Candidates prepare for elections

BY BETSY MARTINEZ AND ANA SANCHEZ
Beacon Staff

The Student Government Associations at Biscayne Campus and University Park have planned events that will allow students to become familiar with the candidates running for office in this year’s elections.

At BBC there are an unprecedented three presidential candidates: Zachary Trautenberg, the current SGA financial chair; Leman Linton, the current president and Camilo A. Silva, a current lower division representative. While at UP, Alfonso “Alfie” Leon, representative-at-large, is running unopposed.

In past years, the number of presidential candidates running at UP has been higher than those of BBC. “Over the past year people considering running for president [at UP] might feel that they don’t have the time or didn’t feel that they were ready. Maybe they want to wait another year,” said Charles Andrews, Campus Life and Orientation director.

Brent Maximin, the current vice-president at BBC who is also running for re-election, prepares for campaigning and wants people to know that students are working toward making SGA more visible at BBC. “We want to up the bar,” Maximin said. “We’re trying to shed the image that students at BBC don’t care as much.”

Candidates will campaign March 29 through April 5. According to Leon, students at UP will get the full campaigning experience; he encourages students to vote.

“Freshmen will get to experience the campaigning process and even though I am running unopposed, I intend to campaign to get students to vote. We want students to know that SGA cares about their concerns,” Leon said.

At UP, the competition has shifted from the presidential ticket to representative-at-large. “There are some [representative-at-large] candidates who are in the same Greek organization and it’s going to be interesting to see how those organizations are going to vote,” said Travis Stokes, former SGA special events coordinator.

Maximin, like other candidates, urges students to hit the polls. “There’s no reason not to come out and vote because the competition is there … the choices are there,” Maximin said.

For a full list of the 2006 SGA candidates for both campuses turn to page two.

SGA Election Events

Monday, March 27
Know Your Vote
12 p.m. – 2 p.m. GC Pit
Know Your Vote
12 p.m. – 2 p.m. Panther Square, BBC

Tuesday, March 28
Chillin’ with the Candidates
2 p.m. – 3 p.m. GC Atrium
Know Your Candidate
10:30 a.m. in Panther Square, BBC

Wednesday, March 29
Meet the Candidates/Candidate Debate
GC Pit 12 p.m. – 1 p.m.
Meet the Candidates/Candidate Debate
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. in the Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre, BBC

Election Dates:
Tuesday & Wednesday, April 4 & 5
School expected to open Fall 2008

From MEDICAL, page 1

would still be on the Legis-
lature’s agenda.
The board’s final decision
was submitted in the form
of a resolution drafted by
member Sheila McDett.
The document listed
several factors that had been
taken into consideration
before the vote, followed
by seven courses of action
that the board would try to
follow.
Among these points:
the promise that no fund-
ing would be sought for the
schools until the 2007
Legislative Session; a con-
tinual search for economic
aid toward under funded
enrollment programs at the
existing medical schools;
and the quick submittal of
the resolution along with
each university’s economic
findings to the Legislature.
“It hasn’t been easy get-
ting here, but this resolu-
tion will help everything
ger than we thought,”
Madique said.
As they wait for the
vote to be taken up to the
Legislature, Berkman said
the next step would be to
strengthen the University’s
basic science courses while
going the public health
program fully accredited.
He also said that funds
like FIU patron Philip
Frost’s recently announced
$40 million donation (one
of the largest single dona-
tions in the University’s
history) will be disbursed as
soon as the legislature gives
a positive vote. To date, FIU
has collected an estimated
$70 million in donations.
However, the next all
important step is persuading
the state legislature to spend
$250 million over 12 years
for the school, and then
more than $20 million to
build and maintain it.
Deals with Mount Sinai
Medical Center, the Miami
Children’s Hospital and
possible ties with Mercy and
Baptist hospitals are also in
the works, with many of
the hospitals’ CEOs and
presidents in attendance at
the actual meeting.
The school is expected to
open for the Fall semester of
2008 with a graduating class
in Spring 2012.
“We’re ready for what’s
coming ahead. This has
been a significant accom-
plishment for us, but that
doesn’t mean the work is
done,” Berkman said.

This Week on Campus

Monday • March 27

Haitian Student Organization Movie Night:
8 p.m., Mary Ann Wolfle Theatre (BBC)
Panther Rage General Meeting: 4 p.m., GC
140 (UP)

Tuesday • March 28

SPC General Elections: 2:30 p.m., GC 243
(UP)
SOC General Meeting: 5:30 p.m., GC 150
(UP)
Women’s Center presents Guerrilla Girls on
Tour: 7 p.m., Women’s Center (UP)
Kappa Alpha Phi & Zeta Phi Silver present
Silver Screen Dream movie night “Crash” (Matt
Dillon, Terrence Howard): 8 p.m., University
Park Apartment Building A (UP)

Wednesday • March 29

Student Government Association Meeting:
3:30 p.m., WUC Ballroom A (BBC)
Service for Peace Corps Members: 5:30 p.m.,
WUC 159 (BBC)
Kappa Alpha Phi and SOC presents 2006
Greek Auction and Stroll off Competition:
3:30 p.m., WUC Ballroom A (BBC)

Thursday • March 30

Department of International Relations Le-
cature: 7 p.m., Mary Ann Wolfle Theatre (BBC)
Haitian Students Organization Meeting: 7
p.m., WUC Panther Square (BBC)
SPC BBC Comedy Show featuring Owen
Smith and Tim Young: 9:30 p.m., Mary Ann
Wolfle Theatre (BBC)

Friday • March 31

Haitian Students Association Compa Night:
8 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)
Next Gen Film Festival Selection at the
Wolf: 7 p.m., The Wolfsonian (1001 Washing-
ton Avenue, Miami Beach, FL)

Compiled by Reuben Pereira

The Beacon office is located in the Graham Center, room
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NEWS

SGA Candidates (UP)
President & Vice President
Alfonse Leon
Providence Okoye
Arts & Sciences
Charlene Collazo
Business
Michael Jado
Aviva Rose-Avila
Rep. At Large
Ryun Ali
Robert Barmann
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Honors
Rocio Perez
Housing
Ebe Mezannote
Emanuel Washington
Law
Maria Garcia

F.Y.I.

SGA Candidates (BBC)
President
Zachary Trautenberg
Lemar Linton
Camilo A. Silva
Vice President
Brent Maximin
Pamela St. Fleur
Vanessa Robinson
Broward
Andrew Doblinger
Arts & Sciences
Maha Berg
Rep. At Large
Gabriel Labrados Jr.
Fabrice Octave
Katiana Saintable
Housing
Jesika Serrano
Hospitality
Andre Braitwhaite
Journalism & Mass Communication
Steven Ramirez

GETS THE ADRENALINE GOING.
YOURS AND WHOEVER READS ABOUT
IT ON YOUR RESUME.
Campus organizations confident after budget hearings

BY REUBEN PEREIRA
Staff Writer

After a month of undergoing its annual budget hearing and deliberation process, the Student Government Association at University Park has come to a conclusion as to where and how they will be allocating their budget for the upcoming academic year.

Although most student organizations will not know the decisions made by SGA for another two weeks, many are confident of getting budget increases for the upcoming fiscal year.

SGA usually conducts its hearings and deliberations every Spring semester during which various University-wide and campus-based organizations propose a budget for the next academic year.

The decisions made by the voting council of SGA, includes President Alex Prado, Vice President Christine Denton and Comptroller Nancy Cadavid.

Prado stated that he was very confident on the decisions made this year.

“I think, for the most part, the hearings went pretty much as we expected. The organizations came out and gave good presentations,” Prado said. “Some of them were very well organized and put together.”

During the budget hearing process, organizations are given between 10 to 15 minutes to present their case to the voting body of the SGA and persuade the members why they need the budget they are asking for.

Once the hearings conclude, the SGA voting body takes a look at the money they have to allocate and the money SGA allocated to a particular organization during the previous academic year.

Cadavid stated that the $5.7 million SGA budget that comes from students’ Activities and Services fee needs to be spent wisely and that’s where the deliberation process comes in.

“We take into account who needs what and how much, and then we sit down and discuss who needs the money the most,” Cadavid said.

Of the student organizations on campus, the largest share of the Activities and Services fee goes to the Student Programming Council, an organization that programs comedy shows, concerts, movies and other campus entertainment activities for students.

SGA President Bill Buchanan was very satisfied with SPC’s proposal to SGA and believes that the hearings went very well.

“I think that our proposal will be fulfilled by the fact that we will get the money we asked for certain events,” Buchanan said. “What I do know is that our budget will be fine when it comes to dealing with the current SGA administration was dealing with the process.

“I believe SGA is really working hard towards dealing out the money in the best ways they can,” Buchanan said. “And I do think we will receive as much as we asked for.”

Panther Rage President Carlton Ng also believes that his organization will be receiving a lot of money in the academic year.

Ng asserted that the school spirit at games needs to be increased and the only way to get that done is through publicity.

“We will be having many games off campus next year, Ng said. We really need the extra funding to promote these events and with our present budget, it isn’t enough to really promote FIU.”

Ng admits that their proposal presentation didn’t go as well as they expected it to but they nevertheless expect a budget increase to involve more promotions for University sports teams such as baseball, basketball and soccer.

“I think the question is whether we’ll get an increase but how much,” Ng said.

Members of Homecoming, which organizes most of its events in the Fall semester, were confident of an increase.

Alex Ravelo, assistant director of Homecoming stated that his organization put everything down and discuss who needs the most.

“We proposed an increase and I think that the only way to get that increase is through publicity that we will get the increase because of the things we have proposed,” Ravelo said. “We want to take more control of Panther Prowl and want to bring a big time comedian in the Fall.”

Cadavid admitted that every organization proposes an increase and expects to have an increased budget.

She stated that in order to come to a decision, SGA looks to see who needs the increase the most, who isn’t using the money responsibly, who has more than they require and who will gain the most.

She stated that in order to come to a decision, SGA looks to see which organization is currently using the money they are allocated with and expects to have an increased budget.

The Department of Housing and Residential Life would like to recognize the Student Leaders listed below for all the work they have done.

The job you have is a very difficult one, a job that you all do with passion and class. We hope you realize how important you are and the impact you have on students’ lives. It is sincerely appreciated.

The Beacon –March 27, 2005

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Jennifer Fransen
Mathew Parisi
Delio Morato
Amber Galusha-Patel

Nancy Cadavid, SGA Comptroller

We take into account who needs what and how much, then we sit down and discuss who needs the money the most.

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Tennille Thompson
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April Wall
Ron Mathew
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Residence Hall Association E-board

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Maximin urges students to get involved

BY JOSE MAYA
Contributing Writer

The Biscayne Bay Campus Student Government Association current vice-president and presidential candidate for the 2006-2007 term, Brent Maximin, sat down with The Beacon to explain his plans for the remainder of his term as SGA vice president, the importance of student representation and improvements at BBC.

Q: Why did you decide to run for an important position like SGA vice president?
A: I wanted to be a voice of representation for the students and be involved in an activity where I can influence faculty or other key FIU personnel.

Q: What are your goals as SGA vice president for the rest of the Spring semester?
A: I am planning on improving the general appearance of Academic I and Academic II so that students, faculty and visitors appreciate the campus. SGA is in the process of ordering artificial palm trees for both buildings; these palm trees will be placed inside the buildings. I’m also planning a big public relations campaign for SGA, so that students can learn about the organization and decide if they would like to join some time in the future.

Q: What do you think SGA needs to improve?
A: The campus needs to offer more classes. Although we are looking forward to the return of the nursing program and some business classes, we are also looking forward to the conclusion of the new marine biology building.

Q: Do you have any nicknames?
A: Bre limitless, in Trinidad where I’m from, it means to be straight to the point.

Q: Do you have any hobbies, interests or talents?
A: I love to watch and play soccer. I also love movies and music. I’m actually organizing my own DVD collection. I love to relax and read the newspaper, but I have no time for television.

Q: Why do you think students should join SGA?
A: Students will be fully aware of all University-wide issues and they will have a chance to become involved in an important organization where they will meet many important people.

Elections take place April 4 and 5 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. There will be one voting booth in each of Academic I and I, and one in the library.

Maximin, a junior majoring in psychology, said that if he is re-elected he plans to continue carrying out his ideas for a brighter future at BBC. SGA meets every Wednesday at 2:30 p.m. in the Campus Life offices, located in the Wolfe University Center in room 141.

All students are welcomed to listen in or voice their opinions. For more information, students can visit www.fiu.edu/~sga/bbc/

Students stay active on campus late at night

BY SAMUEL HYPOLITE
Contributing Writer

The Wolfe University Center is one of the buildings that has more recreational activities and that makes it imperative to stay open late. It has an information center that makes it important to be available to students who need information of a certain time.

However, activities at BBC continue even later.

The BBC library is one of the most visited centers for recreation and remains open until 1 a.m. on weekdays.

“We probably have that much more students at night because there is less pressure of the class schedule,” said Austin Bovt, a library employee.

Even at this time, it can be difficult to find an available computer in both the first and second floor of the library.

“Group meetings and individual studies are commonly observed at the library late at night. Bovt said that there are more students at night rather than in the morning at the library.

Late-night students are more serious about college, according to Bovt.

“We hope that the library seems to be the ones who are more concerned about school and those who come to use the computers for recreational purposes,” said Bovt, a junior.
Tranquilizer guns are a safe and effective alternative for police

By Mario MendozA Contributing Writer

The methods employed by police departments to battle crime have always caused a great deal of controversy. Police officers work under a great amount of stress. When a policeman stops an automobile, for example, it is impossible for the officer to know whether the subject is an infil- denger, a drug dealer or someone whose had a bad day.

There are officers who protect and serve as well as those who blur the line between duty and crime.

In recent years, police depart- ments have increased their use of taser guns. Even though the electric shock can paralyze the alleged perpetrator immediately, this method has been highly questioned as being violent and dangerous. Cases involving the use of tasers on young children and senior citizens have occurred in the past year in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. One option that is less lethal than pistol firearms or tasers is tran- qulizer guns.

The term "tranquilizer guns" is applied to air powered rifles with sedative darts that are used for shooting large animals, such as polar bears and lions, for research purposes or removal if the animal has entered an area inhabited by humans. Pistol type firearms carrying tranquilizer darts also exist; the shooting range varies between five and 50 feet in distance.

In an age where terrorism has become a possible threat, police departments must proceed with caution and must apprehend ter- rorists before they commit deadly acts without hurting civilians and other bystanders.

A perfect example is the tragic death of Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes in the London Subway, the day after the July 7, 2005 terrorist attack. Scotland Yard ordered de Menezes, who was running to catch the train, to stop, somehow he didn’t hear them and the officers opened fire fatally wounding de Menezes. In this case, if a tran- qulizer firearm had been used, the outcome would have been different.

The sedative darts would have stopped de Menezes without killing him and the case would have been closed as a misunder- standing. If the person running would have been a real terrorist and had he been stopped with tranquilizers, he would have been caught alive and questioned about the whereabouts of pos- sible accomplices.

Using tranquilizer firearms will reduce the risk of wrongful killings of innocent civilians and also the subsequent lawsuits that police departments face in these situations.

Police officers are trained to handle danger and avoid civil- ian deaths, but they still make mistakes. The use of tranquilizer firearms will lower the margin of error. Police departments, FBI and other agencies should consider implementing the use of tranquilizer firearms as a safe alternative for fighting crime.

On November 18, 2004, Uni- versity President Modesto Madi- que traveled to Tallahassee, along with a contingent of hopefuls, to propose to the Florida Board of Governors a bold initiative to start a public medical school in South Florida. What would ensue over the next year and a half is a battle unlike any other FIU has seen in its history.

Almost a year and a half later, FIU finally get the approval it was looking for. In a historic vote, the Board of Governors granted the University permission to go ahead and build its medical school. The decision was almost unanimous (15-1), with only one dissenting opinion.

The lone dissent came from former Florida State University President J. Stanley Marshall, who opined that the community could not wait for a medical school to be established to fill the need for physicians in South Florida.

As FIU now begins to prepare for the next leg in its journey to become one of the nation’s more traditional universities, some troubling questions remain unanswered. Firstly, let it be clear looking for. In a historic vote, the Board of Governors granted the University permission to go ahead and build its medical school.

Further, let it be clear that we applaud the efforts of Maidique, who has led the University through an unprecedented period of growth, culminating in his medical school proposal.

First and foremost are the inevitable questions of funding. FIU has accrued an estimated $70 million in private donations. While impressive, we wonder how the University will find the remaining $180 million in the estimated quarter-billion dollar price tag of this endeavor. All that has come from the Board of Governors is the go ahead. There has yet to be any allocation of state funds so, as far as we know, the state may require that FIU swallow the remaining bulk of the costs.

For a university that—as Madi- que has made clear in several interviews—is cash-starved, the last thing it needs is to scrounge another $180 million. But this is the reality. FIU may face should the state fail to apportion the necessary funds. Where, at that point, would these funds come from? Would a brand new FIU be uncertainly milking every dollar for all it’s worth.

Most students now will not be around to see the medical school in full fruition. In fact, if the final facilities scheduled for completion around 2025, it is the children of current students who will most likely benefit from the school in its completed form.

This leaves the question: Should the University fail to find the necessary funds from an exter- nal source, like the State, would the burden then fall on students’ pocketbooks? Beside the students, who will undoubtedly suffer financially in any efforts of expansion by University, what about the other inadequately funded entities, such as other public universities in Florida or the College of Arts and Sciences for starters?

Noted, a medical school will undoubtedly add an FIU degree more prestige and clout than ever before. However, we must differentiate between its worth and its cost.

With medical school approved, new questions arise

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Mega-churches not mass marketing

I do not attend a mega-church, but contributing writer Ruth Barrocas assumes a great deal of things about these churches that are simply not true (The Beacon, March 6). She has every right to her opinion.

First off, she gives the example of Rick Warren and Saddleback in O.C., California. Later on in her article she says: “Mass market- ing faith, however, and abusing it for monetary function is not the path to righteousness.” So, is what she implying that Warren is mass marketing faith and abusing it for the monetary function? What sort of monetary function? Money? Did you know that Warren does not receive any salary from Sad- dleback.

Furthermore, all of the royal- ties from Warren’s book, “The Purpose Driven Life” go straight to the church instead of to his pocket. Then what exactly is he gaining by mass marketing faith?

It sounds to me that you’re saying he’s in it for the money.

I am not claiming that mega- churches are perfect or that there aren’t people who do abuse so-called “faith” for their own gain. Barrocas how- ever claims that all one finds in large churches are “nothing but false friends and random general acquaintances.” How do you know that?

And on the flip-side, just because a church is small doesn’t mean you won’t find false friends and acquaintances. You are pointing the finger at Pentecostal and Evangelical leaders and their churches without even knowing who they are or how God is using them.

Small churches have their benefits and purpose, but that does not mean that churches with over x-amount of mem- bers are automatically “a simple marketing play in the way of religion.” Please exam- ine the facts before coming to such conclusions.

- Julie Sierra
Senior English Education major

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The Beacon – March 27, 2006

Tranquilizer guns are a safe and effective alternative for police

By MARIO MENDOZA
Contributing Writer

The methods employed by police departments to battle crime have always caused a great deal of controversy. Police officers work under a great amount of stress. When a policeman stops an automobile, for example, it is impossible for the officer to know whether the subject is an injurious driver, a drug dealer or someone whose had a bad day.

There are officers who protect and serve as well as those who blur the line between duty and crime.

In recent years, police depart- ments have increased their use of taser guns. Even though the electric shock can paralyze the alleged perpetrator immediately, this method has been highly questioned as being violent and dangerous. Cases involving the use of tasers on young children and senior citizens have occurred in the past year in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. One option that is less lethal than
U.S. in difficult position with Iran and North Korea
Countries pose threat due to their nuclear policies

BY LUIS H. GARCIA
Contributing Writer

Lately, Iran and North Korea have been scarifying the hell out of everyone, as they are both demanding as possible nuclear threats. Relations with both nations have not been smooth thus far and with tensions mounting, the United States is in a very difficult position negotiating with the two countries.

Looking at both nations, it is easy to see that handling relations with both Iran and North Korea requires extreme care, but which is the greater threat?

So far on the Iranian front, there has been criticism rising from within Iran regarding its nuclear policy. Former President Mohammad Khatami has criticized the current direction of the Iranian government and suggested a return to building relations with the West.

Iran seems to be giving off mixed signals with its nuclear affairs. On one hand, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei strongly insisted that Iran would not back down from trying to reach its nuclear goals, Iran has requested to continue talks with Moscow.

Another thing to consider is that North Korea is believed to have enough plutonium to create a nuclear device. While some in the State Department have had some reservations in how the United States is handling North Korean relations.

North Korea has been deadlocked from creating its first nuclear weapon. Iran, on the other hand, could still be years away from creating its first. Nuclear talks with North Korea have been deadlocked and recent reports confirmed that North Korea has launched two short-ranged test missiles within its borders. This act could very well be interpreted as a warning because the missiles fired were capable of housing a nuclear device.

North Korea has been accusing the United States of using the financial restrictions as a means to hinder the nuclear talks. While North Korea did say they would abandon its nuclear program to receive aid and security guarantees, no progress has yet been made. At the moment, it would appear that North Korea is the greater threat – since it continues to be angered by the current U.S. policy and may already have nuclear capabilities.

On top of that, relations with North Korea have already not gone very smoothly for the past two and a half years. Iran is still a threat mainly due to its already hostile political climate. With U.S. soldiers still fighting in Iraq, the possibility of weapons in Iran could mean much more action to be considered and more anger from dissidents.

With pressure mounting on both sides, the United States must be extremely careful. Though the United States functions as a two-party system, there must be unity and wisdom in handling this situation, especially with North Korea. Either way, regardless of who is the bigger threat to international safety, further actions must be weighed carefully and acted on decisively.

### MIXED SIGNALS:

Although Ayatollah Khamenei has insisted that Iran will not back down from trying to reach its nuclear goals, Iran has requested to continue talks with Moscow.

**KRI Campus**

 Sending 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. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words.

The Beacon – March 27, 2006

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you think that the Miami-Dade County Youth Fair will affect the parking situation at FIU?

- Yes - The parking situation here is bad as it is – it seems like it will only get worse. 72%
- No – The University has made sufficient improvements to its parking facilities. 12%
- I don’t care whether it gets worse or not. The Youth Fair is worth it. 16%

Total participants: 86
Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

WINNER & LOSER

WINNER

**The English:** The Post Office Homephone survey revealed that 40 percent of British men and 27 percent of British women admit to making phone calls in the nude. Even more surprising is that they make these calls in public phone booths.

**Classical Musicians:** One in four musicians use performance enhancing beta-blockers to calm their nerves and improve their performance on stage.

LOSER

Classic/Modern: North Korea requires extreme sanctions to force them to abandon their nuclear programs. Though the United States has already sanctions in place, they have not gone very smoothly.

Its a small number, but it’s real.

- Robert M. Nelson, an intensive-care physician at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, on a warning from federal drug officials that said Ritalin use in kids with ADHD could cause hallucinations.

We’ve been working a long time on all of this, so of course the decision is exciting news.

- Ronald Berkman, interim provost, on approval of the medical school by the Board of Governor’s on March 23.
Brett Castellucio is a junior majoring in architecture that, like many other students in his field, often stays until 3 a.m. in the University Park architecture labs. Looking for a relaxing alternative to his busy schedule, Castellucio learned that the University offered a scuba diving class and jumped at the opportunity to enroll.

"I enrolled in the class because I thought it would be something fun and at the same time, I’d be able to learn something useful from it,” Castellucio said. "It’s a more related class and it isn’t as hard as some of my other classes."

The Basic Scuba Diving Course (PEN 2136) has been offered at FIU since 1996, as part of the Dive Safety Program under the direction of Dive and Safety officer Robert Weisman. The program has represented the University at several science and diving conferences and has been designated as one of the top 10 active marine research institutions in the United States.

Weisman, who also instructs the Basic Scuba Diving Course, stated that the basic course is the first step toward becoming a certified diver.

"Students enrolled in this class not only learn to dive properly but also learn the physics, physiology and medical aspects of the hazards of diving and how to prevent it," Weisman said.

Students who enroll in the basic class also have to enroll in a corresponding lab class (PEN 2132) where they receive practical training and perform six ocean dives. Upon completion, students become certified as professional scuba divers.

Apart from the basic class, the Dive Safety Program also offers an advanced scuba training class, which is a combination of three certification courses and includes dives to depths of 100 feet, exploring shipwrecks and night dives.

Junior Natalie Quinn hasn’t had the chance to take the class but admits that enrolling in such a class would be a very rewarding experience.

"Although I think I would be a little nervous at first, it’d be really cool to take the scuba diving class,” Quinn said. "I’d be able to get some expertise and certification – something I have been interested in for quite some time now.”

Junior Patrick Medina enrolled in the course after first hearing about it in the Fall semester of 2005.

"A friend of mine told me that this was an interesting class where I could learn a lot of new things as well as really enjoy myself," Medina said.

Sophomore Lucas Araujo decided to take this class along with Medina, whom he had known from the previous semester. He admits that the class was more than he expected it to be.

"We had taken another class together in the Fall semester and decided to enroll in this class together," Araujo said. "When I enrolled in the class, I expected us to go to the ocean and come back. I didn’t expect to learn as much as I did.”

The theory class, which meets every Monday from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Pharmed Arena, goes through the theory of dive safety and teaches students about the different marine creatures and hazards in the ocean as well as the various misconceptions about them.

Students are graded on their performances in four quizzes, a mid-term examination and a final, like most classes taught at FIU.

A friend of mine told me that this was an interesting class where I could learn a lot of new things as well as really enjoy myself," Medina said.

"I enrolled in the class because I expected us to go to the ocean and come back. I didn’t expect to learn as much as I did.”

The lab, offered on Saturdays, initially takes place at the Panther Hall Residential Quad pool and then later at the Tamiami Pool.

Students learn how to get up close with sea creatures and how to avoid getting injured. When students train, they learn how to dive and go through every possible thing they will experience in the real world. The lab class is graded on student’s performances in five tests.

"They have to put on all their equipment under water in one breath, do an underwater emergency and learn how to rescue another diver,” Weisman said.

"We’re going to go diving in the Keys so I’m really looking forward to it.”

Weisman acknowledged that most students come into the class expecting to just have fun and get an easy A.

"They might have seen Flipper, or they may want to be photographers. Some even take this class to beat the fear of the water. What they get from this class is that they learn how to dive properly in the ocean and actually become certified divers,” Weisman said.

BY REUBEN PEREIRA
Staff Writer

Aquatic Dive: For over 10 years, scuba diving courses have been offered to FIU students, opening the door to becoming a certified diver and learning a variety of techniques that will enhance diving safety.
Nostalgic TV show jogs memories

BY GEOFFREY ANDERSON JR.
Staff Writer

With shows like VH1’s “I Love Toys” reminding viewers of their beloved childhood playthings, the media attention surrounding toys has shown just how much these diversions have evolved over time.

“Growing up, I loved playing with my toys,” said freshman Anthony Corcione. “I always played with a G.I. Joe or Hot Wheels car. I mean, I know some kids have a childhood friend like their toys, but I never considered that to be the case.

“I’ve known Ivania all my life, so I’ve seen her paint since she was a kid. Her work is very analytical and symbolic of who she is as a person,” said her best friend Marilyn Baez. “I’ve known Ivania all my life, so I’ve seen her paint since she was a kid. Her work is very analytical and symbolic of who she is as a person,” said her best friend Marilyn Baez.

Among the oldest toys created thousands of years ago were dolls, close to their hearts this generation into intellectual stagnation. It is expensive to keep, yes, but there are some things we have to continue to do, like taking something that is bad and continuously breed immorality. It’s like taking something that is bad and continuously doing, it bums my conscience into thinking it is good. That is what that show does to the minds of people.

Power Rangers and Tonka Trucks were not interesting anymore,” said sophomore Ociel Corcione. “Now I have my Xbox 360 to keep me busy and entertained. Although all those old toys make me sentimental, growing up moves my attention elsewhere.”

The sudden shift in attention from toys to media has not derailed some of the cube in order to solve its puzzle. “I remember my parents occasionally getting me some educational toys,” said junior Jose Bouhou. “Although I loved my action figures, the Rubik’s Cube was interesting because it actually forced you to think about reaching a specific solution.”

Even with educational toys becoming popular in the 20th century, toy makers did not forget that the prime purpose for toys is entertainment. Diversions such as silly putty, legos and Barbie were all created in the 1990s and achieved much popularity among the youth.

Although plenty of students hold their childhood toys, such as the infamous Slinky, close to their hearts, this attachment has not kept them from moving on to other forms of entertainment.

“I felt that painting realistically was a little too stiff; now I can go beyond that,” Guerrero said.

Recently, during a feedback and critique session mandatory for all art majors, a group of her professors judged part of her collection, surprising Guerrero by being even more impressed by her drawings than by her paintings. Through their feedback, she feels that she has learned a lot.

Music serves as Guerrero’s muse; as it drones on in the background it points out the direction in which any given work should go.

Guerrero is always trying to develop and push herself as much as she can.

“I’ve seen Ivania progress since high school; she’s developed a great technique that becomes more elaborate every day,” said Guerrero’s husband Melton Diaz. “Not many people can transfer quality from drawing to painting as she does, and I think that’s what her professors like.”

Guerrero is currently undergoing a shift in her artistic style. While in the past her work has been mainly realistic, now during her second semester at FIU, she is seeing a gradual change toward fantastical – dream world art. She feels her new technique allows her to go beyond the limitations of realism.

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See STUDENT, page 10

ARTISTICALLY INCLINED:
Senior Ivania Guerrero has always felt an affinity toward drawing and painting and now is exploring a new territory of fantastical versus realistic art, moving more toward her own imagination and away from simply interpreting what she sees.

Chris Guty/The Beacon

BY SARAH RODRIGUEZ
Staff Writer

Looking back, senior Ivania Guerrero has realized she has felt pulled toward art since she was eight years old, when it was the one school subject in which she never needed assistance, it flowed from her naturally.

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Old toys can yield big profits

From NOSTALGIC, page 9

Students’ fixations on storing their old toys.

“Although I don’t play with my toys anymore, I still keep them around the house,” said junior Richard Lopez. “Even if I do not use them anymore, it is nice to have the toys around my house for nostalgic reasons.”

Instead of storing toys, other students have tried selling them over the internet on auction sites such as eBay. On eBay, thousands of listings for toys can be posted or found by users – collectors are sure to find some rare items for purchase. Some toys, such as Cabbage Patch Kids, are being sold for over $200 while others, particularly Beanie Babies, are selling for over $5,000.

“I think it is crazy how much money some of those toys are fetching on eBay,” said freshman Gabriela Santos. “Paying over $5,000 for a [Beanie Baby] is somewhat stupid. All that money could go to charity or be used on something useful. It’s absurd how some people spend their money.”

The reason for such high biddings on certain toys is their rarity. Toys such as Beanie Babies have limited production runs, resulting in few opportunities for consumers to buy them.

Many of the toys given out at fast food restaurants such as McDonalds and Burger King have limited production runs and garner many bids on auction sites, such as a McDonalds 101 Dalmatians set selling for over $500 on eBay.

Whether toys are used for entertainment purposes or otherwise, they give children something to do and remind older generations of their fond adolescent experiences. As students continue to grow up and toys continue to evolve, many students still carry memories of childhood toys.

Music serves as artist’s inspiration

From STUDENT, page 9

“It takes me to that zone,” Guerrero said. “I like all kinds of music, from Dave Matthews to the [Red Hot] Chili Peppers. Usually when I listen to rock and roll, my paintings turn out more intense and energetic. When I’m listening to something like jazz, they come out more relaxed.”

Once in this zone of inspiration, Guerrero naturally fills her artwork with her own ideas, imaginations and stories. But once these basics have been laid, her goal is to allow her audience to take it from there, building their own stories upon her foundation.

As she looks toward her future, Guerrero aims to finish her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Art and then become a teacher at a university or magnet school. “Many people see art as an easy ‘A,’” she said. “But I want to teach students who care about it and are really there to learn.”

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Brittany Juliachs
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2005 Tony Perez Student Fraternal Award of Excellence
Alexis Hamilton
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2005 Sorority President of the Year
Christine Denton
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For Francis, everything is perfect when he's on the field.

“I don’t know what happened, it was just something with the rules that claimed I was not able to play,” Francis said. “Supposedly at the time I got there, I was too late to play in the regular season.”

Tragedy may have struck again, but Francis did not let it stop him. He kept pursuing his dream and ended up being one of the best players in Champagnat, which lead Major League Baseball scouts to come out and see him play.

But once again, things got in Francis' way and he was unable to get drafted.

But Francis has faced, it’s easy for anyone to have quit, but he remain positive throughout. It is with that same attitude that he goes about his business today, even when his outings don’t turn out as well.

“When I’m on that field, everything seems perfect,” Francis said. “I focus on the game and I don’t have a care in the world. All of my problems outside the field go away when I step between those lines. It’s something I can’t even explain.”

After his first two years in college baseball were up, Francis got closer and closer to his dream of playing for FIU.

“When I first got here and started recognizing the colleges, I wanted to play for FIU — ever since the beginning I knew this was where I wanted to be.”

An exuberant Francis finally got the call from a very interested Tony Casas, who is the pitching coach and the recruiting coordinator for the FIU baseball team.

Finally, in August of 2005, Francis would get his shot to play at FIU and compete at the Division-1 level. The first thing the 5-9, 21-year-old did was call his older sister — whom he actually calls mom — and tell her the great news.

“I called her up and said, ‘[Jermaine], you don’t need to worry about me. I could come out here naked and I have everything I need to play baseball,’” Francis said. “It’s just nothing like Miami-Dade. I came into the locker room and there was all my stuff waiting for me … I mean we get everything for free.”

After all the pitfalls, short-comings and obstacles Francis has faced, it’s easy for anyone to have quit, but he remain positive throughout. It is with that same attitude that he goes about his business today, even when his outings don’t turn out as well.

“When I’m on that field, everything seems perfect,” Francis said. “I focus on the game and I don’t have a care in the world. All of my problems outside the field go away when I step between those lines. It’s something I can’t even explain.”
SPORTS

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Se habla español

Sure, you can say that turnovers accumulated because of the fast-paced offense the Golden Panthers ran to make up for their size, but I attribute it to a lack of leadership. Although she had a solid season, Bouderra committed over five turnovers per game in-route to a – 4.4 turnover margin for the team.

In turn, many teams like Western Kentucky and Middle Tennessee brought heavy full-court presses that rattled Bouderra and Ciglar. In their 1-4 record versus the top two teams of the Sun Belt Conference, FIU’s two point guards combined to average nearly 12 turnovers per game.

The other supposed leader this season was Makela, an area where Makela strikingly came up short. After averaging 11 points and five rebounds last season, the Finnish guard only put up eight points and two rebounds per game. Surely a knee injury early in the season contributed to her low numbers, but her presence on the court was almost invisible. I didn’t see that killer instinct and confidence a leader is supposed to have, especially down the stretch.

All in all, though, the season was a successful one for FIU. Even though it was supposed to downgrade from last year, the team persevered and went on to an impressive 16-13 record and a 9-5 record in conference play. The team advanced all the way to the third round of the Sun Belt tournament and was invited to the WNIT – which last year’s team failed to do.

Thanks to a promising core of young players, I look forward to a great next season and hope to see more butts in those bleachers to root for these women.

The way I see it, if you’re going to show up for a 7 p.m. men’s basketball game, why not come a couple of hours early and watch a real team play?
DURING THE BREAK

MARCH 18

– Sprinter Donita Harmon and hurdler Naim Yisrael qualify for NCAA Regionals.

MARCH 19

– Softball finishes as the runner-up at the USF Speedline Invitational.

MARCH 20

– Tabitha Embry and Sarah Belanger earn Sun Belt Player and Pitcher of the Week, respectively.

MARCH 21

– Women’s tennis beats Dartmouth 7-0 and earns its ninth-consecutive victory.

– Women’s golf, led by Rebecca Samuelsson, wins the USF Waterlefe Invitational title.

KNOCKED OUT

SEASON OVER: The women’s basketball team, led by head coach Cindy Russo [top right], ended its season with a 95-83 WNIT second round loss to cross-town rival Miami March 18 at the BankUnited Center in Coral Gables. The Golden Panthers fell to 14 UM 3-pointers and a game-high 32 points coming off the hands of UM’s star senior Tamara James. Junior Lasma Jekabsone came one point short of James’s total, scoring 31 points, and grabbed six rebounds. Senior Faeza Bouderra [top left], who was injured in the first round victory over Cincinatti, came off the bench to score 10 points. Eva Makela [bottom left] added 13 points. FIU ends its 2005-06 campaign in its 11th postseason appearance in 15 years and with a 19-13 record.

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Women's team surpassed expectations this season

COMMENTARY

BY ALDEN GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

It would've been easy to underestimate the women's basketball team this season. After choosing in the second round of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament last year and losing their best player in Milena Tomic, not much was riding high for the Golden Panthers. However, in covering this team throughout the season, I must say I was extremely impressed with their resiliency.

Heading into the season, it was clear they were a young team that lacked a severe scoring threat on offense, but head coach Cindy Russo did her part instilling confidence in her players to get them back on track. One thing that already has me excited about the 2006-2007 season is the outstanding play from the newcomers, especially Iva Ciglar and Marquita Adley. Watching Ciglar penetrate through defenders and rain 3-pointers, I'm convinced the freshman from Croatia is a star in the making.

Unlike most freshmen that come into a new system, Ciglar displayed extreme confidence all year and, in many moments, outshined FIU's favorite Facza Boudder. After a great first half, she solidified herself as the sixth woman off the bench and every time she stepped in, she gave a spark to this team unlike any other. Her strong upside, quick first step, great ball-handling ability and definite range made her an opposing defender's nightmare. As the season wore on, Russo seemed to gain more and more confidence in her new point guard as she played alongside Boudder down the stretch, where junior Eva Makela couldn't cut it.

In Adley, FIU finally has a strong player in the post unafraid of the opposition, a player that may not have been there a year ago. She reminds me of Miami Heat forward Udonis Haslem – a player that may not come out in the paper everyday, but does all the little things that make a ball club successful.

Women's basketball fans can also look forward to another year from the developing Latvian center, Lasma Jekabsone, who seems to get better and better every year.

Coming into the season, the big question mark was who was going to be the dominating presence in the paint and many people were relying on Jekabsone to fill that role, simply because she was the only one.

But no one expected this kind of season from her. Even when the season started, many were questioning Jekabsone's toughness.

Right before the Christmas break, Coach Russo told me, "We need Lasma to step it up. She's a big part of our offense and she has not stepped up so far."

Jekabsone took to the criticism well, en-route to a season that saw her average 16 points and 10 rebounds.

There were, however, some tough losses against quality programs like Western Kentucky and the University of Miami. The Golden Panthers lost to Western Kentucky twice during the regular season and then got eliminated by them in an eight-point loss during the third round of the Sun-Belt Conference Tournament.

The difference between a team like FIU and Western Kentucky is execution. Throughout the season, many players stepped up for this team and when they met on Feb. 23 at Pharmed Arena, FIU seemingly had the players to match up to the Lady Toppers, but turnovers were a recurring theme throughout the season, and, eventually, spelled the demise of this team.

A LOOK AHEAD: Freshman Iva Ciglar has a bright future ahead as a Golden Panther. Her performance this season shows she will be a good replacement for departing guard Faeca Boudder.

BY ALDEN GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

When life bears down on you and it really gets tough, you usually only have two choices – you can dwell on the setbacks and allow it to take its toll or you can take Akeen Francis' route: display a big Caribbean smile, enjoy life and keep on pushing. Francis' boyhood charm and carefree attitude would be tested early. Growing up in the Virgin Islands, Francis was the youngest of eight children, including six sisters.

At the age of eight, his mother died and Francis' life and attitude would be changed forever. "My sister told me my mother died, I didn't bother asking questions," Francis said. "But it was a really tough loss for me because she was such a big part of my life."

His mother's death changed his life.

"It ended up changing me completely because I was always a troublemaker and after [my mother] died, I started doing better in school and not behaving as badly," Francis said.

Francis ended up moving in with his oldest sister Jermaine after living with his father for a short while.

Because she was so much older than him, Jermaine was a big influence in his life and proved to be the mother he seldom had.

"I love her very much because she did so much for me," Francis said. "Sure we had our dumb little [sibling] fights, but she truly cared about me and she helped me get through a tough part of my life. I don't know what I would've done if it wasn't for her."

Around this time, baseball started becoming a big part of his life, but Francis couldn't just buy a glove and bat and hit the field. Growing up in the projects of Saint Thomas, Francis needed to use his creativity.

"We would pick up sticks and rocks and just start pitching to ourselves and hitting the rocks into buildings," Francis said. "Then sometimes, we would break off tree branches or grab brooms and stand in front of a wall and pitch to each other with tennis balls. That's how we started gaining technique."

Little by little, Francis' game kept enhancing as he started playing in the popular Latin American Tournament that would allow him to play against some of the best competition from countries like the Dominican Republic, Brazil and Venezuela.

His popularity also kept growing as he started displaying talent as a shortstop and a pitcher.

That caught the eye of a scout from Hialeas-based Champagnat High School, who was very interested in having Francis and a few of his teammates join their program.

Francis had a big decision to make. He could either stay with his loving sister and the only home he'd ever known or...