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 out 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. 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 unmovable 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 6, 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 an 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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PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Slashed finances call for scrutiny

BEN F. BADGER JR.
Asst. News Director

Looming budget cuts dominated the Board of Trustees meeting on March 14 with talks of how to best prepare for the inevitable.

Bruce Haupli, a member of the board and faculty senate chair, expressed great concern over cuts to services that have already been made over time, relating the cuts to amputation.

“Over the years we have increased in productivity and decreased in relative amounts of resources,” Haupli said. “The only thing we can do now is cut more deeply into bone and indeed amputate. The truth is we are in deep financial doo doo.”

To compounding the concerns over budget cuts, the board is also taking the state of the Board of Governors into serious consideration. A proposed amendment could remove power from the BOG to set tuition.

The amendment could also regulate the University system and return that power to an elected education commissioner instead of an appointed one.

University President modesto A. Maidique also expressed concerns of how these developments will affect his “FIU at 50” plan. The original goal set FIU to be within the top 15 public universities by the time the university turned 50. The plan later changed to the top 10, but might only hit the top 20, Maidique said during the meeting.

BOT members stressed the importance of lobbying state legislatures for the welfare of FIU. Honorary board member Marbely Hernandez, University Park Student Government Council president, also stressed this point with her SGC-UP letter-writing campaign.

“We really want students to write letters [to their legislatures],” Hernandez said.

Hernandez also dispelled rumors that cutting services also included elimination of summer terms.

“By law there have to be classes offered,” Hernandez said. “There might not be as many as we have now, but there will be as many offered as can be.”

The BOT meeting ended on a more light-hearted note when Hernandez was presented with a plaque in recognition of her service as an honorary BOT member. This will be the last meeting Hernandez participates in as an honorary BOT member.

Ben Badger can be reached at Ben.Badger@fi usm.com.

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 Stiglitz estimates that the total cost of the war will reach $3 trillion, or a quarter of the U.S.’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 or Republican 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.”

PROTEST, page 2

No leader,
No guns,
No targets

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.
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Officer enforces car safety with funny, catchy signs

EDDI TH SEVILLA
BBC Managing Editor

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

“People see the little signs and they say ‘oh I gotta have my seat belt on’,” said Knight, whose police squad car. Degelsmith is known for the posterboard slogans he holds up every morning in front of the David Lawrence K-8 Center. “I had a woman drive by and I don’t even know who she was. She gave me an idea for a sign. No seat belt and she wrote a price, speeding ticket. Obeying the law and still getting my kids to school on time. Priceless. It’s a little bit too long for a sign. Most people can’t drive by and read all that but I thanked her for it,” he said.

Aside from deterring crime such as speeding, Degelsmith said that his presence in the streets also is to educate.

“One time they [click their seatbelt] and 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.”

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

“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 all 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 it.”

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 very much coming everyone,” Oates said.
Sickening torture difficult to rationalize, define

JOSEPH MARHEE
Opinion Editor

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 Freedom of Speech 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 mess of nonsense since UTS won’t look into such "ridiculous" claims. But rather than invest claims of possible identity theft, UTS representative simply transfers you to Conflict Resolution.

It’s unconstitutions for a University to operate in such a shady and detrimental way toward its students. There are plenty of ways to circumvent the Clean Access Agent, but rather than be dissenters, students have been downloading in the first place.

Torture. What would make me weep like a baby is the idea of hurting someone who is wholly innocent. Certainly this is something I have trouble rationalizing. So I’ll mainly focus on the costs.

Certainty is the only way we have to 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.

Practice 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.

All Americans hear about on the news is torture, torture, torture; the kind an inmate feels when his nipples are attached to waterboarding, illegal to the almost universal disapproval of the left.

The vote only serves to shame the nation further—“President Bush’s veto will be one of the most shameful acts of his presidency.” Sen. Edward Kennedy said to CNN on March 8.

The idea of hurting someone who is wholly defenseless is a sickening thought to me, but the Marquis de Sade. The idea itself is one that I have trouble rationalizing. So here I remain mired.

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George W. doesn’t see it that way: “This is no time for Congress to abandon prudence that have a proven track record of keeping America safe.”

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 my mind is how the U.S. will 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 a 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.

In 1998 the Board of Governors was created to replace the elected Education Commission 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.

The short answer is control.

Some techniques cross the line into torture? Some would say yes. Others would say no. As long as the idea of defining torture is tricky because like Emerson said “We all boil at different degrees.” So here I remain mired.

The idea of hurting someone who is wholly defenseless is a sickening thought to me, but the Marquis de Sade. The idea itself is one that I have trouble rationalizing.

George W. doesn’t see it that way: “This is no time for Congress to abandon prudence that have a proven track record of keeping America safe.”
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 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.

Now, only 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 fighters for the first time are Nintendo characters, 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 relishes of other characters already in the game. This means that Meta Knight isn’t just an armored Kirby, and Dr. Mario isn’t included because Mario without his degree is already in the game.

Gamers who can’t let go of their old Gamecube controller can still use it to play “Brawl.” Besides the Gamecube controller, players may also use the Wii remote, the Wii remote and Nunchuk combo, or the Wii Classic Controller to play. Introduced in this edition is the Smash Ball: an in-game item that floats around the stage while players duke it out.

The first player to reach and destroy the Smash Ball will be able to unleash their character’s finishing move: their final Smash. The final Smash is a devastating attack that has the potential to automatically knock out opponents. Link performs a vigorous aerial sword attack that sends opponents flying. Snake calls in a helicopter, hops onto the rope-ladder hanging from it, and proceeds to launch rocket-propelled grenades at his foes. Every character’s Final Smash is amazing to watch in action.

“Brawl” contains different modes of play. The adventure mode is titled the Subspace Emissary, and it is quite different from past releases. Previous adventure modes were simple, short side-scrolling adventures that were essentially the same experience no matter which character was chosen.

The Subspace Emissary expands upon this idea by making the adventure mode a ten-hour, cinematic experience in which players embark on a mission to save the world from the Subspace Army.

The stages vary from excellently designed, fun and engaging levels, to downright monotonous episodes that feature the same enemies. Even with all the mayhem caused by players as they fight the Subspace Army and pummel each other with bombs, hammers and soccer balls (yes, soccer balls), “Brawl” still runs at a smooth 60 frames per second.

The game has already 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.

"She's incredible, keep an eye on her, even if she gets eliminated. Keep an eye on her career because she's going to go far." - Randy Jackson, Paula Abdul and Simon Cowell

"She's incredible, not only a good singer but a great actress." - Phillip Church, a theatre professor

"She's not only a good singer but a great actress." - Wayne Timlick, an assistant professor in the theatre department

"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." - Charlie Spillers, actor and Syesha fan

"I think there's something in the water in Miami that makes you want to sing," said Ashley Alvarez.

"Maybe it has to do with FIU's Theatre Department," said Charlie Spillers, actor and Syesha fan.

"Syesha is not the first FIU theatre major to grace its stages -- Nadia Turner also made it to the top 8 in 2005. Maybe it has to do with FIU's theatre department," said Charlie Spillers.

"We who have met her, we know what a really great potential American Idol she can be. But they are looking for someone who can sell that brand name too," he said. "Right now, though, she's made it through another week and will compete as part of the show's Top 11."

"Keep an eye on her career because 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."
Soto hopes to fill void at point guard position

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@fiu.edu
Highly touted recruiter 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 the way he wanted his playing career to end in 1975 at High Point University. FIU, however, is the first job as a head coach for the man known as Turtle – a nickname referring to his running speed bestowed upon him during his playing days.

Thomas becomes the third head coach in FIU history, replacing FIU Hall of Famer and 28-year incumbent Danny Price.

"I was born like that; I am always an aggressive, fun-loving person," said Turtle.

"I was loud; I am always playing around and coaches get mad at me because I’m so crazy sometimes but it’s me and it’s my way," he added. "Other coaches didn’t have it.

"There are plenty of players out there who choose to go to college because they want a college education," he said. "They love the college game and want to learn how to play the game a little better under good coaches. There are plenty of guys who turn down professional contracts to play in college...You just got to find the right guys who are college players.

"There are plenty of players that I thought I could get when I was at other schools," said Turtle.

"But he is up for the challenge and feels there won’t be many differences from a coaching standpoint," Turtle said.

"Coach Thomas is more aggressive," he said. "I like his coaching style. I feel like he kind of lets the guys go out there and play the game – not a whole lot of thinking about the things that we worked on in practice.

"It’s no surprise now that his love for the game has allowed him to coach for over three decades. It’s the way he wanted his playing career to end in 1975 at High Point University. FIU, however, is the first job as a head coach for the man known as Turtle – a nickname referring to his running speed bestowed upon him during his playing days."