Environmental Engineering

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Torn between graduate
looking for enlightenment.
The Civil and Environmental
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to know Tansel would
after that, I decided to come
professor I talked to, and
met her. She was the first

"Supah" Mario Toledo, a non-FIU student, break dances at
SEX
"Supah"

"I'm in the right profession. This is my calling. I feel like Oprah saying
I'm in the right profession. This is

Accomplished professor inspires current, future engineering students

Daniella Baccalupo Staff Writer

Banni Sizirici walked into the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department looking for enlightenment. Torn between graduate school at the University of Miami or at FIU, she came to the Engineering Campus with her dilemma two years ago.

Her problem was solved after one meeting with Environmental Engineering Professor Berrin Tansel.

"It was the first time I met her. She was the first professor I talked to, and after that, I decided to come to FIU," Sizirici said.

Anyone who comes to know Tansel would probably not be surprised by the anecdote above. Tansel’s passion for her career has led her to work at FIU for more than two decades, during which she has generated innovative programs in her department, collaborated in over 200 research projects and papers and helped develop many young engineers. For all her efforts, Tansel has received constant recognition and was most recently named a 2006 Kaufman Professor by FIU’s Eugenio Pino & Family Global Entrepreneurship Center. In 2007, Tansel received the Engineer of the Year award by the American Society of Civil Engineers Miami-Dade Branch.

"I’m in the perfect job for me . . . there is some degree of freedom [in my job]. I’m not confined — and if I have an idea — I’m not limited in taking that idea to the next step. I love my job," Tansel said.

Innovation has marked Tansel’s career. From choosing environmental engineering for her master’s degree when it was developing in the 1970s, to initiating hazardous wastes as a division of the engineering department at FIU, Tansel has strived to be on the "cutting edge." Engineering is one of the professions that you have to be on the cutting edge. I always look for opportunities to make our program stand out," Tansel said.

This mindset led Tansel, page 2

Students join sprint for Darfur

Chris Towers Ben F. Badger Jr. Season Staff

FIU students looking for a way to help the growing crisis in Darfur can do more besides join Facebook groups. The Miami Sprint For Darfur will take place Feb. 24 at 8:30 a.m. in front of Coral Gables City Hall and will feature a 5k run and 1-mile ‘fun run.’ High school seniors, led by Chloe Hans-Barrientos from Mast Academy, are helping to organize the event. IOS Partners, an international management consulting and financial services firm, is also involved with the sprint.

"The goal of the Miami Sprint For Darfur is twofold: raising awareness and raising funds. The awareness-raisin portion is aimed at informing people about the ongoing genocide," said Robert R. Hans, Chloe’s father and senior managing director of IOS Partners. “Awareness leads to action, and [students’] involvement will directly support the millions currently suffering on the ground in Darfur and in the refugee camps in Chad.”

Hans-Barrientos got the idea for the event following a research paper on Darfur, where she first heard about the suffering people going through there.

"I was in shock that this had been happening and I wanted to become active because people didn’t know..."
about it,” Barrientos said. Following this, she started a “Dollars for Darfur” campaign at Mast Academy and organized the Sprint for Darfur.

“Sprint for Darfur” brings aid, awareness for Sudan

According to an interview conducted by Inreal News with the Sudanese defense minister, the Sudanese government, who has been accused of backing and funding the militia groups being held responsible for the genocide, claim just 9,000 civilians have been killed in the conflict, other sources, such as the United Nation’s Coalition for International Justice, cite figures from 200,000 to 400,000 dead in the conflict, which has also left more than 2.5 million in refugee camps in bordering territories.

“We need to raise awareness of this crisis and channel resources to the families of the victims,” Hans said.

Many University of Miami students have already pledged their support for the event and registered. A similar reaction from FIU students is expected, according to Hans.

Young voters have big effect on primary results

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Women’s Center forum analyzes health, sex, love

PAMELA DUQUE
Contributing Writer

The Women’s Center held its first Wild Suc- tivity forum this semester to discuss sexual fetishes, Jan. 31 at 9 p.m. in the Bay Vista housing community.

In collaboration with the Center for Leadership & Service, the Women’s Center hosts the WSU forum on the last Thurs-
day of each month to allow students to express opinions and learn about sensitive subjects.

“We try to make it a very safe environment so that people who do want to share about certain parts of their sex-
ual desire, can, and those who just want to come in and soak it all in, can do that too,” said Brownen Barres, coordinator of the CLS and Women’s Center at the BBC.

The Women’s Center does research on the topic chosen by the students and then provides information that will educate them.

“These meetings are for anyone, to let [students] know to be comfortable with who they are, to feel OK about certain parts of their sex-
uality, and also to be educated,” said Anzueto.

The next meeting will take place on Feb. 28 and the topic is “Love vs. Lust.”

“Most of the time students talk about academ-
ics, or about choosing a major, or something related to school.”

This is a free forum with interesting topics that students like to talk about that aren’t often presented to students,” said Betty Mathurin, a junior and psychology major who attends the meetings.

The CLS and Wom-
en’s Center will also host “Take Back the Night” to spread rape aware-
ness. April 10 in Panther Square from 7 to 9 p.m. at the BBC. For informa-
tion, visit www.fiu.edu or call (305) 919-
5359.

ASHLEY WOJNAR
Contributing Writer

“Making one wish come true at a time,” is the motto of the Biscayne Bay Campus Wishgivers’ club, a non-profit organization estab-
lished in 2005 that raises money to grant wishes to children with life threatening dis-
abilities and raise awareness of the organization.

The money that the BBC Wishgivers club raises is donated to the Make a Wish Foundation of South Flor-
dida. The children chosen are usually referred by a doctor or hospital.

“I enjoy watching my members run an event and have fun, but succeed at the same time,” said Zach-
ary Trautenberg, the fac-
culty advisor. “They not only work as people, but are helping charity all at once.”

Trautenberg got his own wish granted in 2001, when he was New York’s youngest to ring the stock exchange bell.

Vanessa Robinson, an active member, feels the same way about helping children with life threaten-
ing disabilities.

“It brings joy to my life knowing that I am helping make young children’s wishes come true.” Rob-
inson said. “I feel this is my way of giving back to the community and I am honored to do so.”

Last year, the South Flor-
ida Foundation granted $14 wishes. Some wishes chil-
da have asked for have been to see movie stars, athletes and musicians. Other popular wishes are going to a favorite theme park or to see snow for the first time.

This month, the Make a Wish Foundation made it possible for a young girl to meet Incubus at their concert.

“My favorite thing about the club is knowing that we are able to make a difference in the lives of others,” said President Sonia Perez.

In the spring, the BBC club usually raises 700.00 to 1,000.00 dollars to donate. This year the BBC club hopes to donate 3,000 to 5,000 dollars. Students can check out each month’s wishes on the Web site www.wish.org.

The club has a wish of their own - to bring in more members so that the club remains active for current members graduate. The club’s board consists of five members and ten active members that gener-
ally meet in the Campus Life office around noon, on varying days.

Students at BBC can participate in several events that the Wishgivers organiza-
tion sponsors. Past events have included game nights where club members have played Dominos or Texas Hold’em to raise money. On these nights the organiza-
tion needs students who act as casino dealers. This year’s game night will be held on March 5 at 7 p.m. in the Balloons of the Wolf University Center.

“This not only raised money for a child’s wish, but it was a fun way in doing it,” said Trauten-
berg.

Other examples of events have been auctions where students can donate their prom dresses and other

Wishgivers club helps children with disabilities
Let's face it: Religion is crazy to some degree, but who's the craziest of all?

ROQUE CORONA
Staff Writer

Last week, after I learned that an online group called “Anonymous” was waging war on the Church of Scientology, I started thinking about how the teachings of Scientology were really that much more absurd than other religions.

I’m not talking about whether or not any specific faith is any more malign than another, but if any one religion’s teachings governing the world are more logical than another’s. Scientology, Buddhism, Mormonism, as well as the Abrahamic religions – Christianity, Islam and Judaism – are all equally as silly in what they define as truth.

Scientology, which was founded by L. Ron Hubbard in 1952 and counts Tom Cruise and John Travolta among its practitioners, believes that a human is an immortal spiritual being called a thetan, which is temporarily trapped on Earth in what they call a “meat body.” But wait, where do these thetans come from?

The aliens were then stacked around volcanoes and blown up with hydrogen bombs, creating swarms of alien souls known as Body Thetans, which were later captured and forced to watch brain-wash- ing films on giant 3-D screens. Now these thetans live within our bodies.

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all generally teach a similar creationist story, but on a scale of one to ten on the crazy meter, this rates at around a solid ten.

But on a scale of one to ten on the crazy meter, this rates at around a solid ten.

In the 1950s they said the only way for a black man to get into Heaven was as a slave. One of their early leaders said that race mixing should be punishable by death.

Mormons don’t believe in deities with six limbs or elephant heads. Nor do they believe in reincarnation, or the sacredness of the cow. Those wacky beliefs are reserved for the Hindu religion.

Are you beginning to see a trend here? Thetans, talking snakes, Israeli Nazis, pachyderm-human hybrids. That’s right, they’re all crazy. Every last one of them.

Even in the non-sectarian world of the atheists, they more or less have their own explanation for the Universe set in stone; science, but they’re not in the majority and that could mean any number of things. The basis for all religions are these inexplicable phenomenons, but it seems like a lot of these beliefs are just for the sake of believing.

I think Trey Parker, co-creator of South Park, said it best while being interviewed on ABC’s Nightline: “Basically … out of all the ridiculous religion stories—which are great, wonderfully ridiculous—the silliest one I’ve ever heard is, ‘Yeah, there’s this big giant universe and it’s expanding, and it’s all gonna collapse on itself and we’re all just here just ‘cause… just cause.’ That, to me, is the most ridiculous explanation ever.”

Only one of these signers is considered a “front runner” in the race, further demonstrating how candidates with a greater focus on government by the people are often overlooked in an age where we expect our federal government to be large and in charge.


Democratic policies, which aim at using government programs to improve quality of life for American citizens, make it difficult for them to call for decreased spending, which is fine, but it should still not be a problem for leaders of the party to show that the money being spent is being done so wisely, by publishing it on a government search engine available to the public, especially in a time when terms such as “ear marks,” “pork,” and “pet projects” are becoming buzzwords for representing government waste.

While the pledge applies only to the potential future president and only to the executive branch of the government. Such an action taken by the chief of state would send a powerful mandate to the legislative branch to do the same, especially considering that individual states, including Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma already make such data easily available to their citizens on the Web, according to Newsmax.

Sen. Obama told Fox News: “Every American has the right to know how the government spends their tax dollars,” in explaining why he signed the pledge.

Sen. Paul has been a steadfast proponent of transparency and accountability a priority. The fact that two prominent presidential candidates are willing to open themselves up like that—provided only their they’re elected—speaks volumes of the other non-committal candidates like Hillary Clinton, John McCain, and Mitt Romney. Paul and Obama should be commended for their openness, the likes of which are almost unprecedented in modern politics.

Seems like a copout all lawmakers should agree on, but one that few will pledge to.

Thank’s are in order to the leaders of our country who have made accountability a priority.

Let’s hope that issues such as these prevail over the mudslinging and fluff as we continue to pick not only our next President, but our leaders of our country.

Eric Feldman
Staff Writer

If you were running to be president of the United States and a voter asked you if you would give the public more information on how their tax dollars are being spent, what would you say?

It has to be foolish that anyone who would answer no, considering that continuing to hide such data wouldn’t possibly appeal to any American who funds the federal government, yet has increasingly little oversight in how the funds are spent.

Only four candidates in this election have pledged to open up this information by signing the Oath of Presidential Transparency, a pledge designed by the not-for-profit Reason Foundation.

The oath compels presidential candidates to make the spending data of the executive branch of government available on the Internet, according to Newsmax magazine.

The four candidates who have made such a pledge are Sen. Barack Obama, Sen. Mike Gravel and recent election dropout, Rep. Dennis Kucinich all of whom are Demo- crats.

The Republicans were non-com- mital except Rep. Ron Paul.

Every Republican candidate has vowed to cut spending during televised debates, yet only one seems to have the guts to publish information to prove that this is being done.

Democratic policies, which aim at using government programs to increase quality of life for American citizens, make it difficult for them to call for decreased spending, which is fine, but it should still not be a problem for leaders of the party to show that the money being spent is being done so wisely, by publishing it on a government search engine available to the public, especially in a time when terms such as “ear marks,” “pork,” and “pet projects” are becoming buzzwords for representing government waste.

While the pledge applies only to the potential future president and
At around 9 p.m. every evening, funk and old school hip-hop echo through the Graham Center. FIU students and non-FIU students gather in the GC “Pit” to showcase their best moves and battle through dance.

For the past four years, the “Pit” has been known as one of the prime locations for “b-boying”, or break dancing as it is more commonly known. According to Mario “Supah Mario” Toledo and Jonathon “Exch” Ramos, break dancing’s true name is b-boy and the activity only got the name break dancing from the mainstream media. Ramos and Toledo refer to everyone who comes to practice as their b-boys and b-girls when they get together and practice their moves.

“Break dancers are all the same to me. They’re more like universal,” Toledo said.

The duo belongs to a group called the Ground Zero Crew, which competes in b-boy competitions across the country. Toledo said there are 13 members of Ground Zero, located in Miami, California and New York. Most of the b-boys and b-girls in the pit don’t belong to a crew, though.

“This dance is dynamic … if anybody tells [you] it’s just somebody throwing their body around, it’s far from the truth. Students crowd around to watch them practice and, often, it is their first time watching somebody b-boy,” Toledo said.

For freshman Samantha Chen, who teaches salsa classes for Dade student who comes to the pit to practice his moves and battle other dancers.

B-boying is not as popular in Miami as it is in New York City and California. FIU is one of the few spots in Miami where practice and competition regularly happen.

Toledo said they first found out about the pit four years ago during a barque at University Park. Since then, they’ve come back night after night to battle and practice. While practicing over the years at FIU, the b-boys and b-girls believe they have become a staple of GC. Students crowd around to watch them practice and, often, it is their first time watching somebody b-boy.

“B-boying is even appealing to others who never considered it. Rachel Barronos, a 20-year old Miami-Dade College student who teaches salsa classes for Salsa Kings got her first taste of b-boying while taking a sip of coffee in GC,” Toledo said.

After teaching her salsa lesson, she would watch Toledo and the rest of the crew perform their acrobatic dance moves when Toledo asked her to give it a shot.

Now she partakes in the dance every night after class.

Electricidad refuses to leave her father’s side and goes against the advice of her grandmother and neighbors. According to the play’s director, Professor Wayne Robinson, the audience can still find humor alongside a dark world.

“Alfaro creates a world of dark humor where an audience can laugh despite the violent and dark themes,” Robinson said. “This play is difficult to categorize. It covers serious subject matters and deals with this family’s difficulties, yet in the end, all characters find humor.”

As in any Greek tragedy, the chorus plays an important role in reciting the story.

“The vecinas,” Electricity’s neighbors, humor the audience in a witty and iconically funny tone as they gossip about Electricity’s actions as well as those of the surrounding neighbors.

“A unique element of the play is the chorus,” Robinson said. “Assistant Dxy, the Marina Pareja has done an excellent job working with them.”

Natalie Alvarez, who plays Electricity’s grandmother, also evokes laughter from the audience with her colorful personality.

“I play the character of ‘Abuela,’ Alvarez said. “She’s a sexy vieja still stuck in the ‘good ol’ days, known to be the wisest cholita around, still not too old to kick some barrio butt. She’s too old to be young, but too young to be old.”

Alfaro, who himself is a Chican (Mexican-American) and...
was raised in Los Angeles, blends in "Spanglish" and other street lingo to give the play gritty and authentic dialogue. The barrio (neighborhood) in which the play is set seems a world apart from the rest of sunny Los Angeles. In this barrio, Mexican traditions hold strong and tattoos and jail-time are a way of life. These characters are so consumed in their own world that they are blind to the opportunities that lie before them outside the barrio. Alfaro blends Hispanic elements into his adaptation of the traditional Greek tragedy, but its meaning and theme are not lost in translation. "Electricidad" portrays life and violence in East LA, while representing how a family and a neighborhood struggle to discover themselves amongst American and Mexican influences. Robinson warns that this play is not an actual portrayal of Mexican-American culture and the characters are not indicative of all Chicanos. "Alfaro grabs certain elements of this community to create a specific world surrounded by dark humor. This play would be too violent if it were real." Anyone raised in a passionate culture, like many Hispanics are, will love to see these larger than life characters come alive on stage," said Alvarez. As the first production of the year, the Theatre Department will be hosting Alfaro’s "Electricidad" at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center Theatre Feb. 7 through Feb. 17. To purchase tickets or request information, call (305)-348-3789.
WOMEN'S NOTEBOOK

Road trip helps team gain momentum

DARREN COLLETTE
Staff Writer

Sometimes when things are not going well at home, you just need to hit the road and try to take your mind off things. That old adage seemed to work for the women's basketball team (9-13, 7-6 Sun Belt). However, it seems that trip to the Rocky Mountains and the badlands of Northern Texas turned FIU in the opposite direction. Most of the time, a basketball team on a losing streak will stumble in the face of a road trip that takes the team far away from their home games. The Golden Panthers seemed to be losing control after losing three games in a row, two of which came at home in games that were winnable.

The Mean Green came into the game having won four of its last five games. UNT is also a team with a lot of big players, which has been a problem for the Golden Panthers this season.

When the game ended, FIU had not only beaten North Texas but also had matched a season high with 77 points in the game. FIU should also be commended for apparently fixing some of its biggest problems during the road trip.

Sometimes when things are not going well at home, you just need to hit the road and try to take your mind off things. However, it seems that trip to the Rocky Mountains and the badlands of Northern Texas turned FIU in the opposite direction.

COLLEGE STUDENTS:
Win a trip to Europe!

Enter The Miami Herald Student Backpacking Experience for:
- Round-trip airfare from South Florida to Europe courtesy of American Airlines
- A Eurail pass courtesy of Rail Europe
- $500 cash for lodging, food and more

To enter, write an essay of 150 words or less telling us why you want to go on a summer backpacking trip and how you think it will affect your life or change your perspective.

Enter online by following the link at www.MiamiHerald.com/travel. All entries must be received by Feb. 24, 2008.

Quality of commercial in question

In what was one part ad for Bud Light and one part ad for his upcoming '70s basketball comedy Semi-Pro, Will Ferrell over and over again botches his lines for Bud Light, similar to a scene in his NASCAR comedy Talladega Nights.

Ferrell's comedy has become completely predictable to anyone who has seen more than one of his movies. He always seems to play an arrogant, boorish jerk who doesn't realize it, so it is a testament to his skills as a comedian when, at one point, he deadpans the line "Bud Light: It refreshes the palate and the joints!" and you find yourself incapable of not laughing.

SALESGENIE.COM'S ANTIQUATED RACISM

It seems like a pretty profound waste of time and money for a company to spend about $6 million dollars on two ads that they had to know would make people angry. You have to question the company's decision-making here. There is little doubt in my mind that they will be issuing an apology within a few days.

JOIN OUR STAFF!

The BEACON is always looking for talented and reliable individuals to join the staff. If you have an interest in writing, photography or even grammar, don't be shy. Stop by one of our offices located in GC 210 and WUC 124.
Despite one of the most thrilling finishes of all time, a significant portion of the audience during the Super Bowl on Feb. 3 spent much of FOX's three and a half hour broadcast more focused on the advertisements than the actual play on the field. Advertisers spent, on average, a staggering $2.7 million for a 30-second spot during the game, which was watched by 97.5 million viewers, the second largest television audience of all time.

Unlike in recent years, these affectionately known unadulterated consumerism were rewarded for their dedication with some of the most imaginative and original ads in the game's history. Sadly, there were also some ads that highlighted some of the worst qualities in modern American advertising, with most simply turning to soporific humor, but a select few resorting to stereotypes that, if not for their humorlessness, might have been mistaken for parody.

But before we get to those commercials, there are my 5 favorite commercials shown during the game. Although they might have seemed fresh the first time you see them, by the 100th time you are shown in the next few weeks, you'll be absolutely sick of them, so enjoy them while you can.

**AUDI UNVEILS NEW ROADSTER**

Despite the fact that many people will not be able to afford its $100,000 starting price tag, it is difficult to deny that this advertisement created a ton of hype for this new car. It begins outside of a large mansion. The camera pans inside the house, showing a man waking up in bed, covered in oil, to find the hood of his car at his feet.

This parody of the classic film, The Godfather, proved to be a highly effective usage of the standard movie parody angle which many commercials try. The difference with this one was the execution, building up to the proverbial punch line when the man screams as the new Audi speeds away from his house.

**E-TRADE’S WEBCAM BABY**

E-Trade has always been one of the better producers of ads during the Super Bowl and they struck gold with a pair of ads that featured a talking baby trading stocks online.

While the talking baby angle has been around forever (culminating in a truly awful Christmas time) and they provided one of the more surreal ads when they featured Underdog and Stewie Griffin’s parade floats fighting through New York City for a Coke float. This alone provided enough entertainment, but when Charlie Brown rises out of Central Park to claim the bottle for himself, you can’t help but smile.

The kid’s been through some tough times, so it’s nice to see him come out on top for once.

Though I couldn’t have been the only one secretly hoping Lucy would come and snatch the Coke from Charlie at the very end.

**COCOA COLA’S MACY’S PARADE**

Coca Cola has always had some of the best commercials period (except for those obnoxious Polar Bears that come back every Christmas time) and they provided one of the most surreal ads when they featured Underdog and Stevie Griffin’s parade floats fighting through

**MONEY SPENDERS:** This year’s ads featured a slew of comedy mixed with unprecedented creativity.