In come the rides, out go the spots

CHARLIE GRAU  
Editor in Chief

Students could find themselves looking for parking for a little longer than usual when they come back from Spring Break. From March 17 to April 20, Lot 5, located next to the Wertheim Performing Arts Center will be closed due to use by the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition. According to Bill Foster, director of Parking and Transportation, half of the lot sits on Miami-Dade County property, while the other half sits on FIU property. The University has exclusive use of the lot for 11 months of the year, while the Fair has it for the remaining month when it comes to town.

Unlike past years, The Fair will be opening later in March. It usually opens the week before Spring Break, which allows students and faculty to feel less of the traffic woes caused by The Fair. Officials at The Fair said the date was moved back to accommodate students in the public school system who will take the FCAT in mid-March. The Fair opens on March 27 this year.

Foster said the first day is usually one of the most hectic because fair attendees can pay $5 for admission. Regular admission is $9.

With the added traffic during The Fair’s opening weekend, Foster said Public Safety officers will be stationed at Panther Hall and Lot 5, in order to keep fairgoers from taking up the already limited amount of spaces reserved for students in housing.

Parking and Traffic will also provide some signs and staffing efforts to direct users of Lot 5 to other available spaces.

“Since FIU has this mutual aide agreement with The Fair, we do not try to keep cars off campus during fair hours,” FIU parking is normally used as an overflow area, so the biggest impact during the 18 days The Fair operation comes during the night time hours,” Foster wrote in a e-mail. “Parking and Transportation provides staffing at the housing lots to control access for housing resident decal holders only, and we monitor the Blue and Gold Garages to assist in a security effort for our community.”

Although The Fair may create stress for those trying to find parking at University Park, Foster said there are plenty of parking spaces on campus to compensate for the month-long loss of spaces in Lot 5.

“[Students] can use the Panther Garage. It’s got 800 empty parking spaces,” Foster said in an interview last year with The Beacon. “That’s a really great place for them to go, but most people don’t look at it as a great place to go. It is a little bit more of a walk.”

Students can also park in Lot 7 next to the Football Stadium, which has 200 additional parking spaces.

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WAR PROTEST: Young activists lead a protest in downtown Miami on March 19, the 5th anniversary of the beginning of US military actions in Iraq.

Fifth year of Iraq war brings protesters out

ALEXANDRA MCNARNEY  
Staff Writer

The Torch of Friendship, a monument on Biscayne Blvd. became the center of a protest on March 19 when over 70 activists made of high school students, college students, veterans and others gathered to mark the fifth anniversary of the Iraq war.

They waved banners stamped with the slogan “End the War Now” and chanted through megaphones to passing cars.

“I’m really pissed off,” said Rebecca Lubin, 23. “We spend around $25,000 every hour on the Iraq war and second we voted Democrats into Congress so they would cut the funding, but they haven’t.”

According to an MSNBC article printed on March 9, 2008, the war in Iraq has cost the United States $12 billion a month.

Among increasing fears of an impending recession, a CNN poll released on the weekend of March 15 and 16 showed seven in 10 respondents believe the Iraq war is actually responsible for today’s failing economy. Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stieglitz estimates that the total cost of the war will reach $3 trillion, or a quarter of the U.S. annual gross domestic product of $13.8 trillion.

Rose Lubin marched as a representative for the honors Women Studies Association.

“I can’t vote for Hillary or Obama. They won’t get our kids out of Iraq,” Lubin said. “They’re serving their own interests.”

The protest was organized by FIU alum Muhammed Malik and by the Act Now to Stop War and End Racism Coalition, ANSWER.

“We are not only calling for an immediate end to the war, but initiating a larger call to fight these same corporations and bankers in their war against working and poor people here at home,” Malik said. “The elections will show that Democratic and Republic candidates—parties funded by big business—will not come up with a plan to end the war in Iraq or the economic war being waged here at home.”

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**Miami protest one of many around country**

**PROTEST, page 1**

The protest was part of a larger, national effort railing against the war in Iraq. Other rallies happened in cities such as San Francisco and New York. However, since the troop surge in January 2007, the numbers of protests have dwindled. In the case of the Miami protest, the projected numbers of demonstrators had been in the hundreds.

“The media here, they don’t show the American people what is really going on inside Iraq,” Cecile Yanick, 35, said during the protest. “You can’t send innocent civilians to die. They’re only 20 to 21 years old.”

According to The Brookings Institution’s Iraq Index, there have been approximately 4,000 American casualties. About 51 percent of those are under 25 years of age.

“Hopefully this wave of awareness will continue to rise,” said Marc Reid, 35, who served two tours of duty in Iraq but is now part of the Iraq Veterans Against the War. “People’s homes are being destroyed, Iraq’s are displaced, Iraqi women are being sold into prostitution.”

UNHCR. It is estimated that 600,000 Iraq’s have been killed as a result of the war. However, some at the protest did not think that chanting for troop withdrawals would be a plausible manner of fixing the damage already been done. “You need to identify new ideas. They aren’t saying anything people don’t already know, they should try something else,” said Brandon Little, an FIU alum.

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Officer enforces car safety with funny, catchy signs

EDDITH SEVILLA
BBC Managing Editor

He stood on 151 Street some mornings with signs that read “will work for you to wear your seat belts” all to gain compliance from drivers heading to the Biscayne Bay Campus and the David Lawrence K-8 Center.

“It takes a certain personality type to come out and have a funny sign standing next to you. If I have to be funny to get attention, to get compliance, I’ll be funny,” said FIU’s law enforcement Sgt. Edward Degelsmith.

Degelsmith, who used the self-made signs for about two months and now displays the messages electronically, works some mornings close to the entrance of BBC to control traffic and encourage drivers to wear their seat belts.

“People see the little signs and they say ‘oh I gotta have my seat belt on’ and I gain compliance,” he said. “I didn’t have the sign up for a couple of days and then just ran the radar. A couple of people have the sign up for a couple of days and then take it off. They put it on they just leave it on. I don’t see people when they come by me put it on and then down the road take it off. They just leave it on, said Degelsmith who has been working for the Public Safety since May of 1992.

While Degelsmith and his team of police officers are just doing their job, Margie Knight said that Degelsmith’s presence has transformed the community.

“… Everything has totally changed since he’s been here,” said Knight, whose 10-year-old daughter is a student at the David Lawrence school. Everybody obeys the traffic. He puts little signs up and everybody always gives him the thumbs up and I just feel like everybody is coming together as a community. This was total chaos because as you know the school is new. Since they put this officer here, everybody obeys the law. It’s just totally organized.”

TIM BEACON

The current electronic message on display reads as follows: Speeding, $120.50. No seatbelt, $89.50. Arrive alive, priceless.

“The part of the job of a police officer is to protect and serve and sometimes you have to protect people from themselves,” Degelsmith said.

Carribean student’s voices urged to become vocal

ANA PEREZ
BBC Life! Editor

The West Indian Student Association of Biscayne Bay Campus provides a home away from home for Caribbean students and a culture shock for everyone.

Reinstated last semester, WISA hopes to have a voice on campus and be educational as well as entertaining by hosting cultural discussions and social activity events.

Joanna Oates, vice president of WISA, felt there was a need for a Caribbean voice on campus because of the vast amount of Caribbean students here.

“Students wanted to get to know people from their [home] countries and the Caribbean as a whole because we share many similarities,” said Oates, a graduate student. “We would ultimately like our membership to grow, have signature events and a large voice on campus.”

Although the group has not had any events since its recent resurgence, members are currently anticipating the Florida Caribbean Student Association conference in April where all Caribbean student associations from Florida will come together.

WISA is hosting the conference, which will consist of workshops, team building activities and a pageant, with one day occurring at BBC and another two days at University Park.

The conference’s main objective is to bring everyone together, and Theo Cooper, Student Organization Council’s representative for WISA, believes that is the right road to take.

“As a single unit, we each have a voice, but cohesively we can have a greater voice. We need to find ways like this to come together and ensure opportunities for everybody in the Caribbean,” said Cooper, also a graduate student.

According to Oates, WISA is valuable for many students.

“WISA is a place where [members] can make friends and where we can educate others on our heritage,” Oates said.

Cooper agreed and shared his personal experience.

“In my transition to this country I found a need to find people who I could identify with because they understood better what I was going through. We are the future leaders of our countries. We all had to suffer the same things so we have to think of our brothers and sisters,” Cooper said. “The bottom line is we are human and whatever we can do to elevate human dignity in life, we ought to do.”

In WISA’s last meeting on March 13, the discussion topic was Caricom, the Caribbean Community, and CSME, the Caribbean Single Market Economy.

Caricom’s goal is to share everything within the Caribbean communities and have whatever is allowed in one country, allowed in the others as well.

Students agreed that Caricom is great in concept, but not practical.

WISA Meetings are held every Thursday at 5:30 p.m. and flyers are posted around BBC as reminders.

Next meeting’s topics will include Rastafarianism, a way of life that promotes love and respect for all living things and emphasizes the importance of human dignity and self-respect.

“WISA is here to stay. We are coming back stronger than ever and we are coming everyone,” Oates said.
The fourth amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees citizens the right to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures. The Federal Communications Act protects citizens from wiretapped communications being included in a trial, wiretaps, internet surveillance.

With such stringent rules put in place by Congress and upheld after time by the Supreme Court (most notably, Olmstead v. The United States) why is it that FIU is able to circumvent the law by using Cisco Systems’ Clean Access Agent to monitor the Internet use of students? Why can FIU’s University Technology Service (UTS) use information procured by this “Agent” to incriminate students? The short answer is control.

If a student is “caught” illegally downloading, the source cannot be traced back to a computer, but rather the person whose Clean Access account was used to log in is logged and a warning is sent. If the activity continues, the student’s Internet usage is cut in out indefinitely, pending a police report being filed with Conflict and Resolution Services.

While the student shouldn’t have been downloading in the first place, why are they being penalized for something that has also been deemed not illegal especially? Since the MPAA has dropped its investigations.

Apparently cyber-criminals are more of a threat to FIU than would-be rapists running around campuses harassing women living on campus as reported by the “Police Notes” in The Beacon.

According to The Beacon in 2007, Cisco Systems also peddles the Clean Access Agent to totalitarian regimes such as the government of China, who in turn use the same software to watch citizens, much like the U.S. Patriot Act, can be used to incriminate its citizens.

The responsibility to deal with the allegations falls solely on the student whose user name was logged at the time of the file transfer, not on the owner of the computer, at least according to Ramon of UTS at University Park.

It’s the belief of the Supreme Court that using a surveillance method like CAA is in violation of the Federal Communications Act and therefore constitutes an illegal search (a search that had to be conducted to find out the user who downloaded the material) and therefore a violation of the fourth amendment.

That means that if someone guesses your username (pretty easy to do if they know your first name, last name, and birth date) and password, then you’re open to a whole host of possible other “ridiculous” claims. But rather than investigate claims of possible identity theft, UTS representatives simply transfer the allegations falls solely on the person whose Clean Access account was used to log in.

At least this way, with a greater degree of certainty we’ll be getting the bad guys and not releasing an approximate 27% who didn’t know anything anyway. Another question that’s plaguing us is the idea of defining torture.

What would make me weep like a kindergartener may seem like a hot stone massage to Chuck Norris.

Everyone is aware of the benefits of torture. Insights into future terrorist plots and possibility of saving lives that otherwise would be lost, so I’ll mainly focus on the costs.

One such question concerns the entire premise as to whether the detainee even has the information in the first place. Certainty is a hard thing to come by in the murky world of government intelligence, and a priori knowledge when used by the CIA to capture these people is notoriously inaccurate. Currently there are approximately 545 detainees at Guantanamo Bay. 146 to date have been released, according to CNN in 2007. So my question is, why are they incarcerated be able to download,” but rather, if someone says UTS made a mistake, then they need to investigate rather than forcing other innocent students to waste time trying to get their Internet access back because of an obvious error on the part of UTS.

A practice like this, similar to the practices of totalitarian China, could constitute the establishment of a quasi-police state at FIU. When FIU leaves this Orwellian witch hunt for cyber-criminals, then I think the real education should begin.

Sickening torture difficult to rationalize, define a tuition increase to seamlessly keep schools like FIU going at their current workflow. If Congress, like President Bush were to seize control of these decisions, our tuition would be cheap, but the growth of the University System could come to a grinding halt.

The proposal to revert to a single commissioner is opposed by two education-conscious former Governors, Jeb Bush and Bob Graham. Founder, Bob Graham has been particularly vehement on the issue.

Bush opposes the measure because it leaves the governor without the ability to drive educational initiatives. With Gov. Crist’s recent budget proposal only allotting the University System $33 million, according to Crist’s Web site, it might not be such a bad idea to give the governor power with the BOG, who has proven to understand what’s important when it comes to funding education.

The Board of Governors, even with the increase in tuition, clearly understands that it’s the quality of education and not the cost that is important in a time like this.

The Board of Governors, created to replace the elected Education Commissioner and with a new State House resolution, the state of Florida may be reverting back to the original format of a single, elected official, as reported by The Beacon on March 13.

If such a resolution were to pass, the unity that the Board of Governors (BOG) afforded Florida schools would cease to exist and the power to govern our schools would be given back to the Legislature.

Tuition would be lowered if power were returned to the Legislature, which would be great, if only the quality of said education would remain the same, according to Senator Edward Kennedy, and according to Senator President Ken Pruitt.

The Board of Governors countered by saying that the tuition increase approved by the BOG this semester was only to maintain quality of the University System despite the statewide budget crisis.

The Board of Governors needs to remain as the educational legislating body simply because they obviously have the University System’s best interests at heart, even if it means
Super Smash Bros. Brawl

Nintendo delivers new twists to an old favorite

JONATHAN DAVILA
Staff Writer

Back in the days of the Nintendo 64, gamers would’ve never fathomed Mario’s gloved fist striking Pikachu’s rosy cheeks until “Super Smash Bros.” came out of HAL Laboratory Inc. in April 1999.

Well, how unfathomable does Solid Snake launching grenades at Sonic the Hedgehog sound?

If you answered ‘not at all,’ then you’ve no doubt played “Super Smash Bros. Brawl,” the third iteration of the Super Smash Bros. series.

Building upon the successful formula of its predecessors, “Brawl” pits several of Nintendo’s characters against each other in a child-friendly, fast paced fighting game. The rules are simple: beat your opponent until he or she is sent flying off the stage.

Only now, non-Nintendo characters are being thrown into the mix. Solid Snake and Sonic the Hedgehog are the first three party characters initiated into the “Smash Bros.” universe. Also joining the band of brawlers for the first time are characters from Meta Knight, Pit, King Dedede, Captain Olimar, Wario and others; the full roster boasts 35 playable characters.

Thankfully, only a couple of the brawlers seem like rehashes of other characters already in the game. This means that Meta Knight isn’t just an armored Kirby, and Dr. Mario isn’t just an armored Pikachu. Every character’s Final Smash is amazing to watch in action.

The game has also finally made the leap over to online play, albeit lacking many features that would make “Brawl” a multiplayer masterpiece.

When playing “Brawl” online, players may either play against friends who are already in their address book or play against random players, but these are the only two options.

Playing a game with your friends against random players via Nintendo Wi-Fi is a no-no for Nintendo, whom also decided to not include voice-chat in Brawl, in order to maintain a child-friendly online community.

Overall, “Brawl” is an amazing game that should be a part of every Wii library. Nintendo’s decision to basically strip online play as a respectable one, but it is still detrimental to an otherwise must-own title.
Syesha Mercado has captured the hearts of thousands of FIU students. The former Golden Panther has landed a role as "American Idol," a show that’s one part talent show and one part personality measure and she seems to have enough of both to succeed.

“We were both in the freshman showcase and she did a scene from ‘Hopscotch.’ I don’t know how I remember that,” said Ashley Alvarez, a theatre classmate of Syesha’s, “she did a really great dramatic scene.”

That’s what’s so good about Syesha; she’s not only a good singer but a great actress.”

Before heading to L.A. to start her career in theatre and music, Syesha was part of FIU’s School of Theatre, Dance and Speech. She enrolled in 2005 but dropped out a few days before her Hollywood performance allowed her to compete the following week.

That week, Simon said she had “probably one of the best voices in the competition.”

But talent, whether in acting or singing, is not all that her former peers and professors gush about, they all constantly bring up her fun and light personality.

Ryan Rodriguez, a theatre major, described Syesha “Sye-Sye” as “bubbly” and “full of energy.”

Reading her Q&A on the “American Idol” Web site is a good way to get a glimpse of her personality. “Thinking positive brings positive outcomes,” is her reply to the possibility of being voted off the show.

Syesha’s positive outlook has most likely helped her through some rough patches in her life — a house fire in high school, an alcoholic father and a disagreement with plumbing.

If she can overcome a few faltering performances, she just might.

Randy, Paula and Simon are still fans of her voice but audiences have not been as impressed.

In last week’s show, she was voted in the bottom three but was ultimately not eliminated.

Phillip Church, a theatre professor, said in an e-mail that a show like American Idol “endorses truckloads of fakery” and that because of this, Syesha’s “journey on American Idol will be fraught with obstacles.”

Another theatre professor, Wayne Robinson, believes the problem might stem from the producers’ inability to find a way to market her.

“We who have met her, we know what a really great potential American Idol she can be. But they are looking for someone one who can sell that brand name too,” he said.

Right now, though, she’s made it through another week and will compete next week.

Charlie Spillers, actor and Syesha fan, believes she is the one to keep an eye out for. “She’s incredible, keep an eye on her, even if she gets eliminated,” he said. “Keep an eye on her career because she’s going to go far.”

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Soto hopes to fill void at point guard position

Soto, page 8

“Yeah, I will be a pass-first point guard, but if I need to score to help the team I will do it too. I just want the team to win.”

Soto admits he leaves the starting lineup up to the coaches, but sets the bar high.

“I’ll be happy if I get 10 points, eight assists, and two steals a game,” he said. Alvarez holds high expectations as well.

“I think he is going to be player of the year in the Sun Belt Conference,” Alvarez said. “He is going to bring a lot to the table.”

Soto will not hold back either, and holds even higher team standards.

“NCAA tournament man, that’s it, I’m telling you know,” he said. “I’m telling you today, Feb. 28, 2008, we are going to be in the tournament.”

With an NCAA tournament berth on Soto’s mind, his teammates have no choice but to react the same way they do very often with him.

“They think I’m so crazy,” he said. “But you have to do what you have to do.”

Jonathan Ramos can be contacted at jonathan.ramos@fiuusm.com

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Highly touted recruit replaces former coach Danny Price

XAVIER VILLARMARZO
Staff Writer

Henry Thomas remembers playing little league baseball, and, like most little leaguers, developing a deep love for the game. "It's just such a fun and enjoyable sport that you just develop a love for it that gets inside of your heart that sticks with you all your life," Thomas said.

It's no surprise now that his love for the game has allowed him to coach for over three decades. It's also the reason he wanted his playing career in 1975 at High Point University.

FIU, however, is the first job as head coach for the man known as Turtle – a nickname referring to his running speed bestowed upon him during his playing days. Thomas has been at FIU head coach in FIU history, replacing FIU Hall of Fame and 28-year incumbent Danny Price.

But he is up for the challenge and replacing the 28-year incumbent Danny Price.

"He has you go out and speak in a circuit with some of the best in the nation. A crazy sometimes but it's me and it's my energetic kid, because I love basketball too much," Sujo said about his former coach.

"He narrows the choices and is very good about evaluating people to be a head coach," Thomas said.

"It was a good experience, it was a nice position from one coaching staff to another," Thomas said about the move.

"It was brought in by athletic director Pete Garcia. Both men had local ties. He is a recruiter with many local ties, he is a graduate of the University "Soto hopes to fill void at point guard position

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Editor

Though he did not play in a single men's basketball game this season, it was not hard to spot Josue Soto somewhere around the action.

He could be found meeting in a colli-

hearing him, jumping off the bench after a big play or simply spending more time on his feet than the assistant coaches.

The outgoing point guard just can't help it.

"I was born like that; I am always an energetic kid, because I love basketball too much," he said. "[Teammates] think I'm crazy sometimes but it's me and it's my game and I just want to win."

"I'm just getting started. The sophomore transfer from Florida State says the people around him are just beginning to get used to him and his antics since he arrived on campus, but it is fun for the Golden Panthers during the season.

"I'm loud; I am always playing around and coaches get mad at me because I am so energetic but they're getting used to it and they let me do what I want," he said. "I practice every minute you play, Soto said. "I like that because I appreciate his honesty."

"I told him on an unofficial visit that I was coming because I liked the campus and it was a fun place. But he told me straight up 'you have to get used to academics, and you're going to have to earn every minute you play, Soto said. "I like that because I appreciate his honesty."

"I'm kind of jealous of these freshmen actually," he said. "I wish I could be in their shoes a little bit and pretty much experi-

Ence what this program will be like.

Soto found the right combination of what he wanted at FIU.

"I would bring to this program," Soto said.

"It's not just the talent that a young man can bring but he also [must do] well academi-

ally, has the right mentality, the right work ethic, the right talent level, a guy that will fit into the program the way you want him to fit in and [a] guy that other players will like," Thomas said.

"I would never have signed if he wasn't doing everything he could to win," Soto said about his former coach.

"Coach Thomas is more aggressive," he said. "I like his coaching style. I like how he handles the players and the game – not a whole lot of thinking about the things that we worked on in practice."

"If you have a child with football – and share the college players," Sujo said.

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