degrees and then go pro, not completely skip college and go into a professional sport barely knowing algebra.

Nobody knows what can happen once they jump to the professional level. In 2001, Duke University standout guard Jay Williams got into a motorcycle accident and broke both of his legs. It is doubtful whether he will ever be able to play basketball again.

After the accident, the Chicago Bulls (the team he was playing for at the time) bought out the remainder of Williams’s contract, and he was left with not enough to live on for the rest of his life.

But you know what? Jay Williams went to school, was one of the greatest point guards at his school, was a first round draft pick and still finished his sociology.

COMMENTARY

By ALDEN GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

Whether a college athlete gets paid shouldn’t be an issue. This dollar commodity has become ugly in the world of sports.

In past years, professional associations like the NBA and the NFL have been granting kids who can barely vote lucrative contracts, seven-figure shoe deals and more commercialism than a prep school boy can handle.

The sports enterprise has grown to such monstrous proportions that there is just no way to stop the amount of money being thrown around.

The only halt put on the worldwide expenditures of sports has been at the collegiate level – the only level of sports that is not dominated by money or “collective-bargaining.”

College basketball’s March Madness has become more popular than the NBA playoffs, because people like to watch athletes play for the true joy of the game.

The ambience of college sports simply wouldn’t be the same if there were a dollar sign in front of it. It would no longer have that edge of playing for the love of the game.

I’ll admit that the NCAA rules are strict, but that’s the way it has to be. Today’s sports world is so competitive that loopholes are constantly being searched to gain an edge on competition.

Pitcher epitomizes modern-day Renaissance man

By XAVIER VILLARMARZO
Sports Editor

Most people say a Renaissance man no longer exists. Nowadays, more emphasis is put on being trained in one specific field, craft or subject instead of taking on various interests. But when you see number 38 for the Golden Panthers take the mound, you realize that sometimes most people are wrong.

Jon Banke is not only a starting pitcher for the baseball team, the big lefty is also involved in other aspects of FIU. Since coming to FIU in Fall 2003 as a transfer student from Liberty University in Virginia, Banke has contributed to quite a few organizations on campus.

He was a part of the Village Council for student housing, did the news and helped with promotions for WRGP Golden Panther Radio, was a staff writer for The Beacon and is currently the vice-president for the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

“I try to learn a little about everything,” said Banke. “Just ‘cause I figure, the more you know, the more you can help out and stay around.” Banke doesn’t limit his learning to FIU campus life. He is majoring in criminal justice and is also a fisherman, a free-diver and a skydiver. While in high school, Banke almost completed the course to get his pilot’s license.

But says his biggest passion is space flight – a passion that began in the seventh grade.

“Through high school, that was the biggest aspect of my life,” Banke said. “I was probably more into that than I was into baseball.”

Until his freshman year of college, he wrote about space shuttle launchings for several different human space flight websites.

“I know a lot of people in [NASA],” Banke said. “I know some astronauts at Kennedy Space Center and some at Johnson Space Center [in Houston].”

Banke still loves the space program and would do just about anything to go see a launch.

“I’ve left the dorms in the middle of the night, had class the next day, but I’ve seen OREKHOV, page 14

By NIKOLAY OREKHOV
Assistant Sports Editor

Any time the topic of the NCAA comes up, it often deals with the issue of college boosters, illegal privileges and whether or not the college athletes should get paid. If college athletes were paid, then many problems and illegal wrong doings would decrease substantially.

Let’s make it clear right away. These students put forth maximum time and effort into the athletic programs, yet they are not rewarded. And someone will try to justify that as fair. Give me a break. That is absolutely ridiculous! These student-athletes deserve much better. Yes, they get free education and that’s great. But, while in school, they must also have the financial resources to be able to feed and clothe themselves and still have a chance to have some fun. Now, to some this may sound a bit too dramatic and difficult to believe. It’s not.

Former college athletes have told many stories about how difficult it was for them to make ends meet while in college. One story that stands out the most, for me, is that of former UCLA standout linebacker Donnie Edwards, who currently plays for the San Diego Chargers. While at UCLA, he was an All-American football player who was suspended for a game because he accepted a gift.

The gift wasn’t a car with shiny rims on it, or an all expense paid trip out of town and would do just about anything to go to the moon, but a way to stop the college athletes from getting paid. And someone will try to justify that as fair.

Today’s sports world is so competitive that loopholes are constantly being searched to gain an edge on competition. A plan has to be flawless so it doesn’t get torn apart, and I believe that’s the current NCAA plan.

The sports world should give a message for athletes to stay in school. We want athletes to get their degrees and then go pro, not completely skip college and go into a professional sport barely knowing algebra.

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