Public Safety uses faulty radio system

NAHORE GONZALEZ  Staff Writer

Officer Alex Silva was working at a high school football game at the FIU Stadium when a fight broke out. He called for back-up on his new radio as he restrained one of the girls, who became violent. He received no response.

The struggle continued, and in seconds Silva was cornered by six people who ordered him to let the girl go. He called for back-up again and tried to press the emergency button on his new radio, but there was no response. As they inched in, the group demanded he let the girl go a second time. After four failed calls for help, Silva decided to release the girl and watched her disappear into the crowd.

“True, no officer was injured, but due to the bad radio communication I did not get help until after the fact,” wrote Silva in a correspondence through the FIU webmail to his supervisor requesting an internal investigation of the Sept. 9 incident. He also requested the e-mail be sent “up the chain of command.”

Since June, the Department of Public Safety has been dealing with a faulty new radio communications system. New equipment was purchased from Motorola to make the conversion from the State of Florida system the department had previously used.

“Before we were on the state radio system, but then they changed vendors. If we were to continue with it, we would have had to purchase new equipment, but we also had pockets on both campuses where we had trouble with communication,” said Captain Michael Wright, interim chief from February to August 2005, on the need for conversion.

According to various sources, since the change took place, radio communication has been “unreliable” at both the University Park and Biscayne Bay campuses.

“You could be standing next to another officer, or even the dispatcher, and the transmission wouldn’t work. And the times I’ve been at [BBC] the radios were worse than at [UP] – you couldn’t hear any transmission whatsoever,” said Officer Frank Torres.

Chief Bill King said that “glitches” do exist in the new system, but that this is not uncommon.

There have been a couple of incidents where officers didn’t feel their radio transmission was heard in a timely fashion and the quality of transmission sometimes is garbled,” King said. “But I’ve been involved in three conversions of radio systems in the past and this one hasn’t been too different.”

While both Wright and King said that officers’ safety has not been compromised, others in the department disagree. In his letter, Silva said that problems with the radios “are placing the University and its occupants at risk.”

Other officers have echoed similar concerns in dozens of e-mails and memos to supervisors that were shown to The Beacon. In an Oct. 3 FIU e-mail titled “Problems with New Radio System,” Sergeant Alfredo Torres wrote: “This problem just seems to get worse and worse and we cannot keep ignoring it. I hope and pray that one of us does not have to pay the ultimate price in order to solve this problem.” Among the e-mail’s recipients were Wright and King. Even as early as June 15, Sergeant Douglas Ochipa, the day shift supervisor at UP, warned in an e-mail to Police Communications Manager Janene Hills that the radio situation was “becoming a major officer safety issue.”

In early 2005, Wright was charged with the task of leading the department’s transition. At the time, the department had three options: staying with the changing state system; switching to Police Communications Manager Janene Hills that the radio situation was “becoming a major officer safety issue.”

Police, page 4

POLICE, page 4

THE FINAL GOODBYE

THE LONG WALK: Surrounded by his players, FIU football's first head coach Don Strock waves in appreciation to the crowd as he walks off the field at the cage for the last time. See SPORTS, PAGE 13.

SGA offers scholarship through video competition

JOSEPHINE BRILLANTE  Contributing Writer

While helping organize FIU’s First Film Festival, which will take place in March, Jennifer Ruiz, Student Government Association representative-at-large, thought it would be good to give students an opportunity to have a bigger role in it.

After learning SGA’s intentions of doing a promotional video, Ruiz decided that allowing students to compete to do the film would be a good opportunity for students to experiment through creative expression.

“I started to think that it would be a nice idea to open it up to the students since the film festival is coming up soon,” Ruiz said.

SGA’s promotional video competition is open to all students, and applications are to be submitted to the SGA office, located in the Graham Center room 211, no later than Jan. 18, 2007 by 5 p.m.

Students with artistic drive and an inclination towards creative freedom are encouraged to participate in this unique competition, hosted at FIU for the first time.

The film must be a minimum of three minutes, and a maximum of four minutes long. SGA is specifically looking for ideas that are original, fresh and exciting.

According to Ruiz, the promotional film will be in joint association with FIU’s First Film Festival and the winner of the competition will have their debut screening at the film festival in March 2007.

Also, the winning applicant will have their film broadcasted for all incoming freshmen at orientations and first year experience classes for the next year.

On top of that, the winner will also receive a $500 scholarship.

Guidelines for the film include insight into the who, what, where and how of SGA, which can be obtained through SGA’s weekly house meetings and participation in SGA events.

“The idea is that more people will know exactly who we are, what we do, and how they can get involved with SGA,” Ruiz said.

Applicants are asked to submit a written description of how the short film would be outlined, with inclusive details such as music, scenes and cinematography.

From the written applications, three finalists will be notified by Jan. 26, chosen based on their innovative vision, and will receive further instruction regarding film production at that time.

Students can use their own film equipment, but if they don’t have any, FIU does have supplies available.

“We’ve been sending applications to the department of theatre and they’re also available at the SGA office,” said Ruiz. “Any student can participate.”

For further questions contact Jennifer Ruiz or Jean Roseme, Marketing Coordinator with SGA, at (305) 348-2121.
C. JOEL MARINO
Editor in Chief

Alfonso “Alfi e” Leon, president of the Student Government Council at University Park, sat down with The Beacon to discuss the recent controversy surrounding the decision to switch to a Monday/Wednesday/Friday class schedule for Fall 2007.

Q: Can you let me know a little bit about the history of the decision to switch to a Monday/Wednesday/Friday schedule? It’s something that has been happening for the last 15 years … Now, the big push for M/W/F came about three years ago.

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability surveys the utilization of different institutions across the state, and one thing that they noticed is that FIU is drastically not using our classroom space to its highest capability.

That’s when this became an issue, when legislators were pretty much asking FIU that they wanted to increase our [Public Education Capital Outlay] funding, but that’s not possible if we don’t use our space to the maximum that we can … So two years ago, our legislative body was telling FIU that we need to start incorporating a M/W/F schedule into our classes, and this was not a joke, since we even had [Gov. Jeb Bush] telling us this.

There’s been legislation trying to be passed to show that if you’re not using your percentage to the highest that you can, you won’t receive funding.

Thank God that didn’t occur, but now we know that we need to start making the right moves to start using our space correctly so we can continue garnering funding for the University.

Q: So pretty much the schedule change is an issue of space utilization? Nothing else?

The state of Florida is telling us that we’re the worst in the state in using space. Currently, we use all the classes we have 42 percent of the time … It’s strictly a funding matter because, if we don’t receive PECO funding we can’t build new buildings where we can house new students. We have students right now that complain about their classes as it is because their rooms don’t fit the standards of that student or because they’re not capable or ready to handle PowerPoint presentations … [students] can’t have the full spectrum of what they’d like to be doing in the classroom because we need to have outside resources brought in, and that’s unfortunate because other universities have state-of-the-art facilities for their classrooms and we don’t, and we’re a university with one of the highest enrollments, and the more we grow, the more build-

POLICE, page 4
Late breakfasts offered during finals week

**BEN F. BADGER JR.**
**Staff Writer**

It's that time of year again when the students at FIU are up until late hours of the night studying for their final exams. Also around this time of year the Student Government Association throws an event called Cram Jam to alleviate the stress caused by final examinations, and this year is no exception.

Cram Jam is an annual event where students who stay up late to study are given free breakfast, drinks, and giveaways, and are encouraged to take a study-break while listening to music and hanging out at the Graham Center.

This year's Cram Jam will take place Dec. 11 and 12 from 11:45 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. in the GC Pit. The Fresh Food Company will provide food for the event.

The goal of Cram Jam, according to SGA President Alfonso “Allie” Leon, is to reward students who study all year long and dedicate themselves to their academics.

"Its our way of telling students who lost their IDs for the event. This year the Student Government Administration is going to have the largest selection of giveaways including Bustello items, Rock Energy Drinks, and perhaps one of the most useful of the free give-aways, free Blue Books, said Sabatier.

"That's a great incentive for me to go," said senior Chris Perez. "Cram Jam was the way to go."

All students who study all year and are encouraged to participate, but in order to enter the Fresh Food Company for the all you can eat midnight breakfast, they must have their student ID.

Anticipating the possibility that some students won't be carrying their IDs with them, the Panther ID office will be open selling duplicate ID cards for only $5. The normal cost of duplicate IDs is $15, so this will also be a good opportunity for those students who lost their IDs to get a new one.

For the event, the goal of Cram Jam, according to SGA President Alfonso “Allie” Leon, is to reward students who study all year long and dedicate themselves to their academics.

"Its our way of telling students we support because of the fact that we notice that if the university didn't move in this direction, we'd lose funding.

And that was the biggest issue that we had. It was something that was approved by the past Student Government administration.

Q: What're some of the things that past Student Governments have done in regards to this issue?

Q: You mentioned the benefits that this new schedule would bring to the University. What are some of the problems?

Q: Are you a part of the Implementation Committee?

We haven't discussed all the benefits, but the drawbacks that could occur due to this M/W/F scheduling, we are aware that it's going to cause some student groups, especially the upper classmen who might be taking 1000 or 2000 level course ... More important than anything is the lack of student knowledge on the issue, that's the biggest drawback.

Even Student Government, we didn't know what was going to be occurring until it was approved by Interim Provost Ronald Berkman.

We don't know the entire drawbacks to the new schedule, because, until it's implemented or until we start running test ideas on how it's going to work, we'll see the drawbacks.

That's why an Implementation Committee was made.

Leon, page 2

**Drawbacks to schedule changes, Leon says**
Wright was also concerned about numerous dead spots that were discovered during a test of the county system in areas like the Graham Center and Primera Casa in UP, and the Wolfe University PBA, wrote a letter to University President Modesto A. Maigua asking that the University reconsider the county radios.

“There’s no reason why FIU couldn’t have done that and now we think it’s putting officers’ lives at risk,” Axelrod told The Beacon.

Subsequent estimates show that purchasing 54 radios with the county system would have cost $101,438, according to documents provided to Wright. To date, estimates provided by Scott and Leidy Cabrera, accountants for Public Safety, show that $157,438 has been spent on the radio system. Aside from the initial $85,745 investment on 56 Motorola radios and five mobiles, Public Safety contracted Code 3 Technology to install new repeaters and make other enhancements.

Rosa Jones, vice president of student affairs and undergraduate education, who currently oversees Public Safety, said in an interview with The Beacon that the radio situation is a “high priority” for her.

“It is at the top of my list, and we have contracted with the company to make the process of doing some retrofitting,” Jones said.

Both King and Wright acknowledged that Code 3 Technology, which was hired in July, is yet to bring the communications system to the desired level. As a result, Public Safety is in the process of consulting other companies.

On Dec. 6, Rapid Wireless of Florida was scheduled to visit both campuses to “audit the system and make recommendations.”

“If need be Code 3 will be replaced by whoever will get us there first,” Wright said.

“We are really close, and at this point we have all the software and equipment to do the job. One small interoperability... we should have things going through the FIU graduation [Dec. 18],”

In a Dec. 4 e-mail sent out on the FIU webmail to his staff, King announced that the department is "hearing the final realization of the work on the radio system."

However, some officers have doubts.

“The officers are frustrated because they want to go with what Miami-Dade county... not back to our old system from almost thirty years ago,” Ochipa said. “We keep hearing the same story that it’s getting fixed, but we’re on the same boat we were five months ago.”

Perez was unavailable for comment.

A screenwriter and author, Wakefield is best known for his 1970 novel, Going All The Way, which was adapted to the screen in 1997 and starring Jeremy Davies and Ben Affleck. That novel was honored with a forward by Kurt Vonnegut, and apparently, is not his only hit. His 1992 memoir, New York in the Fifties, deals with the city and time that once graced the souls of Allen Ginsberg, William Buckley and C. Wright Mills, who were all personal acquaintances of the author.

Wakefield, once a devout Christian, now writes about the silence of Christians and Catholics in the wake of a bloody war in Iraq and what he sees as the Patriot Act’s disregard for civil rights.

The ongoing debate over faith and politics has infiltrated churches and homes across the country, many times separating friends and families. Wakefield’s book is a timely one.

MikaelaLoue, a senior studying television production, remembers when Mayor Carlos Alvarez visited her Church, where he campaigned and had the pastor’s full support.

“The leadership of the church shouldn’t use the pulpit for politics, because the pastor is a pastor of all political parties,” she said. “It’s not fair to ostracize another party.”

Also a Christian, senior Ana Sanchez believes that Christianity has little to do with party affiliation.

“Jesus was neither Republican nor Democrat. I think it’s unfortunate that the Republican party manipulated the Christian community by appealing to their emotions and morals,” Sanchez said.

Wakefield was once a journalist before he was a paperback author and scriptwriter, receiving a Neiman Fellowship in Journalism at Harvard University.

Since then, he has written for The Nation Magazine and The Atlantic Monthly. He currently teaches fiction and non-fiction writing.

The Book TV Bus, which has been on a non-stop tour of the country since September 2005, is currently on tour throughout Florida.
New class explores Middle East media

AGUSTINA PRIGOSHIN Contributing Writer

A new class this Spring will offer students a chance to communicate with journalists in the Middle East to discuss social and political issues surrounding the media.

Middle East Media and Coverage is an interdisciplinary course and part of the Middle East Certificate program offered through the College of Arts and Sciences for both degree and non-degree seeking students.

“The Middle East is very important these days,” said Mario Diament, course professor.

“There’s a lot of ignorance with press operations, which is why we hope to analyze it and the government’s manipulation over it,” said Reisner.

Students will be expected to interact with the reporters to listen and learn about the political processes of each country through journalism.

The approach of the class, however, is not the typical lecture style. According to the course professor to be expected to teach with interviews through editors and reporters working abroad at newspapers in the region.

Students will speak to professional journalists via speakerphone during class time, and spend time studying the role of each country within the Middle East.

“Most of the students are non-Jewish,” said Neil Reisner and Diament, though born in Argentine and spent one year as a phone correspondent for a group of Argentine magazines covering both Israel and Egypt.

Students will be expected to write a paper and present their findings on its politics and media to the class.

According to Diament, they plan that social and political issues relating to the press will be an essential aspect to students’ understandings of the region.

Reisner also believes that knowledge of the region before the interviews will let students grasp issues better when discussing with the professionals.

“Students will have to research each country before speaking to the journalists. We will also be looking at different interest groups to hear their opinions about the conflicts in the region,” he said.

The class will be shown documentaries on the Middle East. Afterwards, they will research, share their findings and conduct interviews with reporters for Al Jazeera, Al Hurret (an Israeli publication), The Daily Star in Lebanon and other news organizations.

“The class will be taught in a very unique way,” Reisner said.

“I’m interested in how the media performs and works, how it covers conflicts and its influence on society,” explained Diament.

Muhammad Malik, a senior double majoring in international relations and anthropology, plans on taking the class.

“Not many Middle East classes focus on the entire region,” Malik said. “They mainly focus on one or two countries, which is why this class would be different.”

Reisner and Diament will be teaching the class Tuesday evenings from 5 p.m. through 7:30 p.m. According to Reisner, the time difference between the class and the reporters shouldn’t be a problem.

“They will be very excited to talk to us,” Reisner said.

An important aspect to many Arab and Muslim Americans, Reisner emphasized that biases will be left out of the class.

HOLIDAY CHEER: Sophomore Odantis Dhlaisi hangs Christmas ornaments Dec. 1 in Panther Square. Students and Wolfe University Center employees joined to decorate the tree.

Center educates on Sephardic Judaism

ALEXANDRA MCANARNEY Contributing Writer

The Jewish community has a presence in the North Miami area. There are kosher delicatessens such as Shalom Haifa near Aventura, and Jewish synagogues such as the Syrian Safra Synagogue.

“North Miami has the largest concentration of [Sephardic/Oriental] Jews, that is why the program is here,” said professor Zivan Zohar, director and president of the Navon Program for the Study of Sephardic and Oriental Jewry.

“The class will be taught in a very unique way,” Zohar said.

Historically, the word “Sephardim” is a Jew who of Spanish descent. In 1492, the Jews were forced to leave Spain. All of the Jews were either expelled from Spain or converted to Christianity under the rule of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castille. Those who did not convert or leave remained secretly Jewish.

These Jews who still practiced their religion were called marranos or pigs; the Jews who did not convert called themselves amusnoss, which meant that they were forced to live a life that was false.

Those who fled Spain migrated to the Ottoman Empire or North Africa, and wherever they went, they mixed with the Jewish community that was there, Zohar said.

Zohar said more could be done in order to educate people about the Jewish community and the availability of classes on Judaism at FIU.

“We need more Jewish students, more demand. There are 2,000 to 3,000 Jewish students in FIU and we usually get non-Jews in the classroom. If students came in and demanded their needs, there would be more things offered,” Zohar said.

Informing students and doing research about Sephardic Jewry is what the center is geared towards.

“His center is invested in the research of Sephardic (and Oriental) aspects of Jewish culture, the world view and to teach a part of heritage,” Zohar said.

“We’re here to educate Jews and Non-Jews,” Zohar said.

Many FIU students, such as junior Laura Jimenez, did not know much about Judaism, let alone that there even was a Sephardic and Oriental Jewry Center at FIU.

“I really don’t know much about Jewish culture,” Jimenez said.

“They’re part of the community here, and it’s important to know about them. I know about the Holocaust, and how they were marked by [tattoos], and their persecution, but I don’t really know about the history,” Jimenez said.

In order to make an impact at BBC, the Center has been holding meetings since Oct. 19. A movie is shown every meeting, followed by a discussion about the content. All the movies relate to Sephardic and Oriental Jewry.

The next meeting and film, Turn Left at the End of the World, will be shown Jan. 18 at 7 p.m. in the Wolfe University Center’s Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre. Those who attend must either show a Panther ID or give a $5 donation.

Junior Rebecca Rubi, who is Jewish, was glad that the Center is doing something to raise awareness.

“My family and I aren’t too traditional. It’s important to know you’re heritage, though. I think more should be done to teach us about history,” Rubi said.
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College of Engineering & Computing
Iraqi government silences press

When the United States went to war with Iraq, our president told us that he was because Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. When we did not find any WMDs, he told us that it was good enough that Iraqis experience democracy. But what democracy was he referring to? We could assume that by “democracy,” he meant the kind of government we are used to here in America. Essential to such an idea of democracy is the existence of a free press.

On Oct. 16, Iraq’s parliament recommended to Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki that Azzaman, Iraq’s most prominent newspaper, and Al-Sharqiya, its affiliated TV network, should be closed down because allegations that they were interfering with the country’s political process by stirring up undue controversy were not true.

On Oct. 4, the Iraqi parliament passed legislation to divide the country along sectarian lines. The parliament felt that such criticism was undermining its efforts by causing disagreement among the population, and on Nov. 28, the parliament barred access to all media from its chambers. In an official statement, a parliament spokesman justified the actions saying that the media shut-out “was part of efforts... to prevent media coverage that was deemed to inflame conflicts.”

“Our president promised a democracy for Iraq, but he has failed to deliver it. At best, he has only set the outward appearance of a democracy... A government that does not allow dissenting opinions to be heard cannot function as a democracy. This demonstrates, first, that U.S. military presence may have gotten rid of the dictator, but it has failed to eliminate the authoritarian attitudes symptomatic of a dictatorship.

Second, American military and political leaders have not done anything to ensure the presence of a free press. They have not even commented on it. Were it not for reports from European news agencies like Reuters, this incident would have gone unnoticed by the Americans.

Most disturbing, however, is that American leadership in Iraq is not just silently standing by, allowing the crime to happen. Through the National Security Council, it has approved and supported the parliament’s request for censorship.

Our president promised a democracy for Iraq, but he has failed to deliver it. At best, he has only set the outward appearance of a democracy – an elected, organized government – but it lacks the principles that are at the heart of any democracy, its essential freedoms. So again, the question still stands – why is it that we went to war with Iraq?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Campus dogs should evoke sympathy, not fear

Unlike the two viewpoints presented in your article, I am neither fearful nor “comforted” by the presence of stray dogs on campus; rather, as the owner of a rescued dog, saddened and angry that so little of effect is being done to protect the health of the campus and all who live, work and study here - including the wildlife.

The assertion that the dogs are “big and scary” should certainly not overshadow the fact that they need our help. Perhaps if, in the words of a student interviewed, the wild dogs were “pretty poosles,” your article would be less sensationalist and the actions of the University safety officials more sympathetic and effective, in short, someone would see these animals as deserving of humane treatment, and something might actually get done.

If I were living on the scraps of food people drop and the occasional pile of dog food left by unknown “saboteurs”, I may be inclined to swallow up the occasional overprivileged fuzz ball of a faculty member, too.

Kristyn DeRosa
Junior
Art History Major

Skimping on police radios leaves officers in silence

On Nov. 2, The Beacon published a news article and an editorial outlining the shortage of police officers on campus. In the article, we reported that Public Safety employs only 35 officers to patrol all FIU campuses and that only three are on duty at the University Park campus at any given time.

In the editorial, we concluded that 35 officers could not humanly ensure the safety of more than 37,000 students.

FIU’s understaffed and overburdened police force has been unable to stem a rash of vehicle break-ins that has developed at University Park over the past semester.

Just over a year ago, Public Safety replaced its 30-year-old radio communications system. The replacement was a dud; the department’s state-of-the-art replacement doesn’t work properly.

Now, the three officers patrolling campus can’t even talk radio to another and communicate to work together.

What’s most frustrating is that this could have easily been avoided. The cause, it seems, is that Public Safety has a communication problem of its own.

When shopping around for a new radio system in early 2005, Captain Michael Wright, interim police chief at the time, held a meeting to discuss options with department members.

In the end, Wright acted on the recommendation of its own technology committee to purchase a Motorola system that is now up and running.

Accounts from some present at the meeting suggest that most members in attendance favored adopting the radio system used by Miami-Dade County. In the end, Wright acted without consensus to purchase the Motorola system that is now in use.

Although Public Safety has a permanent technology committee, the committee was not included in this decision. A member of the committee acknowledged that Wright consulted with some committee members individually, though he ultimately made the decision on his own.

In large part, the purchases decision came down to money: the existing system cost $85,745, while the county system would have cost just over $100,000.

To make matters worse, rather than dealing with the faulty system by returning it and getting one that works, Public Safety has spent the past year trying to patch up the malfunctioning system by throwing money at it.

According to Public Safety accountants, the department has spent more than $60,000 just trying to get its brand-new radios to work.

Of course, our grandparents could have warned them about that: as a Spanish saying wisely says, “lo barato sale caro.” Buying on the cheap is usually a bad investment.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you work during winter break?

• No, I like to enjoy my time off.
• Yes, without school I can work full time.
• Yes, but I try not to work as much.

Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor must be dropped off at GC 210 at University Park, WUC 124 at the Biscayne Bay Campus or sent to beaconopinion@yahoo.com. Letters must be no more than 300 words. Include 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.
From spies to a staggering increase in enrollment; from the silver anniversary of our University’s president to an unexpected football brawl, FIU has made both local and national headlines this year more than any time in its short history.

As FIU’s student-run newspaper, The Beacon has covered all the news, scandals, triumphs and joys this year.

However, some readers may have noticed certain changes that have taken place in the paper during this particular term.

Through The Beacon has always strived to be a major information source for the University Park and the Biscayne Bay Campus, our stories have shifted from simple events coverage to news with a bigger mission; taking on the role of the students’ voice.

We’ve published a variety of pieces on our student government – some positive, some negative – in an effort to hold elected officials accountable for their actions, one of the main purposes of any newspaper.

Our coverage of administrative affairs has also increased since it’s our belief that students should be aware of decisions made by our University leaders – after all, it’s the financial implications of those decisions that have far beyond their educational impact.

The Life! section has followed the stories of FIU students learning our craft, as year progresses you’ll be met with a smile, an answer and, if we can’t do it without your help and support.

For the upcoming year, I invite you, our readers, to stop by either our UP office at the Graham Center 210 or our office at the Graham Center 210, to see exactly what it takes to produce a paper.

My staff and I will do our best to cover whatever the new year will bring FIU. However, we can’t do it without your help and support.

For the upcoming year, I invite readers to stop by either our UP office at the Graham Center 210 or BBC at the Wolfe University Center 124 on Tuesdays and Fridays, our most productive days, to see exactly what it takes to produce a paper.

We work hard to produce the paper you’re now holding in your hands, but this isn’t over yet. Whether you consume it on a computer or through our print edition, to receive construction funds from the state.

Three-day class schedule schedule is in effect in order to receive construction funds from the state.
Procrastination, lack of sleep mark last week of semester

For students like senior Rajiv Kirpalani, cramming is essential to getting through your last class when you haven’t attended since your first.

“It’s studying eight hours before a final exam when I haven’t touched the text all semester,” he said.

Junior Richard Lopez has a similar description of finals week.

“[Finals week] is grabbing your friends’ notes the night before the test and waking up late before trying to grasp eight months of material in 30 minutes before the exam,” Lopez said.

The reasons behind students’ procrastination can vary greatly. Some do it to avoid the work, such as Kirpalani, while others simply find it hard to find the time before waiting until the last minute.

“When I procrastinate, I do anything from cleaning my room to using Instant Messenger – stuff just comes up,” he said. “Once I have nothing else to do is when I sit down and work.”

“I do it because I have a hectic life,” freshman Kassandra Nuñez said.

Although it’s common for students to have procrastinated at least once with positive results, such as in Kirpalani’s case, others affirm that the practice may have its drawbacks.

Center for Leadership and Service Coordinator and graduate student Angel Garcia helps coordinate seminars and workshops that deal with the topic of time management and other organizational skills. He acknowledges the negative effects of delaying important tasks.

“One of the things procrastination impacts is a person’s stress level. Sometimes, we can get away with procrastinating a task, but eventually it can become an issue because the job may not come out as successful as it could have been,” Garcia said.

Some students like Nuñez admit that the practice has become a habit in college without serious repercussions. Post-graduation, however, can be a different story, according to Garcia.

“If you work for a big company and you’re working on a big project for them, procrastination could definitely impact your results. Employers will find out that everything was rushed by the quality of the work,” he said.

In addition, prolonged procrastination after leaving college can become counterproductive to higher education’s purpose: retaining what you’re learned, Garcia said.

“When you cram, you commit everything to short-term memory. You’re not learning, only memorizing. After a while, you’re going to forget everything you crammed,” Garcia said.

The act of cramming can lead to more severe consequences than merely forgetting information after an exam. Florence Cardinal, a sleep disorders researcher on the general interest website About.com, warns against staying up late at night to do last-minute studying because of the potential to develop sleep disorders.

“Too many nights of forced wakefulness can eventually lead to a case of full blown insomnia and other sleep abnormalities,” she said.

Of course, there are ways to curb this propensity to delay long-term projects. Lopez recommends keeping a schedule as a good start. “My advice to all who procrastinate is to get an agenda,” he said. “If you’re the type who loses your agenda – buy several.”

A continuous cycle of cramming for tests can be a symptom of having poor time management skills.

Procrastination is in essence a disorder, which both leads to and is caused by disorganization and anxiety, therefore creating an unmanageable cycle.

The following are ideas meant to keep in mind when organizing:

- Time management is life management.
- Make “To Do” Lists: Make tomorrow’s list at the end of today.
- Prioritize your tasks: Refuse to accomplish your second priority before you finish your first.
- When tackling a project, clear your workspace of everything except what you’re working on.
- Repetition leads to action: It takes 21 days for a behavior to become a habit (this applies for both good and bad habits).
- Get your own goal or you’ll always be working for another’s.
- Law of belief: there’s a positive relationship between how intensely you believe your goal is achievable and how rapidly your goal will manifest in your reality.
- Time management ensures you work smarter, not harder.

— Compiled by Alicia Bustamante with additional reporting by Charlie Grau
TIPS FOR LOW-STRESS STUDIES

LEONCIO ALVAREZ
Staff Writer

Yet another semester has come and gone and here you are one step closer to graduation ... you think. But just like past years, you are dreading finals and studying for them. Here are some tips to help you get through the end of the semester with minimal damage:

GO TO CRAM JAM
Free breakfast at midnight is always a plus – especially when you should be studying but all you can think about are scrambled eggs with cheese. Cram Jam might be the only event in which a large portion of students are expected to attend so make sure to get there early with your FIU ID close by to avoid a long wait.

GET COMFORTABLE
Make sure your spot is free of interruptions, distractions, has the perfect temperature for you and has a not-too-comfortable-chair. The last thing you need is to wake up an hour before your final with an eraser in your ear and the formula “y=mx+b” inked on your forehead.

TEACH TO LEARN
Do you have to digest a lot of information in a short period of time? Then teach your study guide to a friend or relative. You will find that explaining something to someone is always a good way of demonstrating what you’ve learned. Besides, your aunt probably admires Madame Marie Currie and would love to know that she was the first person ever to win two Nobel Prizes.

TAKE A BREAK
If your final is tomorrow and you haven’t even bought the book yet, chances are you’re going to fail. You might as well feel relaxed during your academic downfall.

Staying hydrated while studying is a good way to keep your mind leveled. It is impossible to be completely stress free during finals. One needs a little stress to stay alert and motivated. The key is keeping the stress levels low.

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IN THEATRES FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

NO ONE CAN OUTRUN THEIR DESTINY.
Abortion clinic defense entails eternal damnation

MY LIFE! EXPERIENCE

I never thought the priest who gave me my first communion when I was 8 years old would try to have me arrested 12 years later in front of an abortion clinic.

I was accused of being a “misguided animal that was feeding into a culture of death” by the priest, and when I replied with my beliefs, he hailed a nearby policeman to arrest me.

After the policeman left, the priest and other pro-lifers prayed and insulted me. When my mother called, the priest started yelling near the phone, “Your daughter is going to Hell!”

Every Saturday in October, I met with other pro-choice defenders at 6660 SW 117 Avenue, the site of the A Choice For Women abortion clinic. The clinic, once almost completely hidden by trees and a concrete gate, had turned into a battle site between Catholic fundamentalism and the secular right for women to choose.

After hearing that the Miami Clinic Access Project, who was serving as a buffer to the pro-life protesters, was requesting for the FIU Women’s Studies Department to recruit students to defend the right to have safe abortions, I joined the cause.

Our job was to use our blue “Keep Abortion Legal” rounders (signs) to help block the pro-life signs from obstructing the driveway and make sure every woman who had an appointment was safely escorted into and out of the clinic.

During the early morning before sunrise, the scene was quiet. Some of the pro-lifers would stand to one side of the driveway with their signs, while others would stand around a three-foot statue of the Virgin Mary and pray in hushed tones.

The pro-choicers and I would either be sitting in folding chairs on the other side of the driveway, helping to hold the “Keep Abortion Legal” banner or standing while holding the blue rounders displaying the same message.

Things would start to get heated after sunrise, however. Always outnumbering us in vast quantities, the pro-lifers made their way to our side of the driveway and began to repeatedly recite the Hail Mary until it became incoherent noise.

When cars passed, I made sure to look into the eyes of the woman in the car. I wanted to see her. I wanted her to know that by my sign and by my actions, I was there to help defend her choice.

Some of the women were in tears, and others smiled back. All of them looked scared.

We would leave when all of the women who came for procedures were safely escorted out of the clinic. The pro-lifers would stand, holding their signs and praying, but we wouldn’t. We had accomplished what we had set out to do.

Although I was damned, I knew that the only way I would go to Hell is if, according to Dante, I didn’t stand up for my beliefs. My choice to have an abortion is a decision that I feel people who impose their religious beliefs in this secular society should respect.

Once one group of people has their rights taken away, other groups will soon have their rights taken away. Abortion rights are the inalienable rights of every woman, and they represent the freedoms of everyone, regardless of their background.

And what’s so wrong with being a feminist fighting for equal rights, anyway?

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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

No one like you.
No place like this.
Men’s basketball loses game and uniforms at Wisconsin

RENALDO SMITH / Staff Writer

After a delayed flight, lost luggage and freezing climate changes, the men’s basketball team still had enough energy to give No. 12 Wisconsin a scare, before falling 79-63 Dec. 2 at the Kohl Center in Madison, Wis.

The Golden Panthers were forced to play in black and white uniforms and new tennis shoes (courtesy of the University of Wisconsin), and senior guard Johnen Villegas looked as comfortable as he has been all season in the new threads.

Villegas tied a season high with 24 points, making good on 7 of 10 attempts from beyond the arc – setting a new Kohl Center record.

The Golden Panthers jumped out to a 9-5 lead, thanks to early three-point hits from Villegas and senior center Facundo Giorgi. Despite that promising start, things began to go downhill for the Golden Panthers who shot a dismal 9-31 (29 percent) from the field in the first half.

The Badgers, on the other hand, had their offense in gear behind Kammon Taylor as they opened up a 13-point advantage and led by as many as 16 with just over five minutes remaining in the half.

Villegas poured in three baskets, and Villegas swished a 3-pointer to ignite a run that pulled the Golden Panthers within eleven at halftime intermission (38-27).

In the second half, Villegas poured in four 3-pointers, guard Chris Fuller attacked the hoop recklessly and Prejean continued to make his presence felt.

Despite all of those factors, the Badgers, who were equally as productive on their offensive end, still managed to pull away.

Prejean was the lone Golden Panther beside Villegas in double figures as he finished with 11 points and four boards in the tough loss. Fuller, who went scoreless in the first half, finished with 8 points on 4-7 shooting.

After swishing a trey early, Giorgi cooled off in a hurry. He finished the game with just 7 points on 2-10 shooting, and sophomore forward Alex Galindo struggled as well with just 2 points on 1-6 shooting from the field.

Gracesa, who made good on two three-pointer attempts late in the game, finished with 7 points. Strong shooter Elvis Lora went 0-3 from behind the arc on the night.

The Golden Panthers wrapped up their four-game road trip 1-3, with the lone win a 70-68 thriller against Kennesaw State Nov. 25.

The team will travel to Troy, Ala., to face the Trojans Dec. 17, before returning home for a three-game stretch of home games against Palm Beach Atlantic, Florida Atlantic and Middle Ten.

Men’s basketball loses game and uniforms at Wisconsin

SPORTS

THE DEFEATED SEASON

Football dropped by Trojans, finishes season 0-12

ANDONI GONZALEZ-RUA / Staff Writer

Coach Don Strock’s final game at the helm of FIU’s football program ended the same way the rest of the 2006 schedule did, with the Golden Panthers underscoring and falling for a 12th straight time.

The Golden Panthers (0-12, 0-6) ended the season winless as the offense could not carry the squad past Troy (7-5, 6-1), losing 26-13 Dec. 2 at FIU Stadium.

The visitors needed the win to clinch the 2006 Sun Belt Conference and a berth in the R&L Carriers New Orleans Bowl.

Special teams were the difference as Troy returned a punt for their first score just minutes into the second quarter. Troy punt returner Leonid McKelvin broke a 48-yard return for a touchdown following a Chris Patullo punt and the visitors took a 6-0 lead after a missed extra point.

“We need to give Troy credit,” Strock said. “They won the football game. We had opportunities again but we didn’t take advantage of them.”

The Golden Panthers bounced back and took the lead with 6:15 to play in the first half as they blocked a punt and safety Cory Fleming returned it 22 yards to put Strock’s men ahead 7-6.

The lead would last less than six minutes when, with 34 seconds to play in the second quarter, Troy quarterback Omar Haugabook found Andrew Davis from 8 yards away, putting the Trojans in the lead heading into the locker room 13-7.

“Early in the game we had breakdowns,” Strock said. “We should have been ahead in the game more than we were in the first quarter.”

Though FIU showed promise in the first half as they moved the football offensively, the second half belonged to Troy.

The Trojans outscored the Golden Panthers 13-6 the rest of the way as kicker Greg Whibbs, who beat the hosts last season with a field goal, connected from 29 and 36 yards. Toris Rutledge caught a 13-yard touchdown from Haugabook giving Troy their conference crown.

The game marked the end of the career of several important Golden Panthers both offensive and defensively.

In his final game, Strock found the same things that had plagued the team all season long.

“As far as the game was concerned it’s the same things: the kicking game and protection. Hopefully, through maturity they will begin to understand what we were trying to get across to them and they’ll get better in the future.”

FOOTBALL, page 14
FOOTBALL, page 13

Quarterback Josh Padrick, making his final start, equaled a program record he set himself last season against Troy with 51 pass attempts. The senior completed 30-of-51 passes for 225 yards a touchdown and an interception.

Classmate Chandler Williams, who led the Sun Belt Conference in receptions per game, managed 90 yards on 11 catches and had the lone FIU offensive score with 4:18 to play when he caught a Padrick pass from 5 yards.

The running game was once again non-existent for the hosts as the sophomore tandem of A’mod Ned and Julian Reams combined for 52 yards on 13 carries.

The defense, without leading tackler and captain Keyonvis Bouie for the second game in a row, was led by fellow senior Alexander Bostic III’s 11 tackles. Scott Bryant and Michael Dominguez filled the void left by Bouie and managed 10 and 9 tackles, respectively.

Defensive end Antwan Barnes recovered a fumble while fellow defensive linemen Roland Clarke and Justin West were both credited with sacks.

Haugabook led Troy, having his way both on the ground and through the air. The junior completed just 9-of-23 passes for 53 yards but had two touchdowns through the air to go along with 107 net yards on the ground. FIU came in giving up almost 145 yards per game on the ground and were torched by a Troy team that managed 263.

Kenny Cattouse looked sure to break over the 100 yard mark early in the third quarter but sat for much of the fourth, finishing the night with 91 yards rushing.

In his final FIU game, Stock was thankful for the opportunity to start a tradition at the University.

“I tried to coach to the best of my ability and I thank President [Modesto A.] Maidique and FIU for letting me start a football program here. Most people will never get that opportunity and I did. I am proud of what we have done.”

The Golden Panthers finished the season tied with Duke for the worst mark in Division I-A.

Athletic Director Pete Garcia and his department are currently in search of a coach to fill the void left by Stock’s resignation.
Shorinji Kempo club teaches students balance

XAVIER E. MARTINEZ  Contributing Writing

For thousands of years mankind has sought after complete harmony between the body and mind. Many Asian teachings constantly stress the importance of mental and physical balance. Through the FIU Shorinji Kempo Club, FIU students now have an opportunity to join in this spiritual pursuit.

Shorinji Kempo belives in balancing the spiritual aspects of the East with the material and scientific approach of the West,” said Sensei Eric Messersmith, who began the club at FIU two years ago and still continues to teach it.

In 1981, Sensei Eric received his 6th degree black belt in Shorinji Kempo. He holds the highest rank among all non-Japanese members in the United States. “We’re very lucky to have him here,” said brown belt Mike Kirgan.

Kirgan is an IT manager for the UTS department at FIU and has practiced Shorinji Kempo for two years. “Students should take advantage of someone ranked so high,” he said.

The FIU Shorinji Kempo Club has 12 members, including both students and faculty. In the past, all classes were held in vacant classrooms around campus. Recently, the club was given a designated home on the second floor of the newly built recreation center. The club is an affiliate of the World Shorinji Kempo Organization. According to their website, the WSKO has over 3,000 branches worldwide and approximately 1,500,000 registered members. FIU’s own Messersmith was once named director of the WSKO. His accomplishments in martial arts date back for decades.

In the 1974 All Japan Tournament, Messersmith won first place in the category of embu. The national competition was held in Tokyo and was attended by over 30,000 spectators and participants. Such martial arts superstars as Steven Segal competed in this tournament.

Embū is a choreographed series of fighting techniques preformed at full speed. It consists of two martial artists facing-off and demonstrating their knowledge of kicks, throws and pins on each other. Embū is the most common method of competition used in Shorinji Kempo.

Shorinji Kempo was created in Japan at the end of World War II. Directly translated into English, it stands for “the small woods temple law of fist.” Like many other martial arts, its origins can be traced to the Chinese Shaolin Temple styles. It’s one of the only Japanese martial arts that incorporate both striking and grappling techniques.

“Ideally, women should practice Shorinji Kempo because it teaches how to apply large amounts of damage with little strength,” said Sempai Clovis Tondo, who is not an FIU student. He has studied Shorinji Kempo for 30 years, and said he still enjoys training because he’s never stopped learning. All kenshi or students are asked to follow four basic philosophical teachings. The first states the answer lies in man, meaning one cannot blame society for his problems; everyone is responsible for their own being. The second teaching focuses on the unity of Ken (body) and Zen (mind). The third explains the importance of unity between strength and love. The final teaching states one should live half for himself and half for others, or people must always think of the welfare of others before they act. “Shorinji Kempo is not simply a technology of self defense, but a method of cultivating one’s character,” said the official WSKO website.

The average class session lasts approximately two hours. It consists of warm-up, basic technique, goho (thrusts and kicks), juho (throws and pinning), lecture and clean up. “I can do anything for exercise, but this isn’t boring and I can meet people,” said white belt William Zhu, who is not an FIU student. He will be testing for his next rank Dec. 17.

Practices are held on the second floor of the Recreation Center on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. and Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. There are no fees for FIU students to observe or participate, so everyone is welcome.

“If you are looking for a complete martial art, one with a philosophical base, then Shorinji Kempo is the perfect way to build a strong body and mind,” Sensei Eric said.

For further information please visit http://www.technicalsynergy.com/Shorinji/index.cfm.
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