**FLORIDA BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**Fight for right to set tuition continues**

**CHARLIE GRAU**

Editor in Chief

The Florida Board of Governors is re-filing a lawsuit against the Legislature that, if won, would give the board authority to set tuition for all public universities in the state.

The lawsuit was originally dismissed by a judge on Jan. 3 because it lacked standing.

The Faculty Senate at FIU is part of the suit, but may be thrown off the case if they fail to prove they have been specifically harmed.


"If the BOG has control of tuition and the Legislature grovels underfunds public universities, it will allow the [BOG] to increase tuition in order to provide the best educational experience," said Faculty Senate Chair Bruce Hauptli.

Created in 2003 by former Gov. Jeb Bush, the BOG’s mission is to regulate, control, and manage Florida’s 11 public universities.

"[This lawsuit] is necessary, but it’s painful…painful because the Legislature wants to have complete control," Hauptli said.

After discovering that

**BOG, page 3**

**NICHARAGUAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

Club focuses on culture, service

**JADE LLEONART**

Contributing Writer

The Nicaraguan Student Association (NiSA) is one of the largest student organizations on campus.

"The real and true motivation for students to join NiSA would have to be [being] passionate on working in community service projects and enjoy being involved in the FIU campus," said Carmen Linarte, secretary of the Nicaraguan Student Association (NiSA).

NiSA, page 2
THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • FEBRUARY 4

Pan African Opening Ceremony:  12 p.m., Graham Center Fountain
Pan African Opening Ceremony/Pep Rally:  12 p.m., Panther Square (BBC)
Romantic Film Festival- “I’m not here to be loved”:  7 p.m., Graham Center 150

TUESDAY • FEBRUARY 5

2008 Non-Technical Career Fair:  10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Graham Center Ballroom
Romantic Film Festival- “Shake It All”:  2 p.m., Graham Center 150
Pan African Wet Fete:  4 p.m. - 9 p.m., Housing Quad
Romantic Film Festival- “Lora, a story of loved”:  7 p.m., Graham Center 150

WEDNESDAY • FEBRUARY 6

SPC BBC- Haitian Music:  7 p.m., Bay Vista Housing (BBC)
Spas! on Point:  7 p.m. - 10:30 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)

THURSDAY • FEBRUARY 7

Ash Wednesday Ceremony:  12 p.m., WUC 157 (BBC)
Pan African Workshop:  12 p.m., Graham Center 314
SPC BBC- Dance Presentation:  12 p.m, AC 1 (BBC)
Asian Student Union General Meeting:  3:30 p.m., Graham Center 140
Pan African Movie Night:  8 p.m., WUC Theatre (BBC)
Dance Marathon’s “So you think you can dance” Show:  8 p.m., Graham Center Ballrooms
Delta Sigma Pi General Meeting:  9 p.m., Graham Center 343

FRIDAY • FEBRUARY 8

SPLAT! – Compiled by Kassandra Pool

On Point Poetry:  7 p.m. - 10:30 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)

Club addresses Nicaraguan issues

NiSA, page 1

Association
Some community service projects the club has sponsored include the sale of Hershey’s Chocolate and World’s Finest Chocolate.

NiSA held a toy drive this past December and will be having a school supplies drive later this semester.

The club has also sold pizza at the Graham Center and helped raise money for the victims of Hurricane Felix, a highly destructive category 5 storm that struck Nicaragua and Honduras in early September.

On Jan. 19, the club, along with the Center of Leadership and Services, participated in the MLK Day event: A Day of Service.

“Community service is one of our priorities. We also want to make our local community aware of our existence at FIU and wanting them to know that NiSA is available and help.” Linarte said.

The club will continue its humanitarian efforts over spring break. From March 17-21, while many students will be on vacation for spring break, NiSA will be visiting their charities – Club de Ancianos, Ciegos & Invalidos de Santa Lucia in Esteli, Nicaragua. While in Nicaragua, they will provide resources and care for everyone from victims of sexual abuse to the handicapped. NiSA also sponsors two other charities in Nicaragua.

“It is important that we actively reach out to those who are in need of help,” Linarte said.

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In the issue dated Jan. 31, Jose Maya should have been credited with additional reporting for the story titled “Giuliani pushes for student vote at FIU”.

In the same issue, the pull quote should have credited Juan Carlos Robaina, not Juan Robaina.

The Beacon will gladly change any errors. Call our UP office at 305-348-2709 or BBC at 305-919-4722.

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Budget cuts, economy behind board’s decision

Hauptli said. “It’s great in the university system,” low that they can’t get into consequences on family. raising student tuition has insensitive to the fact that the BOG is going to be do so responsibly. in the state, the board will receives the power to set believe that if the BOG universities. money to appropriate to also decides how much can increase tuition and whether or not universities Legislature decides for tuition. BOG voted to increase public universities, the increase the funding for Legislature would not cut public university’s budgets any further. “Two things are happening simultaneously, which is a little unfortunate,” said University provost Ronald Berkman. “On the one hand, there is a growing awareness in Tallahassee that higher education requires more money. On the other hand you have diminished resources Unfortunately, there is no more money.” “The judge is going to have to be wowed by the argument, otherwise he’s going to leave it as it is,” Hauptli said. “One way or another, this is going to be decided by the courts within the next year.” Chancellor Mark Rosenberg wasn’t available for comment.

Charlie Grau can be reached at charlie.grau@fiusm.com

Police Notes

- Compiled by David A. Barrion

January 30, 2007 • Call to Order: 4:06 p.m. • Adjournment: 4:50 p.m.

President’s Report (Marbely Hernandez):
- Will be attending FSA at UCF from Feb. 28 to March 1. Will be discussing the Bright Futures scholarship program.
- Students can access the RUCKUS music downloading service by registering with their FIU student email.

Vice-President’s Report (Arthur “Al” Meyer):
- Panther Point system introduced. Program will give students points for attending athletic events which can be traded in for various prizes. A pilot of the program is being planned by Athletics in association with the SGC-UP.
- An open SGA forum will be held Feb. 20. Students and encouraged to attend. Time and location TBA.

Comptroller’s Report (Sergio Ibarra-Bolanos):
- Budget report will be completed by the end of February.

Student Services:
- Preliminary results from student polls on the Mobile Campus text messaging service show the majority of those polled in favor of the service.

Student Organizations Council:
- Deadline for new club registrations is Feb. 29.
- There will be a point conversion in the new SIC council during the Fall 2008 semester. Students are asked to continue earning SOC points as usual.

SGC-UP Notes

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EXPERIMENTATION: The Science Club invited students to mix polymers during the Student Organizations Council's club fair Feb. 1.

ANNA PEREZ Contributing Writer

Long known for its high poverty, unemployment and drug crime rates, Overtown was dealt another blow in 2000, when the census indicated that more than 1,500 children ages 14 and older do not attend high school.

The Overtown Youth Center was created in 2003 by Martin Z. Margulies, a real estate developer, and Alonzo Mourning, a renowned Miami Heat player.

Mourning experienced the challenges of being a foster child, according to Jayne Klein, program coordinator for the Honors College at Biscayne Bay Campus.

“A lot of them come from families where they are not getting the support that they need to begin with and it just multiplies itself and that’s what [Mourning] saw, being a foster child and having the experience of being shifted around,” Klein said.

In October 2006, Klein established a partnership with OYC originally only for Honors College students, now expanded to allow any BBC student to volunteer as well.

The project brings children from OYC to BBC for selected events that Klein believes would be interesting, useful and entertaining.

Antonina Shachar, a junior and secretary in the Honors College, went on a tour of the facility and described the staff’s passion.

“It was touching to see the personnel have tears in their eyes while discussing the kids and you can see they truly care. I can’t wait to volunteer!” Shachar said.

The center is equipped with a computer lab, gymnasium, nurses’ clinic, and library. They also have a point system, where children accumulate points for good grades and ethics to exchange for prizes.

“It’s a whole empowerment project to help them feel more a sense of self-esteem and feel that they can succeed. The idea is to help them to grow and make them feel worthy,” Klein said.

The OYC has a variety of programs including in-school, after school weekend and even summer programs - all of them free.

The OYC is part of the Alonzo Mourning Charities and gets its money from funding and donations.

In 2005, U.S. Representative Kendrick B. Meek awarded the center a $147,996 federal grant from the U.S Department of Justice.

For more information, visit overtownyouth.org or call (305) 349-1204.

ANNA PEREZ

Contributing Writer

For those who want a better understanding of Western media’s depiction of terrorism, David Olesker will deliver a lecture on Feb. 6 at the Biscayne Bay Campus’ Wolfe University Center ballroom at 7:30 p.m.

Olesker, who has worked with Israeli diplomats and emissaries as a media and counter-propaganda specialist, is a founding director of the Jerusalem Centre for Communication and Advocacy Training.

“There is a lot happening in the Middle East at any given moment and very little is available for media access,” said Olesker in a phone interview. “I once asked Andrew Steele [the head of the British Broadcasting Corporation bureau in the Middle East] how many times he had visited Damascus. He said, ‘I never actually visited Damascus.’ When asked why not, he replied, ‘The Syrians won’t give me a visa.’”

Rabbi Saj Freiberg, a religious studies department adjunct professor and FIU’s Jewish Collegiate Learning Exchange chapter’s associate director, remembered the first time he attended one of Olesker’s lectures.

“I first met David Olesker when I was in high school,” Freiberg said. “Olesker actually posed as a representative of a militant Islamic group, and proceeded to ‘prove’ to everyone that terrorism was justified. And we had no good answers for him! Then he revealed himself and began to pick apart the arguments he had just made. It was awesome!

“The world could make a difference if we can be manipulated all the time into believing in things that are totally false.”

The international political debate surrounding the Middle East has become an increasingly sensitive topic at undergraduate institutions across the United States.

According to Olesker, it’s imperative people know the real facts of what is going on in the region.

“When you are talking about media in the Middle East, every one is a consumer and everybody needs to know what is happening with the coverage they get,” Olesker said.

Daniel Behar, president of the JCLE, one of the event’s sponsors, stressed the significance of the seminar.

“This lecture will open people’s eyes to see what the United States, Israel and the rest of the Western World has to offer,” said Behar in an email interview.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, email MediaWarEvent@gmail.com.

“Students will get a better understanding of terrorism, how to protect themselves and avoid fake news. They will see they truly care. I can’t wait to volunteer!” Klein said.

According to Klein, the OYC produces annual events that Klein said.

“More than just telling us the facts, he showed us how we can manipulate all the time into believing in things that are totally false.”

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“If students care about knowing true from false then they should come to this event,” Freiberg said. “I never read a newspaper the same way again.”

Media guru to discuss war
This election may be the first where the youth vote is being targeted more than ever and maybe more so than any other demographic, as evidenced by the recent surge of politicians focusing their energies on various youth groups (most notably Rudy Giuliani and Ron Paul supporters on FIU’s campus).

In Broward County, 18-29 year olds comprised of a growing number of Residential halls; they go up to about $4,200 per semester. Thats 5 percent of the registered voters and such a sizable percentage (especially in Miami-Dade County where the 18-29 demographic is slightly larger) of voters could have swung the primary results in anyone’s favor.

With the recent slew of politicians and their supporters, who have visited the University Park Campus, FIU has enjoyed a great degree of recognition.

The coverage of these events was international: At the Rudy Giuliani appearance on Jan. 28, the press coverage ranged from the local NBC state to foreign affiliates, an almost unprecedented occurrence for a University, especially one as young as FIU.

As a result, FIU has recently benefited from all types of positive publicity as a result. With a large Cuban community, Miami was a desirable location to promote the campaigns of most of the candidates in the current election.

Publicity aside, the appearance benefits FIU further by increasing the pool of possible future voters.

Events like this could serve to build the University’s reputation as a “politician/an any major speaker friendly campus,” as well as a campus that has a politically voracious and outspoken student body.

Thats why the alcari college campus body had a huge role in making the school desirable for these politicians and made FIU a very important stop for these candidates.

This election may have pushed FIU a little closer to being the next major Florida institution to be a mainstream of high-profile speakers and, perhaps in the future, a major factor in attracting new students.

The exposure to come (as candidates may return to speak in future elections), may be critical in attracting young students who may otherwise never known about FIU. Publicity like this may serve to intensify the awareness of FIU in the media and in the general population.

With the Florida primary behind us and the attention on the Miami-Dade area following President Bush’s speech at Miami-Dade College last year, the entire Miami area stands to benefit from this massive amount of exposure to the Colleges and Universities, other than the well-known University of Miami. With FIU’s academic stock quickly rising, the athletic programs steadily moving into prominence, FIU’s political importance and mass awareness seems almost inevitable.

As candidates from both sides of the aisle continue to drop out or fall behind in the delegate count, voters are struggling to realign their support.

Obama seems to be the candidate with the greatest ability to depolarize American politics and lead the nation, which is why voters, on Super Tuesday, may want put their confidence in him.

The Democrats need to take note of the divisive nature of Clinton if they want more members of the GOP base to cross over in November’s general election.

Among conservatives, the divisive vs. Hillary’s fiscal policies, mudslinging campaign tactics, and affiliation to the former president of Democrats imposed by the national committee.

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Among conservatives, the divisive vs. Hillary’s fiscal policies, mudslinging campaign tactics, and affiliation to the former president of Democrats imposed by the national committee.
Recalling former President Bill Clinton’s recent dozing off for a few seconds during a Martin Luther King Day speech, something inspired me to write today’s column.

Some people took advantage of this event as reason to mock him, while others defended him due to the inadvertance or forgave him out of compassion. “Just because he is a public figure, it doesn’t mean that he is not human. He is allowed to fall asleep like the rest of us,” said senior Ulyses Almanza.

Although it is really funny to watch someone with our ex-president, fall asleep in front of a crowd, this event calls attention to an important health issue.

When I go to school, stop for coffee, and overheard people talk in the morning, I often overhear people say they stayed up late the night before studying, working or doing something else.

Why is that? Why do people exchange sleep time with work, study or partying? Getting no sleep may seem like or a trademark of a successful, hard-working individual.

The common assumption about former President Clinton’s episode is that he has been sleep deprived due to his involvement with his wife’s campaigning, not that the speech was so boring that he fell asleep.

Sleep deprivation could either be a trend or a fact of life, according to a segment aired by HelpGuide.org.

Sleep is necessary to restore and rejuvenate body and brain functions. “It’s lucky, but I chose to do photography,” McCloskey said. “When we get an e-mail back and we end up with better photos,” McCloskey said.

“Most of the time they will have great lighting as well as several spotlights. The performers will interact with us. It makes things fun and we end up with better photos,” McCloskey said.

“Sleep is necessary to restore and rejuvenate body functions, according to the article “Understanding Sleep,” by HelpGuide.org.

An individual, it is necessary to sleep at least seven hours for the healthy functioning of the mind and body.

“The combination of the acceptance of this trend and the fast world we live in can be problematic. Regardless of the current situation or status of an individual, it is necessary to sleep at least seven hours for the healthy functioning of the mind and body.”

Lack of sleep may lead to many problems such as constant fatigue and less obvious problems affecting the brain and normal behavior.

The American Insomnia Association defines insomnia as a condition where people either have trouble falling asleep or maintaining it.

When the periods of time without sufficient sleep become more regular, you could be experiencing any of the three common types of insomnia.

According to the AIA, there are three kinds of insomnia. Transient insomnia is the inability to sleep well over a period of time, usually fewer than four weeks, caused by excitement or stress.

Short-term insomnia is the inability to sleep soundly for four weeks to six months, caused by ongoing stress or medical conditions.

Chronic insomnia can be defined as poor sleep every night or most nights for more than six months, due to the above factors or a physical problem.

Vikki Valentine from an NPR segment titled “How to Get a Good Night’s Sleep,” advises: Get some exercise into your day, set up a quiet, relaxing bedtime routine, soft music and quality time with a bed partner, if possible.

If any of these techniques do not improve sleep quality, visiting a doctor might be necessary.

Do not skip or exchange your sleep hours.

SLEEP现实

Why you need sleep and how to get more

如果你缺乏睡眠，并且睡眠出现了问题，你可能正在经历睡眠障碍，也就是失眠。失眠是现代生活的一个普遍问题，影响了很多人。失眠的原因很多，包括压力、焦虑、睡觉环境不佳、睡眠习惯不良等。

了解失眠的原因和影响，可以帮助我们采取措施改善睡眠，提高生活质量。这包括建立良好的睡眠习惯，如定期睡觉和起床，避免在睡前使用电子设备，保持舒适的睡眠环境，以及尝试放松技巧，如深呼吸、瑜伽或冥想。

通过改善睡眠习惯，保持身心健康，可以显著改善日常生活和工作效率。记住，睡眠是恢复和重建身体的重要过程，是提高生活质量的关键。

所以，为了更好地生活和工作，让我们关注睡眠，采取积极的措施改善睡眠质量吧！
Jack Johnson returns with more of the same

CHRIS TOWERS
Asst. News Director

I like Jack Johnson. I might be risking any credibility I might have as a rock critic by saying that, but I can’t lie about it anymore. Admitting you like Jack Johnson right now is like admitting you liked the Dave Matthews Band five years ago. It implies you have all of the creativity of a drunken frat guy at a kegger doing an ice luge.

Still, I have to admit, ever since I first heard 2001’s Brushfire Fairytales, I’ve had an affinity for this guy’s music, and his latest album, Sleep Through The Static, is no different.

Johnson has made a career out of sleepy-eyed sing-alongs and stoner faux-poetry, and while this album was supposed to represent a radical departure from the same old formula, at least in this regard it falls short. Much of the pre-release talk surrounding this album has been regarding the sonic shift to a more electric sound, but it appears that nobody actually told Jack about this departure.

While new pianist Zach Gill adds some nice flourishes and backing vocals, for the most part the album steers clear of anything that would upset the listener’s vibe. Aside from some heavy slide guitar on “Go On” and a fuzz electric rhythm guitar on “You Thought You Needed,” there is very little here that won’t sound instantly familiar to anyone who has listened to Johnson before.

That said, these criticisms wouldn’t even be voiced if this wasn’t hyped up as his “electric album,” so perhaps it is unfair to lay them down. Well, it doesn’t have the hooks of his last album, In Between Dreams, but it also probably represents a better version of Jack the “song writer.”

If this album is similar to any of his previous ones, it would have to be On And On And On, his second album, which features a more stream of consciousness approach and less of an emphasis on big hooky choruses. “Go On” is a somber reflection on his new life as a father, representing his fears for the future for both himself and his two new children.

One thing this album does not have are any glaringly bad songs, which is something his last CD definitely did. Getting rid of the big hooks of the last album managed to hide both the great songs and the bad ones, leaving you with something somewhere in the middle.

And for an artist like Jack, that middle ground isn’t necessarily a bad thing. “If I Had Eyes” represents this best. Obviously the most upbeat song on the album, it still manages to give off a subdued feel.

Ever since he came onto the scene, it has been hard to separate the music from the young surfer-stoner persona he first appeared with. While this is a somewhat conscious effort to shed that image and begin the growing up process every artist must undergo, this album manages to not come off as forced.

That is the best thing anyone could have hoped for from someone as laid back as Johnson, but then should we have expected anything more?
Game sequel maintains quality of predecessors

LUIS H. GARCIA  Staff Writer

Burnout has always been about three things: Cars, speed and making insurance companies go bankrupt through insurmountable property damage. Criterion continues the mayhem with its first Burnout title dedicated to the current generation of consoles.

Burnout Paradise marks a big change from its predecessors with the vast cityscape of Paradise City which players can explore, taking after free-roaming titles like Grand Theft Auto. Players are now free to drive anywhere and crash to their heart's content with the entire city available from the start.

The Burnout series has always been easy to pick up and this game is no exception. Driving is a cinch and starting a race is just a matter of pulling up to a major intersection. More cars become available as you progress and the action is the saving grace of the series. There are explosions, car chases, robot fights and an evil Terminator pulling out someone’s eyes to use for his own. The series really has all the action you can for, and hopefully the trend will continue.

Asst. News Director

BEN F. BADGER JR.

Arnold Schwarzenegger may be the governor of California, but that hasn’t stopped another Terminator from protecting would-be world savior John Connor (Thomas Dekker) in the latest TV series, “Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles.”

The “Terminator” films center on several robots sent from a future where machines have enslaved humans. In the second film, Arnold Schwarzenegger played a robot sent to save a boy named John Connor and his mother Sarah from being killed in the coming robot war in order to save humanity.

The series is set after the events of the second film in the Terminator series and follows Sarah Connor (Lena Headey) and her son John, who are on the run from the law. They blew up a multi million-dollar computer research facility and the next episode titled “Heavy Metal,” is scheduled to air on Feb. 4 at 9 p.m. on Fox. Hopefully the national writers strike won’t keep more episodes from being produced.

So if you want to sit back and just watch some non-reality TV, then tune into “The Sarah Connor Chronicles” every Monday on Fox. It may make you hate the writers, but you’ll soon love the show regardless of the cheesiness.

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Tournament hopes still alive as season’s end draws near

JONATHAN RAMOS
Staff Writer

Seven games. That’s what FIU’s season has come down to.

When the Golden Panthers (6-14, 3-7 Sun Belt) visit conference leader Louisiana-Lafayette (9-12, 5-5) on Feb. 6 at Pharmed Arena, it will be a must-win game for both teams.

With its season on life support, FIU will need to win to keep its slim tournament hopes alive.

The Ragin’ Cajuns have lost three of their last four games, and with a 6-6 record at home, it is unclear whether the stretch of seven games to end the season, five of which are at home, will be enough for FIU to close the season strong for a chance to be seeded in the Sun Belt Conference Tournament.

The Golden Panthers are currently 3-7 in conference play and the Ragin’ Cajuns have lost three of their last four games.

Without a strong inside presence, FIU will have to win on the perimeter to upset Louisiana-Lafayette.

As of late FIU, has struggled on offense as the team is shooting at a low percentage of 39.6.

Against ULL, the Golden Panthers will look to contain veteran swingman David Dees, who has been shooting with consistency this season.

Nonetheless, the skilled scorer poses a threat to the Golden Panthers, who rely on defense to win.

The Ragin’ Cajuns only have one scorer who averages double digits and are among the bottom half in the conference in team scoring.

The Golden Panthers will be looking to win consecutive games for just the third time this season.

Dynamic Duo

The arrival of junior center Russell Hicks as a transfer from Pepperdine University was the most talked about addition of the team with 1-11 road record in the Sun Belt Conference.

The Ragin’ Cajuns have one scorer who averages double digits and are currently last in the Sun Belt’s West Division.

The Ragin’ Cajuns are led by senior forward Alex Galindo to play the third time this season.

The Golden Panthers, however, are second to last in the conference in team scoring and have not supported the two main scorers sufficiently.

In spite of that, the two juniors can expect to be in consideration for the all-conference team in the off-season.

Golden Panthers host faulty team with 1-11 road record

DARREN COLETTIE
Staff Writer

The women’s basketball team (8-13, 4-6 Sun Belt) will return to the Pharmed Arena on Feb. 6 after a two-game road trip that took the team to Colorado and Texas.

Awaiting the Golden Panthers will be the Ragin’ Cajuns of Louisiana-Lafayette (5-15, 1-8).

In one of FIU’s most recent games, the team was able to grab a one-point win over Denver with a narrow final score of 53-52.

In Denver, all four of the Golden Panthers most stay focused and work to improve their shooting percentage and shot selection.

Without a strong inside presence, FIU is forced to shoot more from the perimeter, but those shots have not been falling with the consistency this season.

In Denver, all four of the team’s freshmen saw playing time as they came in off the bench.

Without a strong inside presence, FIU will have to win on the perimeter to upset Louisiana-Lafayette.

Another key player on the Golden Panthers’ roster is senior forward Courtney Rutliff, who over 13 points and seven rebounds a game.

ULL ranks near the bottom of most major defensive categories in the Sun Belt Conference and will probably be hungry for a road win in Miami.

This is a winnable game for FIU, but the Golden Panthers must stay focused and work to improve their shooting percentage and shot selection.

FIU’s last two home games have slipped away mostly in the second half.

The Golden Panthers have to make sure to save some gas in the tank for late in the game against the Cajuns, so they can avoid another second-half meltdown.
New stadiums fail to boost economy

The only reason Loria and his group have not built a stadium is because they have been looking for the city or county to fill a so-called funding gap. The team says it doesn’t have enough money to fully fund a stadium, but if you ask them to show you their books, they won’t.

They’ll claim they don’t have to because they are a private company, but what do you have to hide if you really are losing money like you claim to be?

The Marlins aren’t the only team who does this. Many teams claim to be losing money or not have enough money to fully fund a new stadium, but they’ll never open their books to prove it.

Hell, even George Steinbrenner got New York city to pony up some cash and give up a couple of city parks for the New Yankee Stadium set to open for the 2009 baseball season, a project that some analysts say costs an estimated $1.3 billion (for the stadium, parking amenities and other incurred construction costs).

He also won’t have to pay any property taxes. So tell me how that can benefit the local economy?

Sure a new, bigger stadium creates some new jobs, but they are low-paying, seasonal jobs.

Sports owners are taking you out to dinner and while they get to have a well-aged filet mignon with a bottle of cabernet and nice cheesecake for dessert, you’re having the complimentary bread, a measly appetizer and some iced tap water. However, at the end of the night, you’ll be splitting the check. And you wonder how the rich stay rich?

Gauging recruits’ value not possible for years to come

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in their hands. (No pressure, guys.)

As of Feb. 1, 16 high school recruits have verbally committed to sign with FIU, according to Rivals.com.

This is the first FIU recruiting class to have four players rated as three star recruits, and three out of five stars is nothing to be ashamed of.

But the rating system does not necessarily dictate who is going to be taking it to the house or bringing the pain.

Last year’s recruiting class brought two players rated with three stars: Devin Parrish and Marquis Rolle. Unfortunately, Parrish recorded just 1 solo tackle and Rolle caught two passes last season.

Regardless, the three-star rated players for the 2008 class are defensive back AJ Grant, offensive lineman Cedric Mack, linebacker Kambriel Willis and defensive back Marquise Manearer.

On film, Grant possesses college level speed and power. His instincts getting to the ball are natural, and he knocks out running backs like a young Mike Tyson.

Unfortunately, that was the only video of the four players available for free, but, I admit, I liked what I saw.

With that being said, however, nobody will know how good a recruit is until they put on the shoulder pads and play consistently throughout a whole college season.

One thing is for sure, though, come Feb. 6, Cristobal will approach the podium and announce the 2008 recruits.

For him, Christmas is in February, even though students won’t see gifts for another year or two.
STADIUM OWNERS LEAVE TAXPAYERS WITH THE TAB

Imagine a millionaire panhandling through the streets of downtown Miami, asking for loose change. Sounds ridiculous doesn’t it? But it happens more often than you think. Maybe they’re not literally panhandling, but every time a millionaire – and not just any millionaire, a nine-figure millionaire – or billionaire owner of a professional sports team asks the city or county for tax money to fund a new stadium, they might as well be.

Passing the bill – or even part of the bill – to tax payers is not only unfair, it is extremely greedy, considering that the majority of tax payers do not even care for the local sports team.

So why do they do it? It is very simple – because they can, and no one will stop them.

Every year, an ownership group for a professional sports team will complain to the local government that they need a new stadium.

The owners will argue that a new stadium will reinvigorate the area and stimulate the economy. But only the economy a new stadium stimulates is the pockets of the owners.

There’s a reason those owners have all the money they have. They can avoid paying the full tab and still profit from it, they’ll do it every time. You wouldn’t pass up a free meal, right? Well these guys aren’t passing up free millions of dollars if they can get it.

Ever since Jeffrey Loria took over the Florida Marlins in 2002, he has been vying to build a new stadium, ownership of the Florida Marlins in 2002, allowing him to build a more competitive team. Ever since Jeffrey Loria took over the Florida Marlins in 2002, he has been vying to build a new stadium, ownership of the Florida Marlins in 2002, allowing him to build a more competitive team.

For FIU coach Mario Cristobal, Feb. 6 is the day when months of scouting, recruiting and convincing high school players to dawn blue and gold next season culminates.

Yet as exciting as new, fresh players joining the team sounds, National Signing Day, in a nutshell, is a showcase of next season’s benchwarmers and practice squad.

Sure these new players are the future of the program, but, really, how much does the future matter to the current juniors and seniors who might never see the contributions these incoming recruits will make on the field?

For results to be acknowledged and appreciated they have to be a little more immediate than two or three years.

Of the 18 recruits Cristobal brought last year, 10 of them participated in at least one snap.

The 2007 National Signing day recruiting class consisted of the most heralded recruits in FIU’s short history because it was the first time the team landed out of state players.

I understand that the purpose of National Signing Day is not to present the new starting quarterback or defensive back, but it’s just so difficult to be hyped up when in the back of your mind you know most of these kids won’t help the team reach their goal of winning at least two games next season.