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Students question Coke’s ethics

CHRISTOPHER NEVLAND AND MARIA CHERCOLES
Beacon Staff

The Student Government Association has decided to support a student campaign asking the University that it think twice before renewing its contract with Coca-Cola this April.

The campaign – which has been named “Killer Coke” – is spearheaded by the United Students Against Sweatshops. Representatives from the organization say that Coke hasn’t been able to answer certain questions related to its labor practices abroad.

The Coca-Cola Company currently has a 10-year exclusivity contract with FIU under the terms that the contract will open for revision and bidding after its fifth year, which will occur at the end of this semester.

According to USAS, if the contract is terminated in April, FIU will not have to pay any compensation to the company. This is why the campaign is racing against time.

The club alleges that the company has been using more than its fair share of water in India, violating the country’s restrictions on how much can be used. They also say that the company has unfair labor practices in Turkey and the organization even alleges that Coke has hired paramilitary troops in Colombia to murder and scare union leaders.

USAS first presented its case to SGA two weeks ago, and Alfonso “Alfi e” Leon, president of the Student Government Council at University Park, agreed to support the club.

USAS member Laura Garcia then gave a presentation at the council’s weekly meeting Feb. 21 and asked council members to volunteer and help conduct an extensive investigation on the company’s practices that will later be presented to University officials.

“Why the reason we ask SGA for support is because you are elected representatives and the University hears your concerns. It is easier for you to reach high officials [than for the average student],” Garcia said at the meeting.

At the end of the presentation, four SGA members agreed to volunteer in the newly formed committee. However, they preferred to remain anonymous.

According to Pablo Avendano, USAS president, the completed report will be presented to the Faculty Senate.

“FIU does not have the time or the money to conduct this report. Other universities even sent people to India to investigate coke’s operations. Since FIU can’t do this, we are asking students to help us conduct the investigation,” Garcia said.

As part of the new committee’s efforts, Leon and Camilo Silva, president of the Student Government Council at the Biscayne Bay Campus, signed and sent a letter to the company’s headquarters, located in Atlanta, Ga. Feb. 21.

The letter invites Coke to send a representative to a public forum at FIU and answer questions on the student’s allegations before the contract opens for revision. The letter also asks that the forum take place sometime in March, preferably March 13 or 14. Leon

ELECTIONS date change unconstitutional

MARIA CHERCOLES
Asst. News Director

The Student Government Council at University Park recently moved the date of its annual election without properly notifying students, a decision that, though logistically convenient, violates the student government’s constitution.

The constitution, effective January 2007, dictates under article VII that the annual elections “will be held for two (2) days of the second week following Spring Break,” usually the third week of March.

This means the elections should be taking place April 4 and 5, the second week after Spring Break.

However, there has been a change in the date: this year’s elections will be held April 10 and 11, the third week after Spring Break.

Charlie Andrews, director of Campus Life, said that he specifically requested the postponement because the Campus Life staff will be attending a conference in Orlando during the original election dates. This staff supervises the election polls every year.

“We just didn’t see [moving the elections] as being such a major thing,” Andrews said.

“We thought that most of the student body wouldn’t notice the change.”

Kathryn Cubbon, a member of SGC-UP’s judicial board, agreed with Andrews.

“Students don’t really care about when the elections are held,” Cubbon said.

However, according to professor of law Elizabeth Price Foley, who specializes in constitutional law, that is not the main issue.

“The two main things to look at are due process and opportunity to be heard,” she said.

Whether or not they think students really care, changing the election date without a proper notice, election, or public hearing approved to move the elections.

When asked about not informing students about the change, Andrews acknowledged that there hasn’t been any public hearing, but added that he did tell the students “most likely to run on the elections or to vote,” and that they did not have a problem with the change.

Leon said that in fact, there was a University-wide council meeting in which the issue was brought up and no one raised concerns, yet he couldn’t specify the date of the meeting.

Judene Tulloch, a member of the elections board, did not mention the University council meeting, but said that the decision was in fact announced during an SGA general meeting, and that this sufficed the requirement to make a public announcement.

“General meetings are considered public announcements. They are open to the public,” Tulloch said.

Despite the fact that the last meeting minutes posted on the SGA website date June 21, 2006, Tulloch referred to them as a “communication channel between SGA and the students.”

“We have minutes from every meeting. Anyone with questions is free to ask for them, but we can’t announce to our students every time we change a [letter from] lower case [to] upper,” Tulloch said.

We have minutes from every meeting. Anyone with questions is free to ask for them, but we can’t announce to our students every time we change a [letter from] lower case [to] upper.

Judene Tulloch, Student Government Council - UP Elections Board chair

THE GOOD BUBBLY: A presenter dressed as a Greek nymph serves champagne at the Publix Grand Tasting Village, one of the main attractions at this year’s Food Network Wine & Food Festival. The annual event is partially produced by FIU. More than $1 million were raised for the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management. SEE PAGE 2 FOR STORY, PAGE 6 FOR PHOTOS.
Memorization no longer a big part of new GRE

February has passed and graduation is now only two months away for many. However, recent changes to the Graduate Record Examinations, a requirement for all students considering post-graduate degrees, may make their academic lives somewhat more difficult.

The Educational Testing Services, which provides customized weather forecasting technology, announced Feb. 22 that they will jointly develop the RenaissanceRe Wall of Wind. The weather wall is being officially named after the RenaissanceRe Holdings Ltd., a global provider of reinsurance and insurance and a United States affiliate of WeatherPredict but has been dubbed the “WOW.”

The “WOW” will replicate Category 4 hurricane conditions with 130-140 mph winds and rain in a laboratory environment. Powered by a racecar engine with 502 horsepower, the RenaissanceRe Wall of Wind consists of six rotating propellers inside 7 ft round aluminum ducts. Wall-mounted and freestanding wind-driven rain gauges will measure vertical and horizontal rainfall intensities.

The WOW was tested on a home in Sweetwater several months ago and the testing facility is slated to be completed late this summer.

LOCAL
Gov. Crist tackles first “To do” list
Gov. Charlie Crist goes into his first regular legislative session with a long “To do” list and complexities he’s predecessor, Gov. Jeb Bush, didn’t face during his time in office.

Crist has promised to lower property tax rates, while homeowners insurance is still on his mind. Additionally, he has to pay for constitutionally required class size limits during the time when the budget has reached a plateau.

At the top of the list of the bills he wants passed is the anti-murder bill, which strives to keep violent felons who violate probation behind bars.

Crist also wants to give the state’s best teachers a 10 percent raise, make sure that there’s a paper trail for profiting railroad employees, provide customized weather forecasting technology and make the FLORIDA CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK.

The new Quantitative Reasoning section will focus less on geometry and more on real world problem solving. Cynics believe that attitude.

The educational testing services, which makes the GRE, announced Feb. 8 that the exam would change its format, a decision that might drive students to take the exam before planned, while they can take the old version.

To express themselves clearly and effectively

The new Quantitative Reasoning section will focus less on geometry and more on real world problem solving. Cynics believe that attitude. The new Quantitative Reasoning section will look something like this: “The total amount of Judy’s water bill for the last quarter of the year was $40.50. The bill consisted of a fixed charge of $13.50 plus a charge of $0.0755 per gallon for the water used in the quarter. How many gallons of water was Judy charged for the quarter?” The student will be asked to type in the answer on the test screen.

The analytical writing section has been renamed Critical Thinking and Analytical Writing. This section will test student’s ability to express themselves clearly and effectively while eliminating the possible use of memorized skills to respond to prompts.
ELECTIONS, page 1

Foley believes that notifying the student body of changes like this one, which could unduly affect students, is in itself necessary. According to Foley, it’s not a matter of whether the issue is that important or not, but rather how serious student government takes its constitution.

When compared to the U.S. constitution, the SGA constitution might not seem as formal or as important, yet it is the document by which the University’s student government will govern.

"If you’re going to take politics seriously, abide by the plain text," Foley said. "If our president violated the U.S. constitution under the same terms, it would obviously raise concerns. That’s just not a good signal.”

Another, more serious question is whether disregarding the constitution for this issue could lead to other, more serious infringements. “Leaders who disregard regulations are leaders you have to keep in mind, because they’ll do it again … It applies to any president,” Foley said.

The election date has never been moved before, said Andrews, who mentioned that the issue opened conversations about the strictness of the constitution, and whether there should be a clause allowing date changes in case of emergencies. Leon agreed, saying that a new SGA constitution with a clause about the election dates will be approved soon.

Coke’s ethics questioned

The essays will now ask students to take a closer look at the inner workings of big business, which is bound to lead to other, more serious infringements.

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Sharpton promises students he’ll visit shantytown

JOSEPHINE BRILLANTE
Contributing Writer

Civil Rights leader Reverend Al Sharpton—the self-proclaimed “racial activist against injustice” and former Democratic presidential candidate—was a guest speaker at this year’s Black Student Union Conference. His lecture featured points about avoiding youth apathy and increasing student activism.

The Conference took place Feb. 23 in the Kovens Conference Center located in the Biscayne Bay Campus.

As Sharpton put it, his purpose for being there was to empower his audience and ignite passion to them to fight for their beliefs.

Despite Sharpton’s often controversial past, students and faculty in attendance were excited to have the opportunity to hear Sharpton as he urged them to take action against any kind of injustice they might experience.

“In the last several years, I have found [Sharpton] to become more mature, thoughtful, conscientious and deliberate,” professor Ronn Silverstein of the English department said.

During the last few minutes of Sharpton’s speech, FIU student activists with Take Back the Land confronted the speaker.

The group has been protesting the government’s denial to provide low-income housing to homeless residents in Liberty City. Many of these residents have been forced to live in a shantytown known as Umoja Village.

The students said Sharpton spoke with them over his radio station, promising to come to Umoja Village himself, and support them in their cause.

“When there are fights like these, we would hope black leaders would help,” Muhammad Malik, president of Act Now To Stop War and End Racism, said. Sharpton apologized for being preoccupied and agreed to eventually stop by the village.

He finally made it Feb. 27, when he promised to sleep at the village if nothing is done to fix the problems and vowed to donate $1,000 to the community.

According to Sharpton, countless individuals see themselves powerless to implement change in the world. He spoke about combating apathy, emphasizing that progress can only be made when people stand up for what they believe.

“Rather than just observe black history, you need to stand up and make black history,” he said. Sharpton communicated that simply accepting how society portrays African-Americans in the United States stunts the advancement of equality.

“Acting like blacks is synonymous to hoodlums and thugs. This is counter-productive to black history, Sharpton said. “It’s bad to be down. It’s worse to glorify being down. A lot of what we see is people glorifying this through their culture.”

He offered statistics to validate the disparity between African-Americans and other races. While African-Americans make up 13 percent of the country’s population, they make up 50 percent of the prison population today.

He insisted that the power of a few is strong enough to create change.

“If even you’re not responsible for being down, you’re responsible for getting up,” Sharpton said. “The legacy of our people is that no matter how far down we are, we always find a way up.”

Sophomore John Wilson was so impressed that he had Sharpton’s voice on the phone.

“Despite [Sharpton’s] controversial history, in the end, he showed the world how Martin Luther King Jr. As much as you could criticize him, he has made his mark on the world,” Wilson said.

Additional reporting by Charlie Grau

Event sheds new light on hip-hop

SILVIA LORENZO
Contributing Writer

Students and the North Miami community crowded together for the beginning of a weekend-long event Feb. 23 in order to reclaim hip hop’s identity and pedagogical roots.

The Fourth Annual Organic Hip Hop Symposium, which brought an estimated 250 people to the Biscayne Bay Campus, featured local lyricists, spoken-word and graffiti artists, breakdancers and a keynote speaker.

The highlighted theme for this year’s symposium was a more natural approach to living and the arts. The African New World Studies and the Urban American Newspaper, which promotes mostly independent hip hop artists and businesses, sponsored the symposium.

The event provided “organic music and discussions that do not receive popular media attention,” according to Tony Muhammed, the owner of UAN and a FIU alumni, who organizes the event each year.

“This event is for the community. We bridge gaps between students, professionals and generations,” he said.

Muhammad said the event was supposed to present “an international perspective of hip hop and create a place where like-minded people can network and strengthen the community.”

According to rapper KRS-One, who had been a speaker at a previous hip hop conference that denatured williamz, the symposium was important because the genre is more than just “a collection of music and dance products.”

“If it’s the collective consciousness of a real community,” the rapper said. “The origins of hip hop were also explored. This included graffiti art and break dancing as part of its culture.

According to the book, The Vibe History of Hip Hop, early hip hop artists used music to voice socially conscious issues and promote social progress and political action instead of the violence and misogyny that the commercialized form of hip hop music is now seen to promote.

The symposium began with the serving of a vegetarian meal, which stressed this year’s theme of an organic approach to living.

“We live in a junk food culture. My goal is to present an alternative to the junk food we are fed in popular culture,” Muhammad said.

Lilacs Africa, the keynote speaker, spoke about how important artistic expression and an organic diet are to physical health and social progress.

“Anything you put in your body that is denatured will denature you,” Africa said. She also emphasized the need to “take any step necessary to clean your body, mind and spirit of pollutants.”

Casandra Roache, the Health and Wellness Center’s senior health educator, agreed with Africa. Roache, who confronts students’ health concerns every day, was pleased that the symposium promoted a healthier diet and socially conscious issues.

“The diet of an average FIU student is horrible. There needs to be a balance. Regular hip hop isn’t promoting anything wonderful.”

Roache said. The night ended with local lyricists who all rhymed over beats provided by DJ Estoteric and DJ Framik.

Local music group Fusik played a fusion of hip hop, funk, jazz and Latin musical elements.

Felix, the drummer of Fusik, is an FIU student majoring in music. He said he enjoyed performing at BBC because “independent artists get a chance to meet with people that we normally wouldn’t get a chance to meet in a club or typical venue.”

NEWSFLASH

Health expo offers free health screenings

The Wellness Center will help the Biscayne Bay Campus community “Journey Through Wellness” during the two days of the Wellness Expo 2007.

The event will be held March 13 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. in Academic I. The second day of the expo will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 14 at the Wolfe University Center. Free health screenings and prizes will be available, among other things.

For more information, call 305-919-5620, ext. 4.

Play at BBC explores church issues

The Limited Edition Steppers and the Black Student Union present the play Devil’s in God’s House which will feature an all-star cast. The play discusses controversial events that occur in churches.

The play will take place March 1 at 8 p.m. at the Mary Ann Wolfe Theater. Tickets for students and the general public are $5 in advance or $7 at the door.

To purchase tickets or meet the cast, call 786-443-2540.

Chance to address BBC events at forum

On Mar. 1, a BBC Student Forum will be held for all students to give their input on what they feel about BBC and the events happening around the campus. Commuter students will be able to give their input from 12:45 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the BBC cafeteria. The forum for residential students will take place from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Housing Community Room.

Compiled by Ana Davis and Nicole Acosta
MAIDIQUE DOES THE TIME WARP

President’s ploy to age FIU good for University

FIU is an institution with the potential to be among the top universities in the state, perhaps one of the top public institutions in the whole country. The only thing that will expedite the process of academic recognition and widespread prestige is time.

That is exactly what University President Modesto A. Maidique is trying to accomplish by moving the University’s 50th anniversary from 2021 to 2015. Maidique is laying the groundwork for a new and intricately coordinated plan to make FIU a more widely recognized name in public education, by making it appear more aged.

Maidique’s ambitions include the implementation of an “international” program of education that would include a second language requirement, essentially preparing FIU graduates for the increasingly diverse society that will surely emerge with time. This unique brand of curriculum would mesh well with the diverse settings of the University Park campus, and the city of Miami, collectively.

While it would appear that Maidique is making the university’s upcoming milestones — such as the completion of the FIU College of Medicine and College of Law — seem more delayed, FIU is still on par with some of the top universities in the country in terms of the amount of time it took to be able to graduate programs to emerge.

Take for instance Duke University: this institution attained considerable prestige in a remarkably short period of time. It was founded in 1892, and little over a century later, it is recognized as the “Harvard of the South.” It took Duke University 32 years to establish its school of law, and 38 years to establish its school of medicine. Compare this to FIU, which had a graduate program in law within the first 37 years of its existence, and a medical program within 41 years.

The fact that one can even render some sort of comparison between two entirely disparate institutions — such as FIU and Duke — shows that Maidique is indeed doing something right. In fact, it shows that FIU is surely on its way to national recognition.

The University of Florida, which is the most recognized university in the state, public or private, and one of the most reputable public schools in the nation, did not have a school of law for 57 years, and had no medical program for a whole century. The fact that FIU has succeeded to do so much in so little time bodes very well for the future of the University.

As a university ages, it tends to improve in terms of academic achievement and prestige. Maidique is clearly trying to hasten this natural process, and transform FIU into a more selective institution than it has been in the past, one that can be recognized for a diverse, yet academically talented student body.

This will attract a new crop of highly motivated students and enable other cutting edge graduate programs to be constructed in the coming years.

Maidique’s claim for a curriculum that embraces the linguistic diversity of contemporary American society adequately prepares future FIU graduates for professional careers in an increasingly competitive world.

Letters to the Editor

Athletes criticized for being hurtful, not opinionated

This is in response to Xavier Villararmazo’s article titled “Athletes afraid to speak up on tough issues.” There’s a difference between being opinionated and being a bigot or a fool. It is not the opinions that we condemn, it is the stupidity behind them.

Real athletes love the game. If they comment on issues, it is because they are passionate about what they do. The opinions of athletes from the past, such as Ali or Barkley, are often something worth paying heed to. The editors are correct in saying that a new era has come in the realm of public opinion. Bringing the truth to light is the job of the athletes, not the media.

The comments of former FIU student-athletes who criticized Ali are disrespectful, and it is a bad reflection on our campus."
BAKING IN THE SUN: The Food Network South Beach Wine and Food Festival attracted more than 90 vendors and 10,000 guests over the weekend of Feb. 23-25. (Top left) Local vendors, such as Eric Lopez of Evaton Inc., pour visitors a taste of their products. (Bottom center) Live food demonstrations by chefs, such as Ian's Tropical Grill's Eric Grutka, heated things up on the sands along Ocean Drive. (Bottom left) FIU students, such as Pamela Sinclair, were on site to guide patrons through the events.
Dance Marathon helps raise funds for children's hospital

GEORGE ANDERSON JR.  Asst Life! Editor

For a third consecutive year, sophomore Daniel Estevez is doing it for the kids.

Estevez will once again take part in Dance Marathon 2007, a two-day event where students and non-students stay on their feet and dance for 25 consecutive hours to raise funds for the Miami Children's Hospital Foundation and the Children's Miracle Network.

"It's an opportunity to raise money for kids and families who need medical care but are otherwise unable to pay for it," said Charlene Collazo, the event's assistant director of communications.

Dance Marathon 2007, which is celebrating its 10-year anniversary, will take place in the Pharmed Arena, beginning at noon on Saturday, March 3, and finishing at 1 p.m. on Sunday, March 4. The theme is DM-TV, a reflection of the importance that music has played in the event's history.

"Since Dance Marathon is all about music, we felt that an MTV-inspired theme would be perfect for our special tenth anniversary," said Leah Dunleavy, executive director of DM 2007, in a press release.

Although participants will spend the majority of their time dancing, there is an array of other activities intended to keep them awake and standing. Performances by the Miami Heat Dancers and the Marlins Mermaids as well as a silent auction are scheduled for the event. In addition, the event will feature the Miami Heat Dancers and the Marlins Mermaids as well as a silent auction.


According to Collazo, last year's marathon raised more than $80,000. This year, the goal is $100,000. To help reach that goal, participants are required to raise a certain amount of money prior to the event; the amount is dependent on the role they want to play.

A Dancer, someone who stays on his or her feet the entire 25 hours, needs to raise $200. A Dancer Team, composed of a minimum of five dancers, needs a minimum of $700.

Junior Alejandra Maruri, who has to raise a minimum of $425 as a Morales Captain this year, used a series of methods to earn enough funds for her goal.

"It's an opportunity to raise money for kids and families who need medical care but are otherwise unable to pay for it.

— Charlene Collazo

DANCE MARATHON, page 8

As I stood in line at a local Publix deli last weekend, my gaze strayed from my ever-increasing bill to the rack of magazines neatly organized on the shelves next to the conveyor belt. It seemed to me that America's mind was on two celebrities – Britney Spears and the late Anna Nicole Smith. Poor Anna Nicole – they say 'till death do us part,' but not even death can separate Smith and the press.

Moving on to Spears – at the rate she's going, she might end up somewhere along the lines of Smith herself, unless she decides to wake up. How low do you have to stoop to when even Kevin Federline starts to give you advice on how to live your life?

Just in case you spent the last two weeks in a jungle in Cambodia with Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, here's the story so far: After a string of strange and bizarre behavior culminating in a head shaving incident, Spears checked herself into rehab ... and then out ... and then back in, much to the pleasure of the media and to the dismay of her family and publicists.

For me, this wasn't much of a surprise considering her behavior has gone from bad to worse in the past few months and, not to mention, we've seen this story a million times before.

When you ask yourself why so many celebrities tend to get into the problems they go through, the answer is easy – the pressure of living up to their own image. They create their problems for the sake of publicity. After all, there's no such thing as bad publicity, right? Maybe so, but even celebrities are not dumb enough to call what Spears, Mel Gibson or even Tom Cruise did: publicity stunts.

So who's to blame? It's everyone: the media, the public and the celebrity. It sucks, but that's how the ball rolls. We feed the media's garbage by buying the tabloids and related magazines. It's our obsession. Since we can't be like the celebrities we crave, we want to know everything there is about them – what they wear, where they go, what soap they use or how many times a day they take a shower. They're like toys: in the beginning we can't get enough of them, but once we're bored with them, we get sick of them and wait for that opportune moment to get rid of them, all in favor of the new starlet in town.

Some celebrities recover from their poor decisions, and then we try to make their lives a little easier – with money, as in the case of Britney Spears.

Junior Alejandra Maruri, who has to raise a minimum of $425 as a Morales Captain this year, used a series of methods to earn enough funds for her goal.

TRIVIAL PURSUIT, page 8

Water from rainfall that runs overland, seeps into the ground or drains into storm sewers is known as Stormwater. Collectively the draining water is called Stormwater runoff.

Stormwater picks up debris, chemicals, soil and various surface pollutants as it flows. Stormwater eventually flows directly to lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, or coastal areas. The economic impact of polluted Stormwater extends to the fishing, tourism, and recreational industries.

- Stormwater is not treated before it empties into our rivers and lakes and can add harmful bacteria, parasites and viruses to our water.
- Vehicles spills (oil, grease, gasoline, antifreeze, brake fluids, etc.) onto paved areas, only to be carried away by Stormwater runoff into storm drains and into our water.
- Chemicals used to support growth and maintain beautiful lawns and gardens, if not used properly, will run off into the storm drains when it rains or when we water our lawns and gardens.
- Waste from chemicals and materials used in construction can wash into the storm sewer system when it rains.
Fundraiser celebrates 10-year anniversary

The Beacon – March 1, 2007 www.beaconnewspaper.com

DANCE MARATHON, page 7

"I went out canning on the streets to ask drivers for donations and wrote letters to different companies," she said. Maruri also has the duty of Morale Captain, which entails boosting participants’ morale throughout the event. Maruri, who was a dancer last year, remembers how she felt during her experience at DM 2006. “You start feeling the worst around 4 a.m. and 5 a.m. – you’re so tired," she said. Nevertheless, Maruri said that the marathon’s line dance kept her motivated. The line dance, which has become a staple, is a dance that is learned in parts throughout the 25 hours. Last year’s dance included snippets from the “Saved by the Bell” theme song, the Black Eyed Peas, and Guns N’ Roses. Estevez, who is part of the DM 2007 Steering Committee and was both a Dancer and a Morale Captain in previous years, is particularly touched by the ending ceremonies. “It’s an amazing feeling that you got in the end when it’s over – the feeling that you were a part of something bigger than yourself and helped so many people.” Students can pick up Dancer and Morale Assistant applications in GC 2210 at the Center for Leadership and Service and are able to register until the day of the event.

TRIVIAL PURSUIT, page 7

meltdowns. Drew Barrymore and Robert Downey Jr. are prime examples of actors who have made impressive comebacks. Some don’t (Anne Heche, anyone?). Some of them even pay for their fame with their very lives – Elvis, Kurt Cobain, Marilyn Monroe and even Anna Nicole Smith.

For Tom Cruise and Mel Gibson, two of the biggest stars of the ’80s and ’90s, the verdict is still out. Despite their insane mannerisms and actions in the past three years, Cruise continues to be a Hollywood power with his films continuously being accepted by critics and audiences despite his persona. Gibson came out on top after The Passion of the Christ became one of the highest grossing films of all time and Apocalypto opened to critical praise.

Anna Nicole Smith leaves behind a baby, four prospective fathers and the continuous battle over her late husband’s estate. As for Spears, every passing day is a worry for her family and an obsession for the public; only time can tell what direction her future will take. Every star fades, but in the case of celebrities, overexposure leads to self-destruction.

THE POWER TO

LIFE!

DANCE MARATHON Lip Sync Competition WHEN: 8 p.m. WHERE: GC Ballrooms (UP) HOW MUCH: Free

WHAT: On-Point Poetry – Poetry Night WHEN: 5 p.m. WHERE: WUC Ballrooms (BBC) HOW MUCH: Free

WHAT: Mozart’s The Marriage of Figaro WHEN: 8 p.m. WHERE: Wertheim Performing Arts Center Concert Hall (UP) HOW MUCH: Call 305-348-1998 for Information

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WHAT: Dance Marathon WHEN: 24-hour event begins 12 p.m. WHERE: Pharmed Arena (UP) HOW MUCH: Free

WHAT: Fourth Annual College of Law Dominos Tournament WHEN: 3 p.m. WHERE: College of Law (UP) HOW MUCH: TBA

-- Compiled by Reuben Pereira

Since we can’t be like the celebrities we crave, we want to know everything there is about them...
Softball captain united by friendship off the field

Centerfielder Deomni Murray, catcher Tabitha Embry and outfielder Ashley Falk, the captains of the women’s softball team, come from diverse backgrounds, but their characters bind the three together.

Throwing rocks at0tractors In Philpot, Ky., is not an exercise to develop arm strength, but a means of entertainment. Embry’s demographics are different than Kentucky, but Embry’s softball talent has translated her to FIU where she has developed leadership skills.

The senior’s responsibilities extend to the entire team, but she is graduating this semester. Therefore, she has been teaching freshman catcher Susy Ellquist the basics of managing pitchers. Embry admits she is a kid at heart, which allows her to level with the younger players such as Ellquist.

“She’s showed me how to handle pitchers,” Ellquist said. “She is a great role model on and off the field and she’s helped me develop a work ethic.”

Coach Kim Gwydir recalls recruiting her future team captain catcher during the Rising Stars Tournament in Ft. Lauderdale.

“She was a sleeper during recruitment; she didn’t play on a good team,” Gwydir said. “I was impressed at the way she swung the bat.”

Gwydir said she was also impressed by Embry’s selflessness as a player. She told Gwydir she would do whatever it takes for the team. As a result, Embry played several uncomfortable positions throughout her career at FIU, yet she never complained.

Embery has been a team captain for two years along with Murray, who is also a senior.

“Whenever we have a problem, Falk decided to help her future teammates. They let her know she didn’t need to help, but she said she wanted to provide assistance.”

“The fact she would help us out when she wasn’t part of the team was enough for me,” coach Gwydir said.

Falk is a first year captain, but she does not believe that her approach to the game will change much. The friendship with Embry and Murray allow her to be a leader, but still be relaxed.

“I have more responsibilities, but I’m not really doing anything different,” she said. “The three of us versus the field as players. We go out all the time to the movies and hang out.”

Although the three team captains are from diverse places, their similar characters and friendship mesh them together as team captains. Their relationship began as friends and is transferred on the field as players.

FIU SPORTS REPLAY

Men’s and women’s basketball win their final game of the season

FIU (MEN) 64, WKU 82

FIU (12-16, 7-11) finished their 2006-07 season by falling to Sun Belt Conference foe, Western Kentucky (21-10, 12-6), 82-64 at the E.A. Diddle arena at Bowling Green, Ky., Feb. 24.

The Golden Panthers lost without their leading scorer, Alex Galindo.

Despite junior guard Chris Fuller’s career-high 21 points, the Golden Panthers were overwhelmed by the Hilltoppers’ offense, which shot 70 percent from beyond the arc (7-10) and 60 percent from the field altogether.

The Hilltoppers had control throughout the entire game as they received their biggest scare of the second half, when the Golden Panthers cut the lead to 14 with 9:21 left in the game.

The win elevated Western Kentucky to the No. 1 seed in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament. FIU finished their season as the No. 11 seed in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament.

FIU (WOMEN) 66, WKU 79

FIU (15-13, 9-9) lost their last regular season game to Western Kentucky (20-7, 14-4) 79-66 at the E.A. Diddle arena at Bowling Green, Ky., Feb. 24.

Although four players scored in double figures for the Golden Panthers, they were not able to stop junior forward Crystal Kelly, who recorded a game-high 31 points and grabbed 15 rebounds.

The Hilltoppers shot 38 percent from the field compared to the Golden Panthers’ 42 percent, but out-rebounded the Golden Panthers 50-40.

The victory earned the Hilltoppers the No. 3 seed in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament. The Golden Panthers concluded their season as the No. 7 seed.

FIU & SYRACUSE 2

The Golden Panthers defeated Syracuse 8-2 behind junior shortstop Monique White’s home-run and three RBIs and junior Kerri Houck’s seven-inning two earned run performance.

TENNIS

The Golden Panthers defeated No. 39 University of Nevada Sunday afternoon at the Fertitta Tennis Complex 5-2. Las Vegas, Nev.

The No. 31-ranked Golden Panthers will face No. 9-ranked University of Miami next Sunday, Mar. 4, in Coral Gables.

Compiled by Sergio Bonilla
Polizano moving up the record books

The other two runs given up by FIU were unearned and ended up being the difference in the game. The Golden Panthers had a mini-rally going on in the ninth inning when Price decided to bring in freshman Enrique Cepero to pinch hit for senior outfielder Cody Jacobs, who had already struck out three times in the game. The move did not pay off as Cepero ended up striking out with the bases loaded to end the game.

FIU 12, URI 11

The Golden Panthers were cruising through seven innings behind a solid performance by junior pitcher Chris Allen before the Rams’ offense exploded, scoring nine runs in the top of the eighth against the FIU bullpen.

After the Rams managed three runs off junior reliever Eric Horstman, Price called upon senior closer Walker Whitley in the top of the eighth with two outs to finish the inning. But Whitley gave up six runs on six hits and could not get anyone out.

Freshman pitcher Brian Santana was brought in for Whitley and finally stopped the onslaught, closing out the eighth and ninth innings without surrendering a run.

The Golden Panthers pulled within a run after scoring three in the bottom of the eighth. Second baseman Corey Lozano and first baseman John Petika each reached base on consecutive Ram errors in the ninth to bring up junior outfielder Rainey Fuentes, who singled in the game-tying run.

Freshman catcher Kevin Mirabel bunted in the game winner.

After sitting out to start the first game of the double header, junior James McOwen went 5-for-5 with four RBI’s in second game.

FIU 15, URI 13

Freshman pitcher Ralph Rodriguez came in and gave the Golden Panthers a solid start, giving up five runs in two innings—with only one of the runs being earned.

The Golden Panthers offense put up double digit runs again, led by freshman designated hitter Tyler Townsend, who went 3-for-3 with two home runs and six RBIs.

McOwen added three hits of his own and tied a school record with eight consecutive hits when he doubled in the third.

Price said Brian Santanadidn’t make things easy for themselves, allowing the Rams to pull within two runs after scoring six in the top of the eighth.

Price said Brian Santana did another solid job closing out the final two innings of the game.

“Anytime you win three out of four, it’s a good thing, but I still believe this team can improve, specifically with giving up the big inning,” Price said.

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New coach able to motivate players and instill winning attitude

fustrated because certain players weren’t pulling their necessary weight. Who’s to blame for that? Look no further to your leader.

EXHIBIT B: CRISTOBAL

Cristobal has immediately changed the culture of the program. His team has yet to take the field and he already seems more energetic and passionate about his monumental task. The 36-year-old Cuban-American is from Miami and understands the football landscape here in South Florida.

Both he and athletic director Pete Garcia understand that they are blessed with a goldmine of local high school football talent. During his five years as head coach, Strock didn’t focus enough on South Florida recruiting, opting to look in other parts of the state to mold his roster.

Besides focusing on keeping South Florida high school football players home, Cristobal also recruited out of the state for the first time in the program’s history. What he found was quarterback-of-the-future Colt Anderson (Omaha, Neb.) and offensive linemen Chris Cawthon (Loganville, Ga.) and Shanquan Hicks (Sanderville, Ga.).

With the extended aim at talent, this will allow the Golden Panthers to bring in the necessary athletes needed to build up the talent necessary to compete competitively.

Along with Cristobal’s energetic approach to the game, Garcia has also ignited a spark in the athletic department. On the flight back after 38-3 loss to Alabama, Garcia heard players joking around as if no whooping had taken place. Surprised at what he was hearing, he went to the back of the plane and reminded the team that they had just lost 38-3 and that they should act like it.

With a new leader and sense of direction, the team should be acting like their coach for this season and the rest to come – a winner.

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Men’s baseball displays an offensive show on Rhode

ROBERTO CARTAGENA
Contributing Writer

The Golden Panthers (7-5) swung their way to victory and took three out of four games to win the series against the University of Rhode Island (1-3) at University Park Stadium Feb. 23-25.

Not making things easy for themselves, the Golden Panthers committed a number of untimely errors. However, the Rams’ defense was even worse and the Golden Panthers’ offense scored 10 runs on five hits. The Rams did their best in assisting the Golden Panther’s output by committing five errors in the inning.

The Golden Panthers never trailed after the offensive outburst in the third, but Price was not pleased when the Rams scored six runs of their own in the following inning.

Coach Danny Price said “The Posse,” a group of rowdy students sitting over the visitor’s dugout in particular, did a great job of distracting Rhode Island throughout the game.

The Golden Panthers never trailed after the offensive outburst in the third, but Price was not pleased when the Rams scored six runs of their own in the following inning.

Corey Polizzano went three and two-thirds innings while giving up seven runs, five which were earned, but managed to strikeout five. Senior outfielder Bryan Pullin hit his second homer of the season and also moved past Brad Murray and junior pitcher Ken Houch were named to the All-Tournament Team for their play. See Page 9 for a feature on the softball captains.

Cristobal has vision

former head coach

Don Strock never had

It’s been over two months since Mario Cristobal took over as head coach of FIU’s football program.

In that short time, he has overhauled the coaching staff, signed his inaugural recruiting class and began the slow process of turning the Golden Panthers into a respectable and winning football program.

Even though he has yet to win his first game, Cristobal has already managed to create a sense of hope for the future.

Even though former head football coach, Don Strock, began the football program and got it into Division I-A status, he never had the vision or gift to get his team to the next level.

He merely seemed content at where he and the team stood. Most teams take the shape and form of their head coach.

EXHIBIT A: STROCK

Granted, he was dealt a season from hell that even Lucifer couldn’t overcome.

Some of his players had even given up at season’s end.

Halfway through the season, it seemed as though everything had taken a toll on Strock and the embattled coach didn’t know how to fix the problem.

He had one of the top rated defenses in the country, but it was his offense that couldn’t get the job done.

For 17 years, Strock played in the NFL as a quarterback — as a backup most of the time.

Being around the league that long, one would guess that you would soak in a whole bunch of offensive schemes from different coaches.

I guess all that NFL experience doesn’t translate into a successful coaching career.

Loss after loss, in all of his post-game press conferences, no matter how or why his team lost, Strock would always say, “We just got to go back to work.”

After every game, every sound bite would sound the same.

Often times, his players seemed more upset than him.

In a 31-0 loss to FAU, several players admitted they felt

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