Budget cuts inspire job search aid

DANIELLA BACIGALUPO  
Staff Writer

The University’s Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations, Vivian Sanchez, addressed questions concerning the recent state budget cuts in the University Support Personnel Senate meeting on April 11.

The regular USPS agenda was postponed to accommodate Sanchez, who spent an hour explaining the state budget crisis and unveiled a new job search program for potential layoffs.

“When we get there, we are committed as an institution in finding everyone a job,” Sanchez said.

Sanchez stated the job search program will provide ample time to find a new job, because the University considers this a personnel discussion and eventual layoffs.

To ease transition and help the job search program will provide individual coaching in resume writing, interviewing skills and job strategies.

“The University has created the FIU community with educational issues which every child in the developing world faces, and [will] raise money for the amazing and lovable children, spread some love and have some great memories,” said Natasha Pytlik, a junior and president of SFP.

The gala will benefit Escuela Paul Harris, an elementary school in Managua, Nicaragua. Money raised will go toward building a roof and school pavilion at the school, according to Pytlik.

“If every person that attends feels even half the love that we have felt from the children and community of Escuela Paul Harris, I know they will not regret coming,” Pytlik said.

The event will feature many ways to raise funds for the needy school, such as silent auctions and raffles. The club also hopes to accept donations, said Grace Alahas, program coordinator.

“It will raise awareness of the night will educate the FIU community about the educational issues which every child in the developing world faces, and will raise money for the amazing and lovable children,” she said.

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Guest speakers give computer safety advice

From the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The conference begins with free breakfast and a few introductions headed by Cheryl Granto herself. After the students become situated, the event kicks off with Security Awareness 101, which covers the basics dealing with security presented by speaker John Hill from McAfee, a respected company dealing with computer security.

Later on in the day, the conference will discuss the dangers of having an open wireless network at home. Granto believes students could be getting in trouble for crimes that are taking place in their very own drive way.

“If you don’t have your wireless secured, at 3 o’clock in the morning, someone can pull into your drive way, look at inappropriate material and, in the morning, FBI will be knocking at your door,” Granto said.

After the discussion on wireless security, Benjamin Baez from the College of Education will talk about privacy rights.

The presentation will cover the basics dealing with security presented by another speaker dealing with the illegal downloading of copyrighted material such as music, movies or any other form of media. The speech, headed by a member of the FBI, is the most relevant of the bunch as illegal downloading has become a problem among the student body.

The rest of the speeches cover topics such as Malware, a presentation headed by Pete Nicoletti of Terremark; Identity theft, covered by a special agent from the Secret Service and Internet Fraud, presented by another speaker from the FBI.

All the speakers hope to deliver their best to the students as awareness of these threats is surprisingly low.

“Awareness is really the root of security,” John Cabrera from UTCS Customer Relations & Communications said. “You know, we can implement a lot of new technologies but if the users... are not aware, then there really is no basis for it.”

For more information visit uts.fiu.edu.

—Cheryl Granto, IT Security Officer

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MUSIC MEN: Andre Ramos, an FIU pre-med sophomore, on piano and Aniel Maharaj, a UM English sophomore, practice songs in the rest area in WUC. Band is called On A Square.

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Bruce Hauptli, a philosophy professor since 1976, spends his days teaching students about the many mysteries of the mind.

But is a member of FIU’s Board of Trustees and Faculty Senate chair whose mission is to speak for the entire FIU faculty.

“My responsibility is to represent faculty and sometimes even students, at large. I try to be the spokesperson and faculty input,” Hauptli said.

When Hauptli became the Faculty Senate chair, he was automatically given a seat on the BOT.

“I didn’t want to do this, if things were very way I could not have people automatically elected,” Hauptli said.

Despite his apprehension of accepting the position, fellow BOT member Mar- bely Hernandez and current University Park Student Government Council President, was always impressed by Hauptli.

“He is very adamant about speaking for the faculty,” Hernandez said. “His vision is to just make FIU better. He has FIU in his heart and on his mind.”

Hedy First, an administrative assistant in the Faculty Senate, also described Hauptli’s passion for his job.

“Hauptli is a man who is totally dedicated to the best interests of this University,” First said.

The constitution of the Faculty Senate limits the numbers of terms a chair can serve to two, so Hauptli will be saying goodbye to his positions at the end of the semester.

“It has been an incredibly rewarding time, I will miss it, but the goal is that it is limited,” Hauptli said. “I don’t remember what free time is. I believe my teaching has suffered because this position requires so much attention.”

The new Faculty Senate chair will be elected April 15.

“The last four years have mostly been like a full-time job, challenging, but fun,” Hauptli said. “I’m looking forward to becoming a regular faculty member.”
We saw The Smile Train organization in an advertisement and thought what could be better than bringing a smile to a child? The event raised enough money for two cleft palate operations. “Thanks to an anonymous donor, we matched the money for two surgeries. It was a great thing to do,” Nisbet said.

The individual donated $174 to complete the goal of $500 for the two surgeries.

Tables were decorated with sky blue balloons, flowers and FIU memorabilia. A buffet dinner composed of chicken teriyaki, Spanish rice and caesar salad was served. Students did not hesitate to participate in karaoke.

“People were very into karaoke. They seemed to enjoy it a lot,” Chaudry said.

Some students sang while others, like guest Melvin Roane, were content just to watch. “I am a terrible singer. Not a chance I would get near that microphone,” Roane said. “I just listened and enjoyed.” Roane said.

Other entertainment included Mitch the Magician, raffles and bingos. Prizes were awarded by corporate sponsors such as Starbucks, AMC Theatres and Courtyard by Marriott.

Dessert and coffee were served at the end of the evening while the final three prizes were raffled off. Surveys were given and collected at the end of the event to gather participants’ impressions of the evening.

“Depending on the response of the survey we will try to plan this event for every spring semester,” Chaudry said. The ship returned to dock at 10 p.m.

“I am really happy with the outcome. It seems like people enjoyed the event,” Chaudry said.

**International Students Club plans trip to discover the Florida Keys**

**ANA PEREZ**

BBC Life! Editor

Biscayne Bay Campus International Students Club is breaking new barriers by taking students on a trip to Key Largo, with transportation and food provided, all for $20.

Aurélie Verne, president of the International Students Club, broke down the gist of the event.

“The purpose of ‘Beach Day’ is to give an opportunity for students who don’t have the transportation or the opportunity to travel outside of campus or Miami to discover the Florida Keys, while meeting other students, and most of all, to relax,” Verne said.

Students will leave BBC at 8 a.m. to arrive in Key Largo at 10 a.m.

The group will be going to John Pennekamp Coral Reef Park, a national park with beaches and different water sports and activities.

After lunch, provided by Great Wraps, a two and a half hour glass bottom boat tour is scheduled.

“We talked about snorkeling first, but that would exclude people who don’t swim,” students with disabilities and students who are afraid of the water,” Verne said. “With [this] option, anyone can come and enjoy the reefs without having to step a foot in the water, and the weather would be less an issue.”

Verne expects the trip to be a good networking opportunity for students. “I hope students will have fun, create friendships, socialize and get a chance to witness the fun we have at the events we host. We have members who are students from all over the world, and it’s always a great pleasure to see different cultures to come together,” Verne said.

Nakeia Calvert, a junior majoring in marine biology, is excited to go on the trip.

“I’m looking forward to the trip for the marine wildlife of Key Largo because as a marine biology student, it gives me insight into field research for my future career goals,” Calvert said.

“It’s a good and fun way to meet new and intriguing people who are interested in marine related activities such as boating, fishing and snorkeling.”

Beach Day represents the first time ISC has planned an event of such magnitude.

“We were asked by many students to have a trip outside of the country,” Verne said. “Unfortunately such a trip involves a lot more organization and a bigger budget. Since it is our first attempt to host such an event, we decided to take students out of town first.”

If the event is successful, ISC said it will consider making it an annual occurrence and adding more flavor.

“This could be our signature event in the future – we’ll just collect students’ feedback and work with that,” Verne said.
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www.fiusm.com
April 11, 2008

CATASTROPHIC CUTS

Students urged to take a stand

CHRIS CABRAL
Asst. Life Editor

This is not fun, this is not a game, a lot of people are going to die.

Those were the words of state representative Yolanda Robertson (D-Miami) as she spoke to The Miami Herald about the $3 billion in budget cuts proposed by the Florida legislature.

There is a battle being waged in Tallahassee, and if things continue on their current course, a catastrophe will ensue. The budgets being proposed by Florida’s House and Senate will slash education, ravage the Department of Children and Families, and leave thousands of the state’s most medically needy without access to medication and treatment that in many cases literally keeps them from dying. The only thing that can stop these cuts is a massive public outcry that pushes state legislators to find another way to balance the budget.

And there are plenty of alternatives. Democratic lawmakers and others have proposed numerous other solutions to the $3 billion budget shortfall that lawmakers are using to justify these cuts. The state has over $13 billion in reserves in “The Lawton Chiles Endowment” fund, named for the late Florida governor who championed the causes of education and healthcare for the poor. The Orlando Sentinel’s editorial board recently expressed support for a $4 per pack cigarette tax that could yield as much as $1 billion and offset the need for some of these cuts. A one-cent sales tax increase could yield as much as $3.5 billion, according to Lakeland’s The Ledger. And there are numerous corporate loophole’s that could be closed and yield more revenue for the state. And yet, the voices of those who demand another way to balance the budget are being shut out. With every passing moment that their voices are ignored, the state gets closer to approving a budget that will leave a shameful legacy of sorrow and destruction in its wake.

These cuts are an assault on Florida’s students, teachers, and residents who literally depend on some of these programs for survival. Every student at this University stands to suffer, as $2 billion of the cuts are being drained from the state’s education system. Everything from high school class sizes to college financial aid will be adversely affected.

The fact that $2 billion in cuts is being aimed at Florida schools is reason enough for concerned students to act. Yet in the broad and homogenized spectrum of these destructive cuts proposed by lawmakers, students emerge as the lucky ones. At least students won’t actually die as a result of these cuts.

Others might not be so lucky. According to The Miami Herald, the proposed budgets include $1 billion in cuts, from Health and human services. The cuts, according to The St. Petersburg Times will mean “foster children, pregnant women, newborns, infants, kids with AIDS, frail seniors and hospice patients.”

The Florida House and Senate are planning to cut between $170 million and $350 million from the state’s Medically Needy program which “covers transplant and catastrophic-illness costs for 20,000 poor people” according to The Orlando Sentinel. As one chronically ill woman who’ll be removed from the program if cuts pass told The Tampa Tribune, “I’d probably just die.”

There isn’t enough space in this entire list the numerous other ways these cuts will hurt our state, with millions in cuts being proposed from environmental programs and the court system among other areas. Yet for all the grim predictions, the lives of the seriously ill hanging in the balance, the students waiting to see if their financial aid and chance at a good education will be snatched away, there is one glimmer of hope.

There is still time to lobby our legislators and tell them to look at the many other alternatives there are to getting public education and slashing healthcare. It is the time for the students of Florida from all ages, genders, races and political parties to band together and demand that these cuts be prevented.

We can call Marco Rubio, the Florida House Speaker. His phone number is (305) 442-6939. He can be e-mailed at speaker@myfloridahouse.gov. He tells Florida voters on his Web site he wants “to make sure we [the legislators] hear your voices in Tallahassee.” Well, it’s time for us to speak up. Let’s see if he hears our voices.

If enough people contact him and other powerful state legislators, we can force the people in charge in Tallahassee to weigh other options. If they fear that there will be serious political consequences if they go through with this they will back down.

A lot can be done. Yet the people of Florida are running out of time. Students who have a few minutes to spare can make a call, or send an email. After all, what do we have to lose—except everything? For more information visit: http://www.facebook.com/group.

SPEAK UP:
To contact state legislators about cutting public education, health care and other vital services:

Marco Rubio
Florida House Speaker
Phone: (305) 442-6939
Email: speaker@myfloridahouse.gov

Marsha Bowen
Speaker Pro Tempore
Phone: (863) 298-4422

Adam Hasner
House Majority Leader
Phone: (561) 279-1616

Juan C. Zapata
House Republican Leader
Phone: (305) 273-3288

Ken Pruitt
Florida Senate President
Phone: (772) 344-1140
Email: Pruitt.kenn.web@flsenate.gov

To look up more representatives and senators, see:
http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives/representatives.aspx

Knocking Nader: Actions speak louder than words

President candidate’s body of work
offsets his elitist smarmy attitude

JASON GELLER
Contributing Writer

A presidential candidate must do more than charm voters, which is too bad for Ralph Nader.

But he might be the perfect person to tear apart the stranglehold corporate powers have over us.

Before his speech, I met Nader at a pre-speech reception held in a convention room overlooking Biscayne Bay.

The room was full of plates of assorted cheeses, coffee, puff pastries and a mash-on-sandwich with that looked suspicious. As I helped myself to some food, Nader walked by.

The reception was in his honor and he gladly took advantage of the snacks. He staffed his plate with the offerings. I introduced myself and put out my hand.

His mouth was full and he had too many plates in his hand to free himself to shake mine. But after he sat down and his plates on a table, he couldn’t be bothered with taking the time to shake my hand.

That is the Ralph Nader I will remember – which is a shame.

Nader fought for the people all his life. In 1965, Nader wrote Unsafe at Any Speed, detailing the auto industry’s fight against putting seatbelts in cars, just so it could save a few extra bucks. For his investigative work, Nader saved countless American lives.

During his speech, Nader further discussed the stranglehold American corporations have over politicians. He spoke in detail of the excessive amount of money Exxon lobbyists gave Congressmen, and drew howls when criticizing President George Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney for occupying Iraq to fatten their wallets off of oil.

He said their campaign of fear and terror – which has resulted in more than 200,000 dead Iraqi civilians and millions more displaced – distracts America from real safety issues, like coo零食 safety and health.

He criticized big businesses like Nike for placating to child labor: Nike products are made in overseas sweatshops by little children.

Instead of calling on Bush to boycott the Olympics in China, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi should have called on Americans to boycott our own companies.

Nader continued his vicious onslaught on his favorite target: big business.

He garnered uproarious laughter when he asked, “Why should a guy be arrested for smoking a joint?”

The question was an introduction to a larger issue Nader posed: drug addiction is treated as a crime while alcohol and cigarette addiction are treated as illnesses, probably due to lobbyists.

After the audience sat wres-

t, Nader asked the audience how many people had been to Wal-Mart, Starbucks or McDonald’s in their lives. About 160 people raised their hands.

He then asked the audience how many people had attended a town council meeting or observed a court hearing in their lives, which was only 20 had.

For his speech, Nader received a standing ovation. After the speech, Nader sat outside the Wolfe Thea-
tre and signed his latest book. As he sat signing his book, pen in hand, I couldn’t shake the feel-

ing that a presidential candidate was too busy to shake my hand.

The Beacon – 5
Not many people can say they've taken up the chance to drop whatever it is they are doing in life and pursue what they've always desired. For filmmaker and FIU alumus Justin Routt, that's just one more thing he can add on his resume.

Routt graduated from FIU with a degree in political science, but he decided to forge a career in that field and pursue a career in the film industry. With that notion in mind, Routt formed Birch Creek Studios, an independent film company that produces short films, full-length films, hosts festivals, produces short films, and other related events. "I always wanted to [open a film studio]," he said. "I just never had the chance," he said. "I read a bunch of books on filmmaking, and I talked to people who know what they were doing."

Routt's studio focused solely on creating, marketing and delivering full-length movies. "I got a lot of press and a lot of attention because of the first short films. We were doing pretty well, so we decided to keep it up," Routt said. Birch Creek would then move on to partner with DreamWorks. The partnership required Routt to promote DreamWorks' movies by coordinating advanced screenings, the most recent being the computer-animated hit "Bee Movie," and previously, "Red Eye."

Birch Creek Studios started out small. In the beginning, Routt's studio focused solely on producing short films, like the well-received "Clear Cut," "Alternative Paths" and "Killer Coffee."

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Birch Creek Studios has been focused on creating, marketing and delivering full-length movies. "If I Were Dictator" will be the first full-length production to come out of Birch Creek. Because it solves so many problems... and he comes to power," he said. "I feel strong about making a change in the world, and that's what "If I Were Dictator" is all about. Every little irritating thing in the world, he tries to fix." Routt hopes to premiere "Dictator" before the end of April, and wants to have the first screening of the film at FIU, free for FIU students and alumni. "FIU has helped me so much in the past," Routt said. He explained that this would be his way of giving back to the FIU community. Besides writing "Dictator," Routt is also directing and acting as the main character in the film. He said that due to all the time and effort being spent on making "Dictator," a success, Birch Creek's other projects have been put off for now. "I'm putting [all of that other stuff on hold and just focusing on my movie right now]," he said. One event that Birch Creek is not planning to perform is another trip to Seattle. "We will feature clips from Birch Creek films, music and Ben McKenzie of "The O.C.," as we plan to open the public to an admission fee, but attendees may pay an extra fee to speak with McKenzie one-on-one before the function begins.

Even though production on "Dictator" has yet to come to a close, Routt has let slip that Birch Creek is actually in preparations to begin shooting their next full-length film, which will be the first in a trilogy. "It's called "The Urban Hard Trilogy,"" he said. For more information on Birch Creek Studios' events, and current or future works, visit the studio's Web site at http://bcfs.us.

To view the trailer of "If I Were Dictator," visit the film's Web site at http://www.dictatormovie.com."

Animal art draws attention, revenue to zoos

DINESH RAMDE AP WIRE

Brittany wields her paintbrush with confidence, slapping it roughly against the canvas to produce streaks of green or smears of orange.

With apparent pride, she steps back, inspecting her work — and extends her trunk to receive a freshly loaded paintbrush.

Brittany, an African elephant, is doing her small part to pay her way at the Milwaukee County Zoo.

"Her artwork is sold at the zoo's gift shop to raise funds. This painting pachyderm is far from the only artistic animal in captivity. For years zoos and aquariums across the country have encouraged animals "to paint" as a way to keep the penned-up denizens mentally enriched. Typically, the paintings were discarded or set aside. But officials have recently discovered that animal lovers are willing to pay hundreds — or even thousands — of dollars for the creatures' creations.

Brittany's paintings each sell for $30 each. "She really seems to enjoy painting — she likes creating new things," elephant trainer Danielle Faucett said. "But we only do it about once a month because we want to make sure the activity remains mentally stimulating."

Brittany is an eager artist. Her ears flare out as she attacks the canvas, swiping at it almost like Zorro wielding a sword, and she finishes up in minutes while Faucett coos words of encouragement.

The menagerie of animals that can brandish a brush is seemingly endless. At zoos nationwide, painters include chimpanzees, kangaoros, ocelots, rapan- das and even a rhinoceros and Komodo dragon, said Jackie Marks, spokesman for the Association of Zoos & Aquariums in Silver Spring, Md.

One especially profitable painter is Town, a 40-year-old orangutan at the Woo land Park Zoo in Seattle. For Valentine's Day, the zoo auctioned a gift shop for almost $1,300 via eBay for a total of more than $1,300.

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Alabama Wine Trail draws criticism from Baptists

JAY REEVES
AP WIRE

CALERA, Ala. — Alabama has all sorts of tourist trails — there’s one for civil rights, another for birds and yet another for old churches. The newest one was introduced Tuesday to promote the state’s wineries, but Baptists aren’t joining in the celebratory toast.

A trade association and a tourism group came up with the Alabama Wine Trail to lure visitors to the state’s eight wineries, which produce everywhere from fruity muscadine and peach wines to more traditional varieties such as merlot and chardonnay. Wineries, which produce everything from fruity muscadine and peach wines to more traditional varieties such as merlot and chardonnay.

Tourist Association hopes its new wine trail to lure visitors to the state’s eight wineries, which produce everything from fruity muscadine and peach wines to more traditional varieties such as merlot and chardonnay.

The head of the other organization, Lee Beadles, said overcoming opposition to alcohol being a constant hurdle for the group.

Bearing the logos of each company, Vizzini, said. “And they’ll get to taste some very good wine,” he said.

The trail is made up of members of the Alabama Wineries Association, one of two small wine groups in the state.

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HAMMER TIME

JUMBO ARTIST: Brittany, an African elephant at the Milwaukee zoo, paints her masterpiece.

GIO GUADARRAMA/THE BEACON

ELEPHANT, page 6

As lucrative as Towan’s works have been, keepers can only get him to produce a limited number of paintings.

“If you try to get him to do it two days in a row, he won’t pick it up on the second day,” said zoo spokesperson Gigi Allianic.

“You can’t make it routine for the animal or they lose interest.”

That’s the challenge for most zookeepers, who say they won’t sacrifice an animal’s enrichment for the sake of making a quick buck.

Also, some animal artists can be as temperamental as their human counterparts.

Sea lions ply the painting trade with their mouths — they hold a stick in their teeth from which a paintbrush juts out in a T shape.

But when they don’t want to paint, no amount of cajoling can convince them otherwise, said Henry Kacprzyk, a curator with the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium.

“If they don’t want to participate, they’ll just ignore you, they’ll leave,” Kacprzyk said of his zoo’s three sea lions. “There’s not much you can do — they swim faster than we do.”

Artistic “talent” seems as diversely distributed among animals as among humans, zoo officials say.

Just as some people are more artistically inclined than others, so, too, is the case for chimps, elephants and so on.

Some animals are eager participants while others turn up their noses — or trunks — at the sight of a brush.

Of course, beauty — and artistic talent — are in the eyes of the beholder. People who buy animal paintings are rarely art aficionados. Instead, they’re typically animal lovers who know the money is going toward a good cause.

But some animal artwork can be surprisingly valuable, none more so than three paintings produced in the 1950s by a chimpanzee named Congo.

The abstracts sold in 2005 for a total of $26,352 at a London auction where competing works by Renoir and Andy Warhol languished unsold.

ELEPHANT, page 6

Hammer time

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Sea lions ply the painting trade with their mouths — they hold a stick in their teeth from which a paintbrush juts out in a T shape.

But when they don’t want to paint, no amount of cajoling can convince them otherwise, said Henry Kacprzyk, a curator with the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium.

“If they don’t want to participate, they’ll just ignore you, they’ll leave,” Kacprzyk said of his zoo’s three sea lions. “There’s not much you can do — they swim faster than we do.”

Artistic “talent” seems as diversely distributed among animals as among humans, zoo officials say.

Just as some people are more artistically inclined than others, so, too, is the case for chimps, elephants and so on.

Some animals are eager participants while others turn up their noses — or trunks — at the sight of a brush.

Of course, beauty — and artistic talent — are in the eyes of the beholder. People who buy animal paintings are rarely art aficionados. Instead, they’re typically animal lovers who know the money is going toward a good cause.

But some animal artwork can be surprisingly valuable, none more so than three paintings produced in the 1950s by a chimpanzee named Congo.

The abstracts sold in 2005 for a total of $26,352 at a London auction where competing works by Renoir and Andy Warhol languished unsold.
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**College presidents, athletic directors disapprove of beer advertisements**

**JUSTIN POPE AP Wire**

For more than 100 college presidents and athletic directors, beer and the NCAA men’s basketball tournament don’t mix.

The college leaders — among them the top officials at Harvard, Albemarle Christian and Georgia State — wrote a letter to NCAA President Mark Emmert Thursday calling for hard alcohol advertising during the tournaments.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest has called for the NCAA to immediately respond to requests seeking comment, or did a spokesperson for CBS Sports, which broadcasts the Final Four.

Among the signatures were four schools that qualified for this year’s tournament — Baylor, Winthrop, Coastal Carolina and the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. All four lost in the first round.

**VILLARMARZO, page 12**

The season has barely started and there’s plenty of time for teams to heat up or stumble badly.

Come on, do you really think the Marlins are going to remain in first place with suspect starting pitching and a bullpen whose arms are going to get blown out by the All-Star break?

As for the Tigers, any lineup with Miguel Cabrera, Gary Sheffield, Magglio Ordonez, Edgar Renteria, Carlos Guillen and Ivan Rodriguez should not and will not be in the cellar.

**Marlins will not win division; Tigers to recover from slump**

Then again, there’s always the unexpected, and I totally broke my own rule with the previous paragraph.

But that doesn’t matter. As the season rolls along, we’ll start seeing more familiar names among the league leaders and familiar teams in the hunt for the division titles.

For the time being, we should all take advice from the famous Greek philosopher Socrates:

All I know is that I know nothing early in the baseball season.

OK, so I may have embellished the last five words.

**SPORTS**

The Beacon — April 11, 2008

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**SUN BELT BASEBALL STANDING**

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**SUN BELT FOOTBALL STANDING**

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**SOFTBALL**

Roughly 200 yards away from the University Park Stadium, the softball team is playing similarly to the baseball team, but with a better record to show for it.

The team (22-26) is headed on the road against Middle Tennessee (14-18) April 12-13.

After getting swept against Louisiana-Lafayette April 5-6, FIU has dropped from second in the Sun Belt Conference standings to fourth.

Even though the Golden Panthers are one of the top hitting teams in the conference, they fall dead last in team ERA and fielding. The team’s faulty defense hurt them against ULL as the Golden Panthers allowed six unearned runs.

During the series, the Golden Panthers lost by a combined five runs.

A more solid defense would’ve resulted in upset wins against the No. 19 ranked team in the country.

The Golden Panthers’ conference leading 57 home runs and 247 runs scored did not help them against an elite team, but those numbers should serve as a powerful tool against a lower tier team like the Blue Raiders.

The Golden Panthers’ starting ace Kasey Barret should also return to dominating form. Despite the team’s three-game sweep, the Golden Panthers are still poised to finish among the leaders in the conference.

**SUN BELT LEADERS**

INDIVIDUAL BATTING

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**ALL records up to date as of April 9, 2008**

**TENNIS**

The only ranked team at FIU had its four-game winning streak snapped by the University of South Florida and Virginia Commonwealth on April 4 and 5. Both teams are ranked among the top 45 teams in the country.

With the 9-8 tennis team going up against 3-14 Florida Atlantic University on April 10, the team’s earnings in the Park Stadium, the Golden Panthers’ two-game losing skid should be over.

On April 13, South Alabama (16-3) should be more of a test for FIU.

Despite the team’s superior record, the two teams are evenly matched in terms of ranking.

The Jaguars are ranked No. 47, while the Golden Panthers are ranked No. 45.

**SPORTS**

The Beacon — April 11, 2008

**www.fi usm.com**

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TRYING TO BOUNCE BACK

Starting quarterback injured; backups lead offensive drills

SERGIO BONILLA
Sports Editor

Last season’s starting quarterback Wayne Younger is still out due to an off-season surgery to his broken collarbone, and he has not seen action in the spring football games.

Sophomore Colt Anderson and junior Paul McCall have taken most of the snaps during spring football practice.

On April 5, Anderson threw two touchdown passes and McCall led the team to three scores. Anderson completed 10 passes for 137 yards with two completions of 28 and 32 yards to sophomore wide receiver Marquis Rolle.

Anderson completed an 8-yard touchdown pass to sophomore James Rucker.

McCall led the offense on a 11-play, 68-yard drive, which ended with a two-yard run touchdown by running back Julian Reams.

Leading the receiving corps was Jeremy Dickens, who had four catches, including catches of 25 and 28 yards.

The offensive drive was helped by the defensive squad committing several penalties.

“I didn’t like the amount of penalties we had; although I know they were just trying to be aggressive,” said coach Mario Cristobal.

All defensive penalties aside, the defense had its bright spots, including senior Reggio Jones picking up 2.5 sacks.

On the rushing side of the ball, senior running back A’mod Nod contributed to the offense by running for two touchdowns, including a 46-yard dash past the defensive unit after breaking tackles at the line of scrimmage.

On April 8, inclement weather cut the spring football practice midway, and the team was forced to finish the remainder of the practice indoors.

“We got a lot of work in, but we didn’t finish some things we wanted to,” Cristobal said. “Once you start a day, you have to finish it.

“You don’t buy a day back in spring ball. We got plenty of work done with walkthroughs.”

SPRING FOOTBALL

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April 11, 2008

LOOKING AHEAD: The baseball team struggles as the softball and tennis teams head into redemption seeking games.

Baseball and softball teams coming off series sweeps

SERGIO BONILLA
Sports Editor

The baseball and softball teams both head into the weekend coming off series sweeps, while the tennis team attempts to bounce back from two straight losses.

With each respective team’s season winding down, each upcoming series and game is a chance to move up in the Sun Belt Conference standings.

BASEBALL

The baseball team (11-23) heads into the weekend facing one of the more mediocre opponents it has faced in the last two weeks, Middle State Tennessee (13-14-1), from April 11-13 at University Park.

Although pitching has hurt the Golden Panthers during their last six games, sloppy defense has also been a big contributor to extending innings, allowing opposing teams to score runs in bunches.

As a result, Golden Panthers have allowed 10 or more runs during 15 of their 23 losses.

Against No. 2 ranked University of Miami, the Golden Panthers allowed six runs in the second inning and were not able to recover for the rest of the game.

Western Kentucky scored seven runs in the fourth inning against FIU, the game ended in a 17-1 rout.

In addition to bad defense, the usually potent offense has not been scoring timely runs. Infelder Jorge Castillo’s 29-game hitting streak is impressive, but the offense as a whole hasn’t come through in the low scoring games.

The once offensive powerhouse, Golden Panthers, has not scored in double-digits since March 18 when the they scored in eight of their first 21 games.

As a team, the Golden Panthers are hitting .294 and are currently ranked eighth in the Sun Belt Conference.

With the offense waning late in the season, Middle Tennessee might be a fresh of breath air for FIU. After facing three of the top five teams in the nation, FIU goes on to face conference opponent with 6.23 ERA.

The Blue Raiders are also one spot down to sophomore James Rucker.

OFFENSIVE LINEBACKER:

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The defensive unit after breaking tackles at the line of scrimmage.

Too early to tell what’s in store for MLB in 08

Commentary
Xavier Villamarzo
Copy Editor

The Florida Marlins are in first place? The high-powered and heavily favored Detroit Tigers are wireless?

What’s going on in Major League Baseball?

There is something off kilter when Milwaukee Brewers catcher Jason Kendall is leading the league with a .523 batting average.

And there’s definitely something weird going on when a player in just his second season -- Arizona Diamondbacks third baseman Mark Reynolds -- leads the league in home runs and RBIs.

Actually, no there isn’t; because it’s only the second week of the season. Anomalies are normal this time in the season, but people always tend to overreact.

There’s really no reason to jump the gun, because as the season rolls around, normality will soon begin to set in.

As of April 9, the Marlins are one game up in the National League East division, leading some fans to believe the team has a shot at a playoff run.

And, the Tigers and their powerful lineup are 0-7 and have been shut out twice already this season after only being shut out three times all last season, leading some of their fans to think the world is ending.

Teams have played around seven games thus far, which means there’s just a mere 155 left.

Let’s face it; the Marlins are not going to win the division this season, next season and probably the season after.

In fact, division standings shouldn’t even be released until at least 30 games have been played.

The fact that the numbers are there compels fans and beat writers alike to claim insane things very early in the season.

Take last year, for instance, the New York Mets had a commanding lead of the NL East and people were talking about a possible run at the World Series.

By season’s end, they had collapsed historically and lost the division title to the Philadelphia Phillies.

Things like that happen in baseball all the time. You always have to expect the unexpected, but making bold predictions after just seven games is irresponsible and idiotic.

If you take a test with 100 questions and you get the first five wrong, does that mean you’re going to fail the test?

Exactly. Not necessarily.

So leave the poor Tigers alone and stop putting so much pressure on the young Marlins.

VILLARMARZO, page 11