Parking lots affected by Youth Fair

BY REUBEN PEREIRA
Staff Writer

With the arrival of the 55th Annual Miami-Dade County Youth Fair and Exposition, those commuting to the University Park campus are expected to experience heightened traffic levels and a harder time finding a parking spot.

The fair, which will take place from March 16 to April 2, is a highly anticipated event for the county and city of Miami, as well as a time of stress and inconvenience for some students, faculty and staff at FIU.

Junior Matthew Gonsalves not pleased about the upcoming fair. “Parking is already a huge problem at FIU. It takes a long time to get a spot,” Gonsalves said. “But now that the fair is coming, it’s going to be worse. It’s just ridiculous.”

Bill Foster, director of FIU’s Parking and Traffic Department, said that he understands the plight of the students as well as faculty and staff members.

However, he stated that even though he knows that the traffic coming in and out if the fair is going to be inconvenient, students have to look at the situation from a different point of view.

“The fair is a huge benefit and means of exposure for the University and people need to have a different kind of understanding,” he said. “Yes, it is an inconvenience, there is no doubt about that, but the University gets a lot of out of it and we need to be patient.”

Foster added that this year there will be one week less to worry about because the second week of the fair will be taking place during Spring Break.

“The benefit that we have this year is that most of the crowd comes in on the first day, which happens to be a Thursday, and then the following week happens to be Spring Break,” Foster said. “So we only have to deal with the last week of the festival as opposed to two weeks.”

Over the course of the last decade, the fair has collaborated with the University in organizing the parking scheme. Parking Lots Five and Six were originally built on the grounds of the fair to create additional parking for patrons of the fair.

The county fair has also been a big supporter of FIU, donating more than $3 million toward the construction of the Wertheim Performing Arts Center, which also partly falls under the county fair property.

During the fair, Lots Five and Six will be closed to fair patrons for separate reasons. Lot Five will be used by the fair to house the people who travel with carnivals from state to state and for the staging and preparation of various equipment used during the fair. Lot Six, on the other hand, will be open exclusively to students living on campus.

“We’re trying to help housing by keeping traffic away from their lots,” Foster said. “Lot Six has a couple of gates that the campus police department will guard during the course of the fair so that no one besides students get to park there.”

During the fair, Parking and Traffic will be more lenient toward students.

“I understand that the increase in traffic will cause more students to park in the garages but tickets will most likely not be given out during the tenure of the fair,” Foster said. “However, this doesn’t mean they can go out and violate the laws. It really depends on the violation. Some violations can’t go unnoticed.”

Students complain about the inconveniences of the parking situation.

“It’s during times like these I’m happy I don’t have a car,” said Sophomore Diana Carmichael. “I remember last year, whenever my

BY DIANNE DAWKINS
Contributing Writer

Myztique Modelz has taken center stage to give students a complete fashion report – something students should look out for.

Myztique Modelz is geared to helping models with or without experience improve his or her modeling skills and self-esteem as well.

“We represent beauty in different shapes and forms,” said senior Mfon Essiet, founder of Myztique Modelz. “Beauty is diverse and we want to show that.”

Currently, Myztique Modelz is the only club at FIU that focuses on the art of runway and print modeling, according to Essiet.

“I try to focus on the best attributes for each model and accentuate those features. I will have them pose or arrange their face a certain way in order to bring out what is special about them.”

All models, like Alythe Gibson a sophomore, possess a different style and walk. “I’m shorter and runways usually call for models that are tall. Myztique gives me a chance to do both print and runway together,” Gibson said.

Essiet established Myztique Modelz last summer.

While there are many dance and singing organizations, Essiet saw a need for another type of performing art at the University.

“We had every type of entertainment at FIU except modeling,” Essiet said. Essiet felt that the art of modeling was a necessary addition to the club scene at FIU.

Try-outs were held at the beginning of the Fall semester.

About 55 students from the Bis-cayne Bay Campus and University Park attended.

The judges were composed of members of Myztique Modelz’s executive board.

Both genders were judged on his or her ability to walk, pose and respond to critique.

Judges also looked at how quickly the models were able to learn stage choreography.

“The designers are excited when they see that Myztique has male models,” said club member senior Rion Daley. “Male modeling is more competitive than female modeling.”

Modeling club focuses on runway skills, print modeling

Timing of Maidique article suspicious, Pg. 4 | Sleepless nights unhealthy, Pg. 6 | New role unfazes shortstop, Pg. 12
Two lots close during fair exposition

FAIR, from page 1

roommates and I would go to Publix, it would take a long time to get to Panther Hall,” she said. “I didn’t like how they would make the students go out of their way to accommodate the fair. It sure felt longer than just two weeks.”

The closure of Lots Five and Six to the general public causes traffic to filter into the other parking lots, which results in the displacement of more than 400 vehicles. However, since most of the major fair activities begin around 5 p.m., the traffic is relegated to the evening, when most students are done with their classes and thus, according to Foster, the problem isn’t as bad as it could have been had the fair been an all-day event.

Foster urges students, faculty and staff members to seek alternative parking spots during the weeks of the fair, which he insisted were widely available across campus despite complaints from many students.

“We have spots in Lot Seven and the Panther Garage, which is located near the [Pharmed Arena],” Foster said. “Those lots are almost always empty. Yes, they are inconveniently placed and they will have to walk to their classes. But if they arrive early then they can avoid the hassle and unnecessary stress.”

The Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition is the biggest fair in Florida and one of the largest fairs in the nation. Each year the fair raises funds to support youth and adult achievement programs and awards over $500,000 in scholarships, awards and premiums. It is estimated that between 20,000 to 60,000 guests attend the fair daily.
Fields to head business journalism program

BY FALLAN M. THOMPSON
Staff Writer

The School of Journalism and Mass Communications has partnered with Gregg Fields – a 19-year veteran writer for The Miami Herald – to direct the newly created Master of Science degree track in business journalism.

“Business journalism requires certain [more] specific skills than regular journalism,” said Fields, a business and finance writer.

“Skills like understanding financial analysis, accounting statements and management theories.”

The new track is offered jointly by SJMC and the College of Business Administration. It combines courses of investigative journalism with basic business courses.

The business journalism track requires a total of 36 credit hours and can be completed in 20 months. Some classes will be available online, and the program begins this summer.

Fields believes the program is designed for the working journalist and part-time student.

“Everything in America is related to business,” Fields said. “Whether you want to cover health care, the arts, banking or politics, the first step is knowing how to follow the money.”

Fields holds a master’s degree in financial journalism from Columbia University and a master’s in business administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.


“My boss at The Wall Street Journal once told me ‘don’t let the facts get in the way of the story. You can have all the facts in the world but unless you tell the story right, no one is going to read with you.’”

Fields has already contacted local companies about getting guest speakers to FIU. He hopes that the new track will be popular with students.

“FIU hasn’t done as good a job in getting the word out about its programs,” Fields said. “FIU has programs among the best in the nation, including the journalism track. FIU is going places, and it’s very exciting to be a part of it.”

His fellowship ends in May and Fields is currently developing the courses for the new program.

As the program director, Fields hopes to continue working at The Miami Herald doing guest columns and editing.

He will live in New York until the end of the fellowship, but will be returning to Miami full-time this summer, where he hopes to indulge in his love of water sports.

“I love scuba diving and outdoor sports. I was president of the Miami Beach Rowing Club,” Fields said.

Originally from Ohio, Fields has a home in North Miami Beach.

“I absolutely love South Florida and think it is one of the most exciting places,” he said.

Myztique Modelz impress designers, students

Models are photographed in realistic backgrounds such as campus classrooms and lounge areas. Myztique models are also photographed at Biscayne Bay and various Miami and Ft. Lauderdale beaches. The runway music and choreography is left up to Essiet.

“I like originality, so when we are coming up with the show the creativity flows out,” Essiet said. “I draw inspiration from everything I see around me.”

Essiet uses a variety of fashion categories in her shows, ranging from Afro-centric style clothing to professional business attire.

Myztique models exhibit clothes from many local designers who like to see their ideas hit the runway. Some of these designers include Beel Tisi Fashions, Designs by Inmadelle, Kulture Klothes and Mendoza Mobile Fashions. All of the designers keep both the male and female models looking sharp and trendy for their fashion shoots and runway shows.

“I was impressed with how professional the Myztique models were,” said Sunnie Morrison of Mendoza Mobile Fashions. “It is can be difficult find male models who can fit into the variety sizes we offer, particularly the tuxedos.”

A variety of models is important too designers, according to Morrison.

Myztique Modelz held their first runway show this year Feb. 23.

“I thought the show was well put together, said senior Pedro Phillips.

“The outfits were interesting and the choreography was great. I liked the way the models moved to the music.”

Additional information is available at www.mfoonessiet.com or Modelz@fiu.edu.

Myztique Modelz will walk the runway in their second show of the semester April 10 in the Graham Center’s pit at 11 a.m. at University Park.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Student disagrees with comparison between Christianity and Scientology

I didn’t know what to make out of Adrian Diaz’ article “Who’s who? A sketchbook as absurd as Christianity’s” published in The Beacon, March 6. At first it was complete nonsense. After re-reading it, it was still nonsense. The article lacks fundament and knowledge, revolving around a semi-ironic degree of “awe” that asserts nothing and gets nowhere. Witty remarks do not do any good to anyone. They just look plainly awful in desultive journals.

As far as your title goes, what is absurd in Scientology or in Christianity? You compare Scientology with Christianity and, I’ll quote: “It would be easy to dismiss Scientology as a cult populated solely by wackos.” Can it be assumed, then, that Christianity (and easily extrapolating to Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, et al) is populated by wackos? Where is Aquinas, Luthier, Kant, Descartes and the uncountable others? Your article falls for ignorance and lame mockery, trying to mask itself behind incoherent, rambling sequences only fit in Ionesco’s plays.

You also argue that resurrection and reincarnation “is all rising from the dead.” I’ll not preach to the choir, but reincarnation is the cycle of the monad coming back in a new body, to the physical world heat up, the Iranian at the International Community, the harshest penalty of the United States and the world’s only remain- weight. Let’s be honest here, shall we?

The global community should seek diplomatic means – through the U.N. – to solve this issue, but should not, however, eliminate the possibility of military interven- tion, until that the U.S. is the world’s only remaining superpower – the one with the world’s strongest and most technologically advanced military – would be a very arrogant thing to do.

The only thing that the United States and its allies have threatened Iran with is a trip to the United Nation Security Council – the harshest penalty of which, should Iran choose not to cooperate, would be economic sanctions. However, because the Security Council, and the U.N. in general, is incapable of doing anything productive, Iran will probably receive nothing more than an angry letter.

In contrast to the situation in which the world was divided in support for a military interven- tion, the world is united in its efforts against Tehran. There is no doubt whether or not Iran has nuclear technology and there is no doubt that they seek nuclear weapons.

Recent findings from a Miami Herald investigation showed that University President Mustafa A. Maidique has a taste for traveling in style. The Miami Herald concluded that Maidique spent about $80,000 in state money on $60,000 for a FIU’s private foundation money for travel during the four-year period that it reviewed.

Looking at the numbers, the first thing that comes to mind is how on earth can someone spend $140,000 on traveling expenses in a span of four years? Here are just a few examples of The Herald’s findings: A trip to Port St. Lucie during which Maidique chartered a private plane and rented a limousine for a total cost of $1,616; stays at The Plaza in New York, the St. Regis in Washington and the Ritz in Madrid; a $6,704 four-day trip to Paris.

Maidique is not a celebrity like Tom Cruise to be spending this type of money.

If these findings make you outraged, rightfully so. From a man who complains about the U.S.’s budget problems and who is always looking for people to contribute monetary donations toward the University, it seems somewhat hypocritical to use travel money so recklessly. The public has a right to know where its money is going.

Considering that Jesus Diaz Jr., The Herald’s publisher, is on the FIU Board of Directors, those words, spoken by Ali Asghar Soltanieh, chief Iranian delegate to the International Atomic Energy Agency, sent ripples through the international commu- ni- on the number one point of discussion.

Iranian threats worsen situation

BY CHRISTOPHER NECUZE

Who the hell does Iran think they are? As the nuclear situation between Tehran and the rest of the world heat up, the Iranian government has resorted to intimi- dation, as it finds itself backed into a corner.

“The United States has the power to cause harm and pain. But the United States is also susceptible to harm and pain. So that is the path that the U.S. wishes to choose, let the ball roll.”

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Ionesco’s plays.

The Beacon reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints. Let- ters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words.

SEnD US YOUR LETTERS

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. com. Letters must include the writer’s full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. The Beacon reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints. Let- ters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words.

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Google self-censorship in China hypocritical

BY JONEL NURSE-CUPIDORE
Contributing Writer

In its latest strategy, Google has again accused itself for the authorities in Beijing. This action by the leading search engine is somewhat ironic, because this happened soon after it resisted efforts by the U.S. Department of Justice to disclose data on who people were searching for.

China's market of about 100 million Internet users is certainly a great incentive for Google to want to jump right in and offer their services. What might be the penalty for such an action?

How can Google, a company charged with a free and democratic society, go along with the communist ideals of another? Is it certainly mind-boggling to think of this relationship.

I see Google as a giant chameleon, changing, to match its surroundings. The Internet search engine, adapted to the government's control in China. The topics being censored include material about human rights, Tibet and other issues considered sensitive to the Chinese government.

What that translates to is what happened within minutes of the CIA launch of the new site bearing China's web suffix, .cn. People, who were searching for information on banned sites, were directed to articles condemning that topic.

But the move was wrong. Google is the only search engine that I use consistently and I have no intention of changing. Expecting me to type in information into the search bar and being directed to an article censoring my search is unfathomable.

BY BRIAN O. GONZALEZ
Contributing Writer

Ever walked down the street, or maybe through campus, and saw a man or woman that’s twice as big as anyone else around them? Did you want to laugh inside but felt you would offend this stranger?

Now, we have all seen fat people in our day, maybe everyday. But chances are, that person is obese. Obesity is described as “having so much excess body fat that it may be harmful to your health.” This condition occurs in relation to lean body mass, or Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 percent or higher,” according to the Center for Disease Control. The definition begins to differ with racial groups. Obesity has been a large topic in the United States and even the world, for years now. Many have claimed it as a growing epidemic that is affecting our children.

Cartoons and television have been using obesity for slapstick comedic for years now, but in reality, obesity is no laughing matter.

Excessive body weight opens up risks for many deadly diseases like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, sleep apnea and osteoarthritis to name a few. It is also considered a risk factor for certain cancers. When you read this and realize that half of Americans are overweight and a staggering 18 percent are obese, you begin to worry about the health issues of our country.

You can blame the fast food industry and the rise of the “Biggie Size” dynasty, or video games that brainwash the children into preferring a virtual reality playmate than their neighbor, but we don’t blame a gun in a murder case. There are two problems with the obese children of America. First, they prefer that lifestyle over any other and, secondly, their parents allow them to be accustomed to this lifestyle.

Others feel excited with the excuse that it is genetics and they can not help it. They believe that obesity does not only risk other diseases, but it is a disease itself. These people make me hope Darwin’s theory lacks in natural selection begins to take place. To say you can’t help being fat is the ultimate sign of giving up. Don’t take my word for it, Carlos Cortes, a board certified doctor said in an interview with The Beacon, “You are not predetermined on your weight, genetics have nothing to do with it.”

This article can run on for pages on my argument that obesity is not a disease, but the fact is there is no argument that obesity is, in fact, a disease. While that makes my argument easier, it also renders it pointless. The fact is you’re eating more calories than you are burning a day.

I’m no doctor, but I sure can count. Subtract one donut plus a jog around the block equals a better body. But they didn’t teach you that in Algebra did they? I’m not your mother so I can’t tell you not to stop using that lame excuse on your weight. For those that want to do something about it, see you guys at the gym.
Sleep deprivation yields negative long-term consequences

BY YALEX LEON Contributing Writer

Is it possible that weak brain activity, weight gain, more than 30 percent of large truck accidents and a faster aging process could be caused by the same factor? The answer is yes and it affects a great amount of college students – it's the continuous lack of sleep.

Many students love to sleep but think that they don’t have time to get enough hours, while others believe that they’d rather be doing something more productive with him or her time. Many also believe that stress is a factor of sleep deprivation as well.

“It may sometimes be caused by stress and students do come in for stress consultation for which [the Health and Wellness Center] have certain courses,” said Jimena Vaillant, Health and Wellness Center senior clerk.

Regardless of the reason for why many students aren’t getting enough sleep, taking it for granted can have serious health outcomes in the long run.

“I’m not aware of a lot of the consequences of not getting enough sleep, but when I don’t sleep enough my body feels it,” junior Cristina Guzman said. “It happens all the time during midterms and finals, where I often times go days with about five to six hours of sleep per night. If I do this for a couple of days, in the end, my body simply doesn’t function the same. I feel exhausted and it even affects my mood.”

One of the obvious reasons students attend college is to get an education. To reach this goal, the brain must retain information in certain subjects that are later tested on.

For those who have made sleep deprivation part of their busy schedules, the truth is that sooner or later it takes a toll on students’ brains and academic performance.

A medical website, www.webmd.com, states that sleep deprivation “may have serious consequences both on performance and on the way your brain functions.” It also states that research done on young people who took a word examination after staying awake for 35 hours showed that the part of the brain responsible for language had shut down.

Many students don’t sleep enough because of their busy lifestyles. Sleep deprivation can be caused by various factors. Faiza Charles, a wellness assistant at FIU’s Biscayne Bay Campus Wellness Center, said she suffers from anxiety symptoms that corrupt her sleep at night.

“Whenever I’m worried about something or if I have an exam I get so anxious that I can’t sleep,” Charles said. “I also have trouble sleeping if I have a heavy meal before I go to bed.”

As a student at FIU, she also knows all too well about late night studying. “I realized that I rather sleep than stay up all night and feel lousy during the exam the following day.”

To deal with her anxiety and be able to rest at night, Faiza takes advantage of different courses that the University’s Wellness Center offers for free. At the courses she’s even learned breathing techniques that help her relieve the stress that disturbs her sleep at night.

Yoga, pilates, meditation, ballet workout classes and nutrition consultants are all available assistance programs to help students lead a healthy life. A particular stress management program offered weekly by the Wellness Center, titled “Cloud 9,” even includes free massages and game activities.

The National Sleep Foundation has categories for different types of sleep patterns that people can quiz themselves on through the web at www.sleepfoundation.org.

With the impact that sleep has on our bodies, figuring out which category you fall under might be a good way to find out what’s triggering your sleeping problem in order to find a solution.

Fetish parties indulge unusual fantasies for students

BY BOBBY JOE BRACY Staff Writer

When you walk into any fetish party, the atmosphere is intimidating at first: The persistent bass line of industrial music rattles the bones of the club, while the strobe lights throb like little mechanical organs around the room. Off by the bar, a handsome young couple pours hot wax from bar candles on each other. The dance floor, adorned with cages and sex swings, is shaking with bodies clad in leather, fishnet and outfits showing plenty of skin. It’s not quite the orgy or sex fest many people might assume them to be, but the partygoers seem to be having plenty of fun anyway.

You’ve probably never heard of these events before: extra- gant parties of leather, whips, cages and nipple pasties. Maybe you know someone who goes to these “fetish parties” and it reminds you of that scene in the movie Party Monster where everyone is dancing seductively to electro clash and wearing macabre outfits. Everyone gets together under one roof to party the night away and rejoice in his or her collective kinkiness.

The most popular fetish parties are thrown by thefetishfactory.com. Fetish Factory has been hosting fetish parties each month, a.k.a. the alter ego parties, for nearly a decade.

According to thefetishfactory.com the party has grown to be the largest monthly strict dress code fetish party in North America, with typical attendance of about 800 people each month.

Most people who don’t go to fetish parties just don’t feel comfortable going. A lot of stigma and taboo surrounds the topic of sex and fetish parties, where sexuality is a prominent theme.

“I wouldn’t go to one at the moment,” said sophomore Matthew Fay. “I don’t know much about them, so they seem dangerous and I would probably feel nervous and uncomfortable.”

Others feel it goes against their moral or religious beliefs.

“I would never go to one...
1. **WHY DID YOU GET OUT OF BED THIS MORNING?**

   The biggest and strongest force is because I have to work. Duty calls. I had to wake up because I have to come to work and help people at FIU. I am the Marketing Manager for Panther Dining; I have the biggest scope in my position because I speak to customers, serve the e-mail complaints and suggestions, comments... I make sure everything is aligned for the Dining Service at FIU.

2. **WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING PART OF YOUR JOB?**

   The interaction with people. I love to talk. I enjoy talking to people. I meet everyone, students, faculty, employees – I’m always talking to my colleagues.

3. **IF THERE IS A CELEBRITY THAT MAKES YOU TURN THE CHANNEL IMMEDIATELY, WHO IS IT AND WHY?**

   Paris Hilton. She just doesn’t do anything for me. She’s a celebrity with no purpose and no background. I wouldn’t even watch to see what trash comes out of her mouth.

4. **IF YOU COULD SWITCH PLACES WITH ANYONE FROM THE PAST OR PRESENT, WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?**

   I would probably want to be an artist. Toulouse Lautrec is one of my favorites. I’d love to have that drive; I love art. It’s hard to express yourself through art, but when you capture it like that – It’s just amazing. Toulouse or Picasso... I love everything, from Mooshe to abstract, to pointillism... Any medium is just great.

5. **WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THIS YEAR’S OSCARS?**

   I think sometimes the Oscars are overrated. It’s all about popularity. I love to watch to see who wins and all, but there are so many other movies and actors out there that don’t get enough recognition. I think the people who win aren’t always the most exceptional. But it’s fun to watch, to see what people are wearing. All of that.

   - Compiled by Amanda Healy
Underground party encourages a release of inhibition

From FETISH, page 6

because I don’t think it’s right for people to be throwing their sexuality out there like that,” said freshman Cristina Xuarez.

Are fetish parties really just all about sex and handcuffs? And who really goes to these parties anyway?

At times, it’s not only those who like leather and lace, but also those with more extreme tastes.

“I go because it feels like Halloween,” said senior Daniel Casal. “The people are a lot nicer and they’re really cool people too … and I like to lick lobsters.”

Typically, the people who go to fetish parties could be anyone. Partiers come to explore their wilder sides and are encouraged to let go of their inhibitions; the dress code enforces that in a way.

“[The fetish parties] encourage you to really go all out. The people here have some really cool outfits and I got to wear something I would never wear to any other party,” said freshman Isabela Derocha, while tightening her leather jacket around her lace corset before a party.

No cameras are allowed, which helps keep the partiers free from worrying about who might see them there.

“If I ran into my boss [at a fetish party], it’d be kind of awkward at first but then he would be dressed in leather too, so it would just be pretty funny and cool at the same time,” Derocha said.

The fetish partiers go for all kinds of reasons. Some people like the atmosphere, others like the thrill of meeting a complete stranger who shares the same interest as you.

Ironically, by going to a party that commands certain attire, some find that it’s possible to have a good time without worrying how crazy you might look to other people. You can strap on your leather boots, adjust the electrical tape on your nipples and go out with your friends. Like any scene, however, it may not be for everyone.

As the lights flip on and the music fades out, the dance floor slowly empties out into the parking lot. A sexy voice over the loudspeaker thanks everyone for coming and flyers are passed around to announce the date and location of the next fetish party as people leave the discotheque. In a month, it all starts over again.

For information on where and when the next local fetish party will take place, visit thefetishfactory.com.

He earned an MBA from the University of Miami.

UM’s MBA Program was ranked #1 in Florida by corporate recruiters in The Wall Street Journal. This means at UM, you’ll gain more than the knowledge to lead, manage and motivate. You’ll be a part of a renowned alma mater that can open doors across the nation - and around the world. And you can do it with the convenience of choosing from a One or Two Year program. Both programs are fully accredited by AACSB International - the most prestigious accrediting association for business schools in the world. Join us for a campus visit and find out why the University of Miami is the right choice for you.

Kirk Peart Senior Software Engineer — Motorola, Inc. UM MBA
Simms, Lora, Villegas prove team has bright future

SEASON, from page 12

There were flashes of brilliance from new players, who may lead this team next season. But that is all there was — flashes. Maybe this is part of growing up.

Johven Villegas showed us his 3-point range on occasion. Most of the time he seemed to lack offensive ability, which cost this struggling offensive team more than anything.

Though he may have had a good year shooting from beyond the arc, it seemed like, when he stepped inside the arc, he was allergic to the basket. Incredibly enough, for a guy who shot on 74 3-pointers at 38 percent, he was a lowly 50 percent from the free-throw line.

Freshman Elvis Lora was another conundrum. He too had flashes, like Villegas, of a player who could pick up the offensive slack. A two-minute flicker in the season’s final game proved that. Too little too late — the story of this team’s season.

Inconsistency every night really cost this team. If one important player showed up, the other didn’t. That’s no way to win games, and they didn’t when it counted — finishing with just four wins out of 14 Sun Belt matches.

The most common trend was their ability to come out flat most nights, struggling to score points in the first 10 minutes of play and falling drastically behind by the first half or early on in the second half. On certain occasions, the team would make a big second half run, but most times it was too little too late.

When the games were close, however, it was the free throw shooting that let them down. FIU would miss free throws when it counted as other teams made them. Too many of this season’s losses came apart at the end of the game, because of a lack of killer instinct — the ability to put teams away when the chance is given to you.

Fingers can be pointed in many directions here: The coaches or the experience of the players. The offensive struggles of this team were what really spoiled everything.

The big thing coming into this season was that the team supposedly brought in scorers — one thing the team lacked in previous seasons. Even though we saw some signs of this, we were left wanting much, much more.

Next season it will be tough for this team to fill the void left by Almonte. They have a player in Kenny Simms who, with maturity, could be that next star.

Simms has shown he can score, rebound, and block shots — the three things you want from an ideal big man.

If Simms can find that maturity, if Lora can find the willingness to put the team on his scoring shoulders, and if Villegas can become that 3-point threat, this team has a bright future.

However, that’s what was said last season about this year’s team.

Maybe it’s better to keep expectations low. It’s harder to be disappointed.

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The regular season. This has to be the most ridiculous excuse when you think of baseball players’ recent injuries.

A little over two years ago, Aaron Boone nearly broke his knee in half playing a pickup basketball game; Jeff Kent hurt himself riding a motor- cycle and I got my foot caught in the door and was not 100 percent for a critical pingpong match that awaited me.

The point is, injuries happen no matter what the situation. Besides, what are these players doing in March. Aren’t they playing baseball?

The owners and the players that shied away from it can try to dispel all they want but this thing actually means something. At a level it never has before, baseball is serving as the driving force to unite a world split by terrorism, government and religion.

The only common ground they share is the wonderful game of baseball, and for one special month this spring, it’s all they’ll need.
Freshman believes team can reach College World Series

**ALFONSO, from page 12**

Even though some players have trouble adapting to their new team and its environment when they first arrive, the 5-10 freshman said it was very easy. However, there are still some aspects of the game that he is familiarizing himself with.

“The speed of the game is really fast and I’m still adjusting to it,” Alfonso said.

“Everyday I learn something new,” Price added, “He’s going to make freshman mistakes, but his consistency is getting better.”

Although many players get discouraged from some of their mistakes, Alfonso knows that he has his teammates and coaching staff to help him grow.

“They constantly push me to be a better player and to learn from my mistakes,” Alfonso said.

Besides having his teammates and coaches persistently encourage him to improve, Alfonso also plays by professional advice given to him regarding the attitude toward the game.

“I talk to some of the guys in the minors and they say that you really have to love it [baseball] to stick with it for so long and to get far,” Alfonso said. Giving his all in every game, Alfonso has the potential to become a very successful player.

“His work ethic is what makes him [the player that he is] and what will help him [become a better player],” Price said.

Although the season and his career have only started, Alfonso has set certain goals for himself that he hopes to attain prior to leaving FIU.

Becoming an overall better player is one of his main goals, however, playing in the postseason is what he is striving for.

“My main goal is to get far. I constantly think about the [College] World Series. I know we can definitely reach it.”

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Sigma Alpha Lambda, a national leadership and honors organization is seeking motivated and qualified students to establish a chapter on campus as it founding members and officers. Contact: Rumner@salhonors.org
FRESHMAN SENSATION
First-year pressure does not disturb shortstop

BY JANNEL PALENZUELA
Contributing Writer

It’s not often that a team is fortunate enough to acquire a freshman with the skills and potential to make a strong impact. FIU’s recruitment of freshman shortstop Alex Alfonso is an exception.

Ever since he could remember, Alfonso knew he wanted to play baseball — and in one sport — while he attended Christopher Columbus High School, Alfonso also put up impressive numbers. Over the four years of his high school career he batted .350 with five home runs and 25 RBI. He earned Honorable Mention All-State Honors as a senior, and was a member of the Class 6A 2004 Championship team as a junior.

Even though Alfonso’s numbers caught the attention of many in high school, he was not guaranteed a lot of playing time, much less a starting role. "I thought I was going to have to fight for a spot," Alfonso said.

One of Alfonso’s main objectives would be to replace Luis Rivera, FIU’s starting shortstop for the past three seasons. Rivera finished the 2005 season with a .304 batting average, 25 RBI and was superb defensively. "He definitely has some big shoes to fill, but he is coming along," said head coach Danny Price.

In his first 13 games played as the starting shortstop, Alfonso is batting .250 with 4 RBI and one home run. He also has the second highest on-base percentage at .457. Not only can he play defense — 34 assists and four double-plays as of March 10 — but he comes through in clutch situations. Alfonso has proven that the paradigm in which rookies crack under pressure should be reconsidered. The most recent example is his two-out RBI hit in the 10th inning off of Michigan State reliever Mike Monterrey, which helped FIU seal a come-from-behind victory March 7.

See ALFONSO, page 11

World Baseball Classic great for everyone

COMMENTARY
BY ALDEN GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

I must admit, when the proposal for a worldwide baseball tournament featuring Major League Baseball players joining their respective countries in March came out, I was a bit skeptical. Then again, anything that MLB Commissioner Bud Selig draws up brings funnels it back to the cynic within me.

However, like the players, once it began and fans decorated stadiums all over the world with painted faces and flags waving, I was sucked into the magic of the World Baseball Classic.

I’m sure even New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner, who bothered like nobody else about the wrongness of the tournament, must’ve gotten chills when he saw his Yankee players take the field with USA across their chest. ESPN analyst and former Cubs pitcher Rick Sutcliffe was brought to the team to throw batting practice and work with pitchers. Listening to him talk in the booth during the March 7 game against Mexico must have been like hearing Lewis and Clark talk about their journeys of the West.

On one particular incident, he walked into the clubhouse where players were having breakfast and as he turned his head, there were Alex Rodriguez and Jason Varitek sitting beside each other.

Just two years ago, Rodriguez had the Red Sox catcher in a headlock to try to kill him, these days the only headlock he gets is for the occasional noggie.

No longer are these players separated by MLB rivalries. They’re part of something bigger and only those that are taking part can truly capture it. In an era bombarded with steroid rants, off-field accusations and all the other things a professional sport dominated by money can bring, the World Baseball Classic brings a diversion from the evil in baseball and funnels it to its purest form, which represents a true joy for the game.

INJURIES NOT AN EXCUSE
This spring, many players and owners had negative views on the tournament because of the possibility of injury. They claimed players were responsible for the MLB teams they played for and could not run the risk of getting hurt.

See WBC, page 10

Men’s team fails to meet expectations

COMMENTARY
BY ANDONI GONZALEZ-RUA
Staff Writer

Having followed the men’s basketball team all season, their 20-point first round loss to New Orleans in the Sun Belt Conference tournament was no real surprise.

In what started out as a very exciting season, with the Sun Belt Conference coaches picking FIU to finish second in the division, the Golden Panthers plummeted in December and never really recovered their confidence. The Dec. 8 loss against first-year Big East member South Florida was the highlight of the season. A season that saw them win just eight games and lose 20 — and lose 10 by more than 20 points, the most by any team in big by money can bring, the World Baseball Classic brings a diversion from the evil in baseball and funnels it to its purest form, which represents a true joy for the game.

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