By C. Joel Marino
Content Editor

Camilo Silva was announced the new Student Government Association president for the Biscayne Bay Campus on April 6, receiving 308 of the 752 votes cast in one of BBC’s largest voter turnouts.

According to Vicky Owles, the assistant director of Campus Life, the reason for the mass turnout is simple—there were people running.

“It may sound like a joke, but having so many candidates was a good incentive for the students. It gave them variety,” Owles said.

Silva ran against current SGA president Lamar Linton and Zach Trautenberg, comptroller for SGA BBC. Silva’s unofficial running mate, Pamela St. Fleur, beat out two other candidates for the vice president position.

Owles said that the increase in candidates for the president and vice president slots is a new phenomenon at BBC.

“We marketed the positions through flyers, banners and word-of-mouth, but the high interest we received was still surprising and exciting,” Owles said.

As recent as 2002, contenders for almost all BBC government positions ran unopposed, including the president, with the two candidates for lower division representatives tying in at six votes per candidate.

See BBC, page 3

Up – Presidential ticket uncontested

By Reuben Pereira
Staff Writer

Alfonso “Alfi e” Leon and Providence Okoye, who ran unopposed, were officially voted in as University Park Student Government Association president and vice president, receiving 1,539 votes, in a year that marked a significant decrease in voter turnout compared to previous elections.

More than 200 students, many of them campaigners, gathered at the Graham Center ‘Pit’ in support of the candidates. Leon, a member of the Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity, was mobbed and serenaded by a large group of fraternity members after the results before being carried away to the lake facing the University Park Apartments, into which he was thrown as part of an annual tradition bestowed on the newly elected SGA president.

“I plan to get working as soon as possible. Right now, it feels fantastic,” Leon said. “I’m going to be spending some quality time with my girlfriend, my friends and my [fraternity] brothers. She’s been helping me with this for the past three years and I really want to thank them for what they did. They made me proud today.”

Leon and Okoye plan to lower extra fees applied to online courses, increase on-campus safety, improve facilities and funding for engineering and graduate students, work for a cost-effective insurance solution for international students as well as provide grocery carts for housing students.

See UP, page 2
Representatives win tight race

From UP, page 1

Additionally, Leon plans to have clubs and organizations accountable for the money they are allocated by SGA.

The lack of competition in the presidential race had shifted most of the attention to the UP representative-at-large where five candidates were running for three openings.

Since voters were allowed to vote three in the category for their top three picks, the number of votes was highest in this category.

Out of the 3187 votes cast, Arthur “AJ” Meyer received 838 votes (26.29 percent); Marbely Hernandez received 822 votes (25.79 percent) and Jennifer Ruiz was third with 692 votes (21.71 percent).

In the lower division representative race where two candidates are elected, Paige LaPointe received the most votes with 643 votes (56.23 percent). Tomas Martinez edging Wolfgang Acevedo by 34 votes to get the second lower division representative spot.

Acevedo, an SGA intern, was clearly disappointed with the results but hoped the newly elected candidates would follow through with their objectives.

“I obviously feel hurt because overall, I do think I was the best candidate running for the position,” Acevedo said. “I do think these things happen for a reason. I didn’t win because I didn’t campaign as hard as I should have. I do think being Greek plays a role in results but not a huge role.”

Jose Torres was voted UP Health and Urban Affairs representative, narrowly beating Bidlose “Bibs” Oliver by 20 votes to 16.

The UP Business representative and UP Housing representative positions were won by default by Aviva Rose-Avila and Ebe Mezzanotte because their opponents Michael Jadoo and Emanuel Washington were disqualified on grounds of exceeding their campaign budgets and campaigning in no-campaign zones.

Candidates largely ran unopposed in other categories including Honors College representative and UP Arts and Sciences representative which were won by Rocío Perez and Charlene Collazo respectively.

Also running unopposed were Ralph Delgado, Shaznna McNair and Marcia Garcia who were voted in as UP Education representative, UP Graduate student representative, and UP Law School representative, respectively.

Cheers: Jennifer Ruiz surrounded by sorority sisters, celebrated her victory as University Park representative-at-large position April 6. Chris Cutro/The Beacon

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For more information, call Major Gallart at 305-348-1619 or visit www.fiu.edu/~armyrotc
The eight-day holiday will start off the Jewish holiday of Passover begins. In addition Jewish dishes will be some of the things that hold us down and keep us away from home for all the Jewish students at UP on Wednesdays from 9-10 p.m. According to Friedman, the biggest strength of this year’s elections was the respect the candidates had for each other, helping turn it into “a friendly event.” Outside of Passover, Chabad is active at both University Park and Biscayne Bay Campus year round, providing Jewish programming for FIU students. Chabad is a worldwide Jewish organization with a presence at over 80 campuses nationally. Chabad is an acronym for the Hebrew words of Chochmah, Binah and Da’at, which mean wisdom, knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, this election avoided many scandals that have plagued candidate relations in the past, such as the 2003 controversy surrounding Nicaise Pailon’s succession of her husband Adrian Carter as SGA president.

“We are more than pleased with this year’s turnout, a sign that points to the growth we’re seeing at BBC,” said Cathy Akens, assistant vice president of student affairs. “The quality of all the candidates was exceptional and I’m sure that made a difference.” Akens said the biggest strength of this year’s elections was the respect the candidates had for each other, helping turn it into “a friendly event.” Outside of Passover, Chabad is active at both University Park and Biscayne Bay Campus year round, providing Jewish programming for FIU students. Chabad is a worldwide Jewish organization with a presence at over 80 campuses nationally. Chabad is an acronym for the Hebrew words of Chochmah, Binah and Da’at, which mean wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

Passover commemorates the exodus of the Jews from Egypt after 210 years of slavery. Jews celebrate this event with a festive meal and ceremony called the Seder, during which they recite the Hagadah, the narrative of this historical episode.

“Through the study and understanding of Judaism and what God wants from us we come to a deeper appreciation of who we are, and what it is that we’re doing.” Their mission is to provide a home away from home for all the Jewish students at FIU, according to Friedman.

VICTORIOUS: Camilo Silva and Pamela St. Fleur were announced president and vice president winners for the Biscayne Bay Campus’ Student Government Association at noon on April 6 in Panther Square. Silva said he is happy to have won another opportunity to begin his tenure as SGA president for BBC, which will begin at the end of the Spring semester. Mara Silva/Toni Taurban

Silva, St. Fleur win presidential elections

Voter turnout one of campus’ highest

From BBC, page 1

Silva, St. Fleur win presidential elections

BY RINA LANKRY

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Chabad to organize first seder dinner for students

Chabad is an acronym for the Hebrew words of Chochmah, Binah and Da’at, which mean wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

Chabad believes that belief in God and being Jewish isn’t enough to follow blindly, it’s something we have to understand and appreciate,” Friedman said. “Through the study and understanding of Judaism and what God wants from us we come to a deeper appreciation of who we are, and what it is that we’re doing.”

Chabad offers classes such as Kabbalah, which teaches Jewish mysticism, at UP on Wednesdays from 9-10 p.m. at the 2nd floor of the Green Library. They explore subjects such as love, good and evil, soul and God and the meaning of life.

Chabad is most popular on campus for its weekly shabbat, which are the Friday night sabbath, dinners, held at Friedman’s house. Once a month they have a themed shabbat in February for example, they had a Panther Pride shabbat.

VICTORIOUS: Camilo Silva and Pamela St. Fleur were announced president and vice president winners for the Biscayne Bay Campus’ Student Government Association at noon on April 6 in Panther Square. Silva said he is happy to have won another opportunity to begin his tenure as SGA president for BBC, which will begin at the end of the Spring semester. Mara Silva/Toni Taurban

Jonathan Berney, a sophomore met Friedman when he was tabling. He grew up with a Jewish education and was looking for a Jewish environment at the University.

“It was a cool experience,” Berney said. “No matter what your level with connection for Judaism is, I think it’s important to have a group that you can fit in with.”

Junior Sarah Steinfield, has been going to Chabad for Shabbat since her first week at FIU.

“I wanted to engage in conversation where people knew what I was talking about. I knew that Chabad had something different to offer,” she said. “It’s very family-oriented and so non-judgmental. Everyone who comes into their house feels so comfortable.”

Junior students who attend Shabbat dinner at the Chabad house can expect a young family sitting around a huge table with plenty of food and singing. The week’s Parsha is read and that gets the conversation started. Students can also ask the rabbi questions about life or anything or other concerns during the dinner.

“Out our doors are always open,” Friedman said. “Don’t be embarrassed, afraid, or worried about coming. We’re here to give them an opportunity to connect to other Jewish people their age. Total pleasure, zero pressure.”

For additional information, contact Friedman at (305) 226-5533 or via e-mail at rables@chabadfiu.com.
SGA must address low voter turnout

There are several things we feel SGA could have done, and perhaps should do in future years, to increase voter turnout. An idea that has been thrown around for a while is Internet voting. By using their Panther IDs, students would be able to vote from their own computers. The use of the Panther IDs would ensure that no student is able to cast their vote more than once.

Besides implementing an online voting system, SGA should also work toward widening their campaign timeline. It felt as though elections shook up on students this year as candidates were only announced two weeks before elections.

Due to this short time span, the contenders may not have had the time they needed to properly inform students about their platforms. A few weeks of extra campaigning may have made all the difference in how well students knew the names of those wanting to represent them.

Furthermore, SGA should plan more debates to inform students about the issues at hand and plan them in very public places such as the GC Pit. An informed voter is usually a more consistent voter.

Low voter turnout is a trend that SGA has been facing for several years, though, so it will be up to the association itself to analyze student needs and eventually figure out what can be done to get a higher number of voter involvement.

Video games do not harm children or lead to violence

Your parents have tried to ban them from home. Democrats Joe Lieberman and Hillary Clinton have persuas ed the Senate to approve a sweeping study to be organized by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC.

Familysearch.org has claimed they are ‘addictive’ and Utah proposed a bill that did not pass to ban children from even seeing them.

Is it a highly potent drug – maybe an opiate, or hallucinogen? Nope, they are talking about video games.

Video games have been around for two decades – from the original and simplistic Pong to the increasingly complex Final Fantasy series. Japan has claimed video games as a part of its culture and has recently opened a videogame museum to commemorate the advances and history of video games.

But across the pond in the States, they are viewed as a malicious attack towards our innocent children. So much so that government-funded studies are popping up everywhere.

Clinton and Lieberman’s proposal for the CDC to study the “impact of electronic media use” was originally going to be a $90 million study, but now has been rumored to be costing upwards of $200 million tax dollars worth of research. Heck, for $200 million I’ll not only research video games, I’ll find the cure for athlete’s foot.

I understand that an excess amount of video games, just like an excess amount of anything, isn’t very good for you, but that does not make video games a disease. These guys are crazy, but the liberals aren’t the only guys behind this lunacy.

Conservatives over in Utah are just as nuts. In January, Utah’s Representative David L. Hogue proposed a bill that if passed, would make it illegal for anyone in months. Just kidding – weeks.

Video games are no more harmful than movies or television and they are a form of entertainment. Violence does not come from video games and people who claim their crimes are video game inspired are either finding a way out of prison or probably belong in a straitjacket to begin with.

I have been playing video games since I was five and I haven’t shot or murdered anyone in months. Just kidding – weeks.
Opposing gay marriage akin to opposing interracial marriage

BY ADRIAN DIAZ
Assistant Opinion Editor

In 1967, the United States Supreme Court ruled a Virginia anti-miscegenation law unconstitutional in the case of Loving v Virginia, in which an interracial Virginia couple married in the District of Columbia to evade the Virginia law. When they returned to the state, they were charged with breaking the law. The law it struck down was the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 which put race-based restrictions on marriage. Ironically, in Massachusetts, some are using an even older law to ban gays from marriage.

The Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled on Thursday, March 30, that non-resident, same-sex couples could not get married in Massachusetts unless gay marriage is legal in their home states.

Same sex marriage is only legal in Massachusetts; however, Vermont, California and Connecticut allow homosexuals to join in some form or another of civil union.

The Massachusetts Supreme Court upheld a 1913 statute that bans out-of-state residents from getting married in Massachusetts if the person’s home state would find the marriage void. The statute was originally adopted to block interracial marriages. Although conservatives argue that same-sex marriages and interracial marriages cannot be compared, they are using the archaic tools that blocked the latter decades ago in the pointless fight against the former.

Just as bans against interracial marriage were brought down in the 60s, bans on gay marriage must be done away with today. In reality, opposing gay marriage is just as bigoted and silly as opposing other racial marriage.

Marriage itself is not a natural human institution. It is, instead, a social construct which changes as society changes – and right now society is changing. After all, in the 60s, conservatives were worried that interracial marriage would hurt traditional marriage.

Massachusetts’s governor Mitt Romney said in a 2004 National Review interview, “Like me, the great majority of Americans wish both to preserve the traditional definition of marriage and to oppose bias and intolerance directed toward gays and lesbians.”

This is one of the more sensible arguments against gay marriage, but it is still fundamentally flawed in that it denies a section of the population certain rights that another group has only on the basis of sexual orientation. You cannot oppose bias and intolerance toward gays and not allow them to marry.

Conservatives attempt to argue that, unlike opposition to interracial marriage, which they say was based simply on prejudice, they oppose gay marriage on the grounds that they are attempting to preserve the sanctity of marriage. The problem I see with this argument is that no one has been able to prove that homosexual marriage undermines marriage as an institution.

There is also an argument over allowing gays to marry and allowing them to have civil unions. For me, I think as long as gays can have all the same rights (hospital visiting rights, death benefits, etc.) as straight spouses, then I really don’t care what you call it. I see it as a case of civil rights and not a problem of semantics.

Gays and the gay lifestyle are much more accepted than they were 10 years ago and their opposition, which seems fierce, to me, is only the last throes of those hanging on to outdated beliefs.


KRT/COMPUTER

WINNER & LOSER

WINNER

English: A survey showed Brits drink more than their European neighbors, about 2.2 pints a night. They would be celebrating but they are too busy nursing their hangovers.

loser

Corruptible kids: A bill is being passed through Congress to restrict the sales of junk food in schools. Finally, lawmakers are tackling the real issues.

QUOTATIONATION

“To begin wish, they should exit the cities and take positions outside the cities and hand over security to the Iraqi forces.”

- Moqtada Al-Sadr, Shiite cleric, on American forces in Iraq.

“I think politics got in front of policy on this issue.”

- Edward Kennedy, Democratic senator, on bi-partisan efforts to reform immigration that fell apart in Congress April 7.

“Burn in the U.S.A.”

- Zacarias Moussaoui, Al-Qaeda terrorist, shouted during a morning break in his trial. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani testified in the trial April 6. Giuliani spoke about his experiences shortly after the World Center attacks.

“A lot of things happened that in retrospect today we would all do differently.”

- Thomas M. Davis III, Republican representative of Virginia, on mishandling of money and supplies intended to aid Katrina affected areas.

“I plan to get working as soon as possible. Right now it feels fantastic.”

- Alfonso Leon, SGA president-elect, on how it felt to win. Leon ran unopposed.

“Whatsoever we have been doing to address these problems has been insufficient and needs to be redoubled and tripled.”

- Robert J. Thompson Jr., vice provost for undergraduate education at Duke university, on accusations that three members of the university lacrosse team sexually assaulted a woman.

“In light of today’s shocking revelation, President Bush must fully disclose his participation in the selective leaking of classified information.”

- Harry Reid, Democratic senator from Nevada, on testimony by I. Lewis Libby Jr. that says President Bush authorized the leak of what was at the time classified intelligence about the war in Iraq.

F.Y.I.

Same-sex marriage around the world

- The Netherlands was the first country to allow same sex civil marriages.
- Other countries that allow it are Canada, Belgium and Spain.
- However, Belgium does not allow these couples to adopt children.

- On November 18, 2004 England passed the Civil Partnership Act which allows same sex partners to register with the government. The government has insisted that this is not same-sex marriage.

- Three countries in the European Union that constitutionally define marriage as a union between a man and a woman are: Latvia, Poland and Lithuania.

- The Beacon – April 10, 2006

www.beaconnewspaper.com
“Kingdom Hearts II” introduces in-depth plot

BY BEN F. BADGER JR. Staff Writer

Originally released in 2002 for the PS2, “Kingdom Hearts” became an overnight phenomenon, much to the surprise of gamers who never believed Disney characters and their worlds could be incorporated with “Final Fantasy” ones.

“Kingdom Hearts” is a must for any gamer. At the end of the highly climactic game, players were given a peek at “Kingdom Hearts II.” On March 29, the four-year wait for the sequel finally arrived.

From start to finish, players are thrown into an incredible story revolving around a boy named Sora and his Keyblade—a special key-shaped sword with the power to destroy beings called Heartless and Nobodies.

Accompanying Sora on his quest to find his lost friend Riku (as well as defeating the Heartless and Nobodies) are Donald Duck and Goofy, trademark characters from the Disney. It was this odd mix that brought the first “Kingdom Hearts” success and the trend has continued.

I was blown away by the extremely in-depth plot of this game. The conspiracy involving Organization XIII has you guessing right up until the last few hours of the game. It is also clear that the maturity of the game’s plot was far beyond that of the first “Kingdom Hearts.”

However, those who did not play the Game Boy Advance game “Kingdom Heart: Chain of Memories” will be confused as to what exactly is going on at the start of the game.

“Kingdom Hearts II” takes place immediately after the end of “Chain of Memories,” picking up right where the previous game left off. The vocal acting is another treat. Haley Joel Osment and James Woods reprise their roles as Sora and Hades, respectively.

Considering Disney’s resources, the myriad of celebrity voices is no surprise. An honorable mention also goes to the late Pat Morita, who voiced the Emperor of China for Mulan before his death last year.

It’s a good thing the vocal talent is so good; otherwise, the countless cinematic scenes in the game would have been a real annoyance. Throughout the game, players are given dozens of cinematic scenes that move the plot forward.

While enjoyable, many times you will be tempted to press the “skip scene” button (a new feature that was not available in the first game.) I recommend, however, you watch everything once and only use the skip feature if you get a game over and have to repeat something.

The battle system in “Kingdom Hearts II” is radically enhanced. The two most notable additions are the Limit and Drive abilities. The Limit ability comes from the “Final Fantasy” game series. Essentially, the Limit is a very powerful attack that can save you in a tight spot and it changes depending on which Disney character you are employing.
García’s Seafood Grille and Fish Market offers affordable seafood staples such as conch fritters and jumbo shrimp. Photo: De La Fuente.

By Laundrea De La Fuente
Contributing Writer

García’s Seafood Grille and Fish Market may be difficult to find, as it is discreetly nestled up to the Miami River, but its fresh seafood cuisine is anything but that.

Since 1966, García’s has been serving seafood to locals at affordable prices. In its Miami River location, with breezy outdoor dining, this seafood eatery is not only quintessentially Floridian, but also quintessentially Miami.

García’s digs may not be posh and touristy like the restaurants of South Beach, but their North River Drive location gives it a cozy feel. Flanked by warehouses, churches and other seafood eateries, García’s is hard to find but well worth the zigzagging through the small streets of downtown Miami.

García’s offers minimal indoor dining, but the real experience is presented outdoors. Their river view dining area is small, so the wait can sometimes be long, but you’re welcome to casually linger around their bar and sip on a drink while you wait.

If you’re lucky enough to be seated right next to the river, you can gaze out onto the water and watch boats move up and down the river, pelicans dive for fish and lobster fisherman load up their traps.

García’s is the perfect locale to enjoy long, leisurely and casual lunches on sunny weekends. Their appetizer menu features dishes that can double as light lunches. Their raw oysters on a half shell are especially their bisques. Their lobster bisque may be $5 a bowl but it features chunks of real lobster immersed in incredibly rich and creamy red bisque. Small stomachs may want to skip the bisque and head straight to the main course.

One of García’s most famous and beloved dish is their fish sandwich. You can try a variety of fish, from grouper to dolphin, in a bun. Their fish is always fresh and never under or overcooked, making their sandwiches classically simple but very tasty. Fish is not the only seafood you can sample between bread. Their fried shrimp sandwich highlights battered shrimp on a bun.

García’s has not left out those who prefer to dine on low-carb meals. One can order a Caesar salad with a perfectly crisp and flaky. This option allows patrons to sacrifice taste. If you’re like me and hate to forgo carbs, a side of flavorful yellow rice with chunks of grouper can be added to complement your dish. Most of García’s main dishes hover between $10 and $15. One of García’s most famous and beloved dish is their fish sandwich. You can try a variety of fish, from grouper to dolphin, in a bun. Their fish is always fresh and never under or overcooked, making their sandwiches classically simple but very tasty. Fish is not the only seafood you can sample between bread. Their fried shrimp sandwich highlights battered shrimp on a bun.

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For those who love to end a meal on a sweet note, García’s has a tasty key lime pie. Not too sweet and with a nice hint of sourness, their key lime pie is the typical way to finish your very beachy Miami dining experience.

Meals for restaurant reviews are paid for by the reviewer and the restaurant is not notified in advance of the critic’s presence.

GARCIA’S SEAFOOD GRILLE AND FISH MARKET

2 1/2 out of 4 stars

398 N.W. North River Drive
Miami, FL 33128
(305) 375-0765

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The University of Miami’s MBA Program was ranked #1 in Florida by corporate recruiters in The Wall Street Journal. Which means you’ll gain more than the knowledge to lead, manage and motivate. You’ll be 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.

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“KINGDOM HEARTS II”
★★★★
4 out of 4 stars
Released: March 28, 2006
Released for PS2
Square-Enix, Inc.

Disney and Final Fantasy characters reunite in game sequel

You have with you at the time. The Drive ability allows you to merge with Donald, Goofy, or both of them to have enhanced abilities and, in all but one case, use two Keyblades. The Drive and Limit abilities really make the game easy. Once transformed, winning a battle is a mere formality and Limits usually cleared the screen of any minor enemies. There is, however, one more new feature that really stands out, the Reaction Command.

Basically, whenever the command flashed you press a button and watch Sora use a unique attack or move. In the case of boss battles, it usually meant watching a short mini movie in which Sora launches a powerful attack. The new features really make the fights a lot of fun and of course, easier. Although one of the most enjoyable fights in the game is when you had to defeat 1,000 Heartless by yourself.

The real point of the game is to tell a story. That is why, for experienced gamers, using the normal difficulty level in the game will feel more like using the easy setting. At the start of the game, players can choose the difficulty level of the game easy, normal, or hard.

In the case of one optional boss, though, the difficulty setting won’t make a difference, as he is nearly impossible to beat. Yes, the villain from “Final Fantasy VII” is back and worse than ever. Sephiroth returns in “Kingdom Hearts II” to give players the thrashing of their life. As was the case in the first “Kingdom Hearts,” Sephiroth is harder than the last boss in the game.

Basically, this game is fantastic. There are virtually no flaws — although the camera angle will sometimes act up. Disney and Square-Enix went all out with “Kingdom Hearts II.” Whether you’re an experienced gamer or new to the world of video games, you will enjoy this game. Most times, it’s more like a movie than a game.
The Student Government Association planned out a series of events to take place the week of April 10 to extend their gratitude to the FIU community for their participation in University events and to highlight their accomplishments.

SGA President Alex Prado organized a “thank you” week which he hopes will develop into a series which he hopes will develop into Representative-at-Large Alfonso ‘Alfie’ Leon’s term as president.

“We are doing this just to say thanks and show the accomplishments of SGA. We also want to compare platforms for the year and thank faculty, staff and students for voting. Prado and Denton [also want to give their] final farewells,” said Wolfgang Acevedo, SGA intern at the College of Law and Business.

Also, the last SGA meeting of the semester will be held April 12 at the Pit as a town-hall meeting.

SGA members will hand out “thank you” T-shirts to students on April 10 for taking the time to vote for SGA elections. A faculty and staff luncheon will take place April 11.

Additional reporting by staff writer Cristela Guerra.

Currie given ten year sentence

BY ANDREW LEINS
Staff Writer

Frederick Currie, a former FIU Public Safety officer, was sentenced to ten years in prison April 5. Currie was convicted in January for molesting a young girl during a pat-down search at Tamiami Park. Currie’s attorney plans to appeal the conviction.

Though there was a lack of physical evidence presented at the trial, an eight member jury convicted Currie of one count of sexual battery and one count of battery on Jan. 26. The assault took place last year on July 8 and Currie was later arrested on July 20. In a statement given to The Miami Herald, the victim urged other victims of sex crimes to come forward, “come forward right away and let them know that you are real and what happened to you was real, people will listen to you.

Currie was twice fired from University public safety prior to this conviction, both times he was reinstated by appealing to the Police Benevolent Association. Currie was placed on administrative leave on the night of the assault and was on paid-leave until the trial when he was formally released from employment from FIU Public Safety.

In a statement to The Miami Herald, Judge Jorge Perez called Currie’s crime “extra-serious” because of the nature of the crime and the fact that he was a police officer.

Student government prepares ‘thank you’ week

BY ANA SANCHEZ
News Editor

“Is basically a week dedicated to informing the students of what SGA has been able to accomplish in the past year, and thanking them for all of their support and trust in their student government ... we couldn’t have done it without them,” Prado said.

In order to thank the student body, free University of Miami vs. FIU football game tickets will be given out at noon on April 12 at the Graham Center Pit where a countdown and a pep-rally will take place.

The money for the tickets will not come from student fees. “It’s all about access: We just wanted to give students the ability to attend the game. We are working with athletics to provide the tickets,” Leon said.

Tickets will continue to be given out during several upcoming University and athletic events. There are 5,000 free student tickets in total which are to be distributed and, in addition to those, 5,000 more tickets are set aside for non-FIU students at $35.

“It was really Alex [Prado] and Christine [Dentons’s] idea to thank the students because they realize we’ve always taken from the students but we have not given back to them,” said Bill Buchanan, representative-at-large.

“We want to recognize what the students have done for [SGA],” The State of Student address is scheduled for April 13 and will take place at the fountain behind GC at 11:30 a.m.

Prado will give a speech in which he will review the year and SGA’s accomplishments along with vice president Denton.

Leon will also give a speech on what he plans to accomplish during his term.

“We are doing this just to say thanks and show the accomplishments of SGA. We also want to compare platforms for the year and thank faculty, staff and students for voting. Prado and Denton [also want to give their] final farewells,” said Wolfgang Acevedo, SGA intern at the College of Law and Business.

Also, the last SGA meeting of the semester will be held April 12 at the Pit as a town-hall meeting.

SGA members will hand out “thank you” T-shirts to students on April 10 for taking the time to vote for SGA elections. A faculty and staff luncheon will take place April 11.

Additional reporting by staff writer Cristela Guerra.
23 on Court 2, literally. About to begin the warm-up for her first round match, Karolina Sprem asked me to grab something from her coach. I ran across the court to receive six bottles of water, nutrients and smelling salts.

As I waddled my way back, Sprem smiled and offered to help me. Just sharing a laugh with a 21-year old Croatian beauty can make a ballboy’s day. It’s too bad she lost.

Friday the 24th brought out the big stars and the big crowds. With fans buzzing, 2005 finalist Rafael Nadal and 2003 finalist Carlos Moya took to the court. Longtime amigos from Spain, Nadal and Moya were unlucky to draw each other in the second round. Moya stunned the No. 2 seed with a dazzling array of whipping forehands and deceptive drop shots. Watching from the net, I couldn’t believe my eyes as Moya crafted a top-spin backhand lob over Nadal’s head to win the match.

The surprises kept coming March 25. Tim Henman entered his match against No. 13 seed Lleyton Hewitt with an 0-8 record against the Australian. A veteran serve-and-volleyer, Henman changed tactics by punishing groundstrokes from the baseline to set up his approaches to the net. The strategy worked as Henman finally beat Hewitt 7-6(5), 6-3.

Defending champion Kim Clijsters seemed assured of restoring order when she took a 3-0 lead on American Jill Craybas in five minutes. But Craybas kept fighting and drew 78 unforced errors from Clijsters to earn the upset. Clijsters joined her fellow Belgian, No. 3 seed Justine Henin-Hardenne, on the early departures list.

World No. 1 Roger Federer also looked destined for an easy victory. I entered the court for my ballboy shift after Federer won his first set against Arnaud Clement, 6-2.

With the second set on serve at 5-5, Federer hit a first serve fault. I sprinted to pick up the ball and return to my position at the net, but I came up empty-handed – missing the ball completely – and had to screech my Filas to a halt, turn around and reclaim the ball while the crowd laughed.

Despite my slipup, Federer held for 6-5. In Clement’s next service game, Federer asked for a ball from another ballboy. It looked like he was going to hit it to the other side, but instead he quickly slapped it directly at my feet. Somehow I managed to catch it on a short hop and roll it to a ballboy on Clement’s end. I’m still wondering if Federer was testing me.

Clement won the final seven points of the second set tiebreaker to even the match, but Federer proved too strong in the third set, winning it 6-0. He wouldn’t lose another set the entire tournament. Look for part two in the April 13 edition of The Beacon.
BELANGER, from page 12

selves out of it, most have trouble relying on their own ability instead of reassuring themselves that they are capable of getting out of the inning.

“I breathe a lot and do a lot of breathing exercises,” Belanger said. “I tell myself to stay calm and remind myself that I have been here before and that I have been able to get myself out of the situation.”

Eastman added, “As a freshman, to see the way that she handles situations just gives me confidence.”

Even though it may seem as if she is invincible on the outside as she steps onto the field, Belanger can’t help but feel a little uneasy.

“I’m always nervous,” Belanger said.

“But I try to pump myself up. A lot of times I’ll sing a song in my head and it helps.”

For some it may seem that the redshirt freshman has accomplished about as much as many pitchers will ever accomplish. However, Sarah Belanger has other ideas in mind and feels that it doesn’t stop here.

“I am always trying to become a more dominating university pitcher,” Belanger said.

“She has the heart and is very physical,” Gwydir added. “She really elevates this team.”

While it seems that Sarah Belanger has quite some weight on her shoulders, she certainly continues to play as if it were to her advantage.

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Redshirt freshman recovers from injury to help lead team

BY JOSHUA REY
Staff Writer

Part one of a two-part series.

I went to Key Biscayne for my Spring Break. It’s a six-year tradition.

For two weeks and no pay, I ran myself ragged in the South Florida sun, putting in nearly 100 hours of work.

Driving back through University Park on April 3, all I had to show for myself was a worn-out Fila uniform and five classes worth of unfinished homework.

But I wouldn’t have missed it for the world. I was a ballboy for the NASDAQ-100 Open tennis tournament.

To the audience our task looks simple: Six volunteers spread out along the backdrops and at the net trying to keep six tennis balls off the court and on the serving player’s side.

In reality, the job is much more complex. Sharing a tennis court with the top professionals in the world can get interesting, even in the tournament’s early stages.

March 20 marked the beginning of the two-day qualifying competition in which lower-ranked players seek entry into the main draw and ballpeople get acquainted with being unappreciated.

2004 Olympic silver medalist Mardy Fish took on fast-rising Frenchman Julien Benneteau in a much-anticipated match. After being broken to lose the first set, Benneteau took a tennis ball from his pocket and blasted it with all his might. The ball ricocheted off the umpire’s chair, leaving a large neon-green mark and scaring the daylight out of Alejandro, a fellow ballboy who was positioned next to the chair.

For nearly impaling Alejandro, Benneteau received only a warning. Go figure. Ballpeople are supposed to be impartial, but we were pretty happy when Fish won 7-5, 6-3.

Tennis history was made two days later, when the Hawk-Eye challenge system debuted on Stadium Court. I was at the backdrop when American James Jackson began the second set of her match against Ashley Harkleroad with the first challenge ever.

Jackson was wrong and fading fast. After receiving a medical timeout in the third set, she nearly served to the wrong side of the court. Facing match point at 2-5, Jackson miraculously won five straight games, ushering in the 2006 NASDAQ with a 7-5, 6-7(3), 7-5 win in three hours and eight minutes.

I had my hands full March 22.

NICE FOREHAND: Roger Federer returns a shot from opponent Tommy Haas in their March 27 match at the NASDAQ-100.

BY JANELLE PALENZUELA
Contributing Writer

Redshirt freshman Sarah Belanger has been named Sun Belt Conference Pitcher of the Week twice this season.

In Canada, it is not common for pitchers to receive scholarships to play for a university in the United States. Perhaps it was a perfect game against Guatemala in the 2004 World University Softball Championship, or a couple of MVP’s, that made Belanger the exception.

So when she decided she was going to play at FIU, she received nothing but support.

“My dad and all of my coaches back at home always helped me out [in becoming a better player] and supported me,” Belanger said.

But as always, there were a couple of things that Belanger had to get used to upon arriving at FIU.

“It was a little hard to adjust when I first got here,” Belanger said. “It’s a bit of a different ball, yet better competition. But the team gets along really well and JP [senior catcher Jennifer Powell] helps me out a lot.”

One thing that Belanger is familiar with is adjusting herself to some of the toughest situations a pitcher could face, such as a full count with two outs and runners in scoring position.

Although many pitchers get themselfs out of such situations, Belanger has struggled when it comes down to making tough, physical plays. However, that is not something that prevents her from playing hard.

“At the beginning, I was a lot more cautious than what I am now,” Belanger said. “But now I’m not worried at all about my knee.”

Head coach Kim Gwydir added, “She was supposed to have great year last year and it was cut short.”

One of the main things needed this year is the skill of an ace pitcher and Belanger has the potential to become that.

“She came in this year without any experience,” Gwydir said. “She is very capable of becoming a dominating pitcher.”

“She has a certain leadership that gives the team the confidence that it needs to have,” pitcher Penny Eastman said.

Unfortunately, Belanger’s season was cut short due to a knee injury that would require surgery. For some athletes, such an injury would make them think twice when it comes down to making tough, physical plays. However, that is not something that prevents her from playing hard.

In 109 innings pitched as of April 4, Belanger leads the team with a 2.50 ERA. Her 112 strikeouts are supposed to be impartial, but we were pretty happy when Fish won 7-5, 6-3.

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