Gas prices infringe on student class options, means of travel

CHARLIE GRAU
Editor in Chief

For Junior Jose Gonzalez, making the trip to University Park from his home in Pembroke Pines was just a waste of gas. “To go to class once a week for a business course just didn’t make sense,” the finance major said.

Like many other students and faculty, Gonzalez is feeling the pain at the pump as gas prices jump past $4 per gallon. On average, Gonzalez said he spends about $45 a week driving his 2000 Mitsubishi Eclipse. Instead of making the 54-mile round trip once a week, Gonzalez decided to try out an online class.

“I really prefer going to class and having that one on one interaction with a professor, but with gas prices where they are now, forget about it,” he said.

But many students are reconsidering their preference for traditional classes as gas prices continue to increase.

“Now it becomes even more crucial. In the past, it was about convenience. Now, it becomes a matter of survival and necessity when you live on a limited budget,” said George Philippidis, associate director of FIU’s Applied Research Center, co-director of the Energy Business Forum and director of the Center for Energy and Technology of the Americas.

Experts like Philippidis believe high gas prices are fixed and cannot see prices dropping to under $1.

“High prices are here to stay,” Philippidis said. “I think that we are bleeding is something that will be permanent and change the way we operate and drive.”

GAS PRICES, page 2

GAS TIPS TO GO

1. Gas mileage can be improved up to 5 percent if you avoid constant stops and starts by anticipating traffic conditions and driving gently.

2. Remove excess weight from the trunk. An extra 100 pounds in the trunk can reduce your car’s fuel economy by up to 2 percent.

3. Combine errands. Several short trips taken from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as one trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm.

4. Tuning your engine according to your owner’s manual can increase gas mileage by an average of 4 percent.

5. Keep your tires properly inflated and aligned. It can increase gas mileage up to 3 percent.

6. Stay within the speed limit. Gas mileage decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 mph.

SOURCE: FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

OLGA VELEZ
Contributing Writer

Miss FIU claims more than a crown

OLGA VELEZ
Contributing Writer

Though being in a state-run pageant is only a dream for some, thanks to the Miss FIU pageant, Michelle Montesino made the dream a reality.

Montesino won the second annual Miss FIU pageant last month, landing her a spot in the Miss Florida competition earlier this month.

“It was very nervous competing for Miss FIU,” Montesino said. “The judges evaluated my enthusiasm, poise and determination through in all areas of competition,” said Zasha Fernandez, director of Miss FIU Public Relations.

“This is not the first time she has competed in a pageant,” Montesino said. “Well, my first pageant was when I was eleven and I was sort of forced to enter because my mom was paying for it. It was a lot of fun, but after that experience I didn’t think I’d ever enter a pageant again,” Montesino said. “Then, when I was 16, I competed in the Miss Miami Tropic Scholarship pageant which was a local pageant that gave away scholarship money, I won that title. Then I decided to take it up a notch when I went for Miss FIU.”

But she was wrong.

“Now it becomes even more crucial. In the past, it was about convenience. Now, it becomes a matter of survival and necessity when you live on a limited budget,” said George Philippidis, associate director of FIU’s Applied Research Center, co-director of the Energy Business Forum and director of the Center for Energy and Technology of the Americas.

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“High prices are here to stay,” Philippidis said. “I think that we are bleeding is something that will be permanent and change the way we operate and drive.”

Saul Perez
Additional money is raised by the Miss FIU committee throughout the year. According to Katie McGee, staff director and advisor for Miss FIU, FIU’s Panhellenic Council donated $250 this year to the Miss FIU scholarship.

The Miss FIU pageant also raises money for the Children’s Miracle Network. According to McGee, all of the local pageants in Florida raised over $30,000 for the CMN this year. The Miss FIU pageant raised around $250 and spent time volunteering at the Miami Children’s Hospital, which is part of CMN.

It also is community service at Miami Children’s Hospital and with my platform “The Art of Hope.” I help to instill a more imaginative and hopeful spirit in the children’s playbook by engaging supportive patients in fun-filled art projects,” Montesino said.

According to the Miss Florida Web site, Michelle Montesino represented FIU in the Miss Florida pageant; however, Sierra Minnot of Palm Beach County was named Miss Florida on July 6, 2008. “Michelle was outstanding in all areas of competition. She also did a great job representing FIU at the Miss Florida Pageant,” McGee said.

Students see this as a great idea, but some think there are a lot of points to look into when discussing a driving or transportation solution, such as the implementation of insurance cases or safety precautions.

“The department of parking should assess driving records and insurance policies, to minimize risk,” said junior Jean Roseme.

According to the Miss Florida pageant, students should lead the charge in creating carpool groups to increase involvement in the program.

“FIU administration and student leaders should lead the charge in an effective marketing,” Roseme said.

GreenRide is part of the University’s broad Go Green initiative established by the President’s Climate Commitment Taskforce at FIU.

Students are trying to have their class schedules match up with their friends so they can carpool to school.

Some students are trying to have their class schedules match up with their friends so they can carpool to school.

“I spend $40 a week on gas, so I decided to sell my car so I can buy a more fuel efficient one,” Zachariah said.

The nursing student who lives in a University apartment has had some people inquire about the car, but no serious buyers. “I decided to sell my car so I can buy a more fuel efficient one,” Zachariah said.

Students are trying to have their class schedules match up with their friends so they can carpool to school.

One other option for students to save money on gas is to enroll in the University’s GreenRide Carpool Program. The online application allows students and FIU employees to set up carpooling groups. Members enrolled in the program can search for other members based on location, schedule and lifestyle preferences.

“Why would you take the gas tank when you have a carpool?” Zachariah asked.

Students turn to selling cars, online classes to save cash

HELLO, ALICE: Junior Janine Grandas and Senior Pedro Mir portray Alice Liddle and the Chersie Cat in a Distinguished Monkey Production of “Mushroom in Her Hands.” The adult adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s “Alice in Wonderland” was directed by Senior Matthew Mur and ran from July 9-13.

GAS PRICES, page 1

LOWEST GAS PRICES NEAR CAMPUS (Unleaded Regular)

UNIVERSITY PARK

$3.97 - Chevron on 6201 Sunset Drive

$4.05 - Sunoco on Coral Way and 88 Ave.

$4.07 - Citgo 10450 W. Flagler Street

$4.07 - Sunoco on 10198 West Flagler Street

$4.08 - Shell on 8701 S.W. 24 Street

BISCAYNE BAY CAMPUS

$4.01 - Amerika on 98 N.E. 167 Ave.

$4.05 - U-Gas on 290 N.E. 167 St.

$4.07 - BP on 14590 Biscayne Boulevard

Sources: GasBuddy.com

For more gas prices by campus, visit our web site, www.fium.com/gasprices

I really prefer going to class and having that one on one interaction with a professor, but with gas prices where they are now, forget about it. – Jose Gonzalez, Senior

“I really prefer going to class and having that one on one interaction with a professor, but with gas prices where they are now, forget about it.” – Jose Gonzalez, Junior

Students turn to selling cars, online classes to save cash

Students turn to selling cars, online classes to save cash
**Grant funds new science certificate**

**DANIELY MARTINEZ**
Contributing Writer

In recognition of FIU’s commitment to the educational needs of the state’s diverse population, Jane’s Trust awarded the University a $140,000 grant, laying the foundation for a new environmental studies program at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

The grant funds the Coastal Environmental Initiative proposed by the University’s Coastal Environmental Initiative Committee. The initiative, which involves the University and the surrounding community, is designed to educate so many minority students in cultural, academic, social, and recreational experiences in coastal areas from an interdisciplinary, holistic perspective. The initiative will pursue research, outreach programs, and community projects, as well as providing an academic program to assist minority students in the study of marine sciences, arts and management, coastal and marine affairs.

The proposal was developed in response to the Boston-based Jane’s Trust’s awarding the University a $350,000 grant for similar purposes. The funding will be used to support the initiative’s efforts to prepare future leaders for the state’s diverse population and to address the University’s strategic goal of enhancing the quality of education it provides for all minorities.

**Local band begins work on first album**

**MIKIALA C. TENNY**
Contributing Writer

On a Square, a music group formed by FIU students, has announced that they will release their first album on August 26 at Biscayne Bay Campus. The album will be titled "Ask Me The Question," and will feature songs written and performed by the band.

The band consists of music student Aneil Maharaj, lead vocalist, and FIU student Brandon Ricatti, lead guitarist. Maharaj, 22, is a senior English major who plans to pursue graduate work in creative writing. Ricatti, 21, is a junior pre-medicine major. Both are interested in pursuing careers in the music industry.

The band, which began in January, first performed at the Student Organization Council club fair on June 30 and then at the-AT THE BAY-Student Organization Council club fair on July 7. The band also plans to perform at the-AT THE BAY-University of Miami's homecoming game on October 1.

"This is our first album," Maharaj said. "We hope to get it out by the end of the year." Maharaj added that the band is currently working on several new songs and that they plan to release an EP in the near future.

The band's first album is scheduled to be released in October, and they hope to get it out by the end of the year. Maharaj said that the band is currently working on several new songs and that they plan to release an EP in the near future.
As prices continue to rise at gas stations nationwide, everyone is feeling the crunch. From the high prices at the pump to the hidden costs found in grocery stores, these are certainly trying times for our wallets.

For decades, Americans have taken the relatively cheap cost of fuel for granted, treating it as less of a luxury and more of a fact of everyday life. But with the threat of oil production reaching a peak in the near future, we’ve been forced to face the old adage that you don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone.

As students, we face additional costs because tuition that you don’t know what you’re paying for isn’t a stretch to say students are feeling the crunch more than anyone. With the implementation of the new GreenRide initiative, which allows students to find students in their area that they can car pool with to school, University administration is showing it can at least empathize with the plight of students and is trying to take steps to minimize it.

One other option the University is giving students comes in the form of lowering the cost of online classes. The $3000 fee for each three credit class, which many students may have found prohibitive, has been lowered to $200.

This is only a feasible option for those students who live further away from campus, but those who do can certainly save themselves some money by taking advantage of this. While GreenRide is a great option for commuter students, it’s effects won’t be felt by all of the University’s 37,000 students.

Those students who do live closer to the University would do better to reconsider the option of walking or biking to their classes, something not many have been willing to do.

The inconvenience of having to brave the elements probably would be outweighed by the inefficiencies of starting your car and facing the awful traffic that constantly encircles the campus.

While many skeptics doubted whether even high fuel prices would be able to curb American’s enthusiasm for driving the biggest cars on the market, cars are getting smaller and smaller, and we are driving them less and less. According to the Energy Information Agency, Americans consumed 3.3 percent less gasoline during the Fourth of July weekend than they did last year, a figure which also represented a 5 year low.

The whole point of this gas-centric issue is to drive the point home that this isn’t an isolated event that will clear out at the end of the summer. Whether politicians pass some sort of tax relief holiday or allow drilling in the Gulf, Arctic, ANWR or some other short term fix, we are facing the very real possibility that we are looking at the end of our dependence on gas.

Take these suggestions for what they are, but remember, your own experience will shape your needs better than any other. As legislators change to our infrastructure won’t have any lasting impact unless individuals take it upon themselves to make changes to their day to day lives. This will help ween us off of natural gas for good.

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OPINION

Students must take initiative, change habits for conservation to be effective

OLGA VELEZ Contributing Writer

President George Bush on July 14 lifted the executive ban on offshore oil drilling, and urged Congress to do the same, as rising crude oil prices have caused gas costs to be a issue in the forefront of the upcoming election.

The ban will expire in October unless Congress acts, causing debate over the merit of the ban on drilling oil off of the coast of Florida and California placed under executive order by President George H. Bush in 1990.

A growing number of Republicans believe that the answer lies in allowing drilling in these areas. They are also looking at other methods, such as using nuclear power and natural gas, a rock that can be converted to oil under high temperatures.

“It’s something we need to do because of the bigger picture,” said Florida Sen. Burt L. Saunders, chairman of the Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee in a June 26 New York Times article.

In contrast, Democrats and independent analysts are saying that offshore drilling is not the answer to the rising cost of gasoline.

In the same New York Times piece, David Kirsch, an oil analyst at PFC, an energy consulting firm, said “if the most promising areas off Florida and California were opened for drilling, their peak production in a decade could be as little as 250,000 barrels a day — less than a quarter of what the Gulf produces now.”

The Energy Information Administration said that even if we open the coasts to oil drilling, that won’t have a significant impact on oil prices, “said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid in a June 19 New York Times story.”

This statement was in contrast to President Bush’s calls for ending the drilling ban.

It could take eight to ten years before any drilling off the coast of Florida or California would take place and coasts have been explored.

No one will know for sure how much oil can be found in these shores until some more exploration is done, which has not yet been done due to the ban.

Considering this, when formulating policy, we need to know all the facts before any decision should be made.

Only exploratory drilling should be allowed until we get a solid estimate as to how much oil can be found.

The environmental effect of this decision should also be taken into account. There is always the risk of a large spill, but advanced technologies relieve the concern to a smaller category than in past decades.

Democrats are saying the answer lies in funding alternative sources of clean energy such as wind, solar and clean coal.

By spending money on solar, wind, bio fuel and nuclear sources we increase competition among fuel producing companies and in the long term reduce the demand of oil while at the same time protecting our environment,” said Dr. George Philalidipos, associate director of FIU’s Applied Research Center, co-director of the Energy Business Forum and director of the Center for Energy and Technology of the Americas at FIU.

According to Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama in the The New York Times, advancement in these areas could lead to the creation of up to five million new jobs as well as lower prices of gasoline.

“Germany, a country as afflicted as the Pacific Northwest, is now a world leader in the solar power industry and the quarter million new jobs has been created,” said Sen. Obama.

More competition in the fuel market has a guaranteed chance of lowering prices, however, it will take some time before these companies can be properly established.

In the end a decision on whether or not to remove the ban on drilling oil off the coast of California and Florida should not be made until exploratory drilling can determine the amount of oil to be found off each shore.

If there is enough oil to drastically bring down price then drilling should be considered as an option.

At the same time the government needs to take steps to ensure we have viable alternative fuel sources needed to be explored so we do not continue to damage the environment.

When the amount of oil is known an estimate as to how it could impact the environment could also be known and steps to prevent such a disaster could be taken.

With different kinds of fuels equally competing in the market the demand of every kind of fuel will decrease and fuel prices can finally start to lower.

Only along with research and investment in other alternative fuels, and if it is determined that enough oil is present to have a significant impact on our economy, should the drilling ban be lifted for good.
Effects of oil prices felt even when cars at home

KIMBERLY ENGELHARDT
Contributing Writer

As if college weren’t expensive enough, we are now facing one more challenge in our lives: surviving today’s rapidly changing economic environment.

Gas prices, as everybody has noticed, have been on the rise. We’re pinching our pockets and paying about $4 a gallon. Mass transit is looking good just about now, but they are going in the red as well. According to the May 28 issue of *The Miami Herald*, mass transit would have to “boost revenues by raising fares, loud cutting free rides for seniors and nudging up the local gas tax.”

County commissioners are also considering another half-penny sales tax increase to keep funding mass transit. In times like these, some of these hikes look very appealing.

There are two factors that are affecting the prices at the pump: speculations and the law of supply and demand. (According to the January issue of *BBC News*, Indian and Chinese “manufacturers and consumers are sucking in energy at an ever-increasing rate.”)

Also, oil speculation has greatly affected our gas prices.

Speculators are essentially trying to make money by betting that prices will go even higher. According to CNN on May 8, Senate Democrats are trying to prevent electronic traders from buying oil outside of the United States.

Alternative fuels are still a long way from being part of our everyday lives. So far, ethanol is the most invested upon alternative fuel. However, it’s becoming a burden.

According to the April 30th issue of *Time* magazine some top international food scientists recommend halting the use of food-based biofuels, such as ethanol, so corn prices can be 20 percent cheaper.

A World Bank study has estimated that corn prices “rose by over 60 percent from 2005-07, largely because of the U.S. ethanol program.”

The effect of corn can also be linked to movie ticket prices. According to CBS 4 News, Some AMC theaters already eliminated student discounts and raised the price for seniors by a dollar for all showings.

Corn is not the only thing that has affected us. According to the May 28 edition of CNN.com, food prices climbed 5.1 percent over the past 12 months and April’s 0.9 percent rise was the largest in 18 years.

According to CBS Evening News, gas prices are expected to jump 5 percent this year, which means that the average American family will bill cost about $87 per more person. “Oil is pushing up and virtually controlling our inflation rate,” said Dr. Stephen P. Leatherman, director of the International Hurricane Research Center & Laboratory for Coastal & Atmospheric Research at FIU.

Postage rates have also increased to keep up with the rising transportation costs. According to the Postal Service Web site, “prices for mailing services will be adjusted annu- ally each May.”

With prices increasing everywhere, including our tuition, don’t be too surprised if our textbooks are going to become more expensive. It takes oil to get our textbooks in our bookstores.

On the other hand, Wages have actually fallen behind inflation. According to Yahoo’s interview with Jared Bernstein, senior economist at the Economic Policy Institute.

“It would feel like our jobs may be just a little bit harder to find.” According to the June 7th edition of The Wall Street Journal, “The jobless rate posted its large- est one-month gain in two decades, rising to 5.5% in May from 5.0% in April.

However, our age group suf- fers the most: The jobless rate for workers aged 20 to 24 rose from 8.9% in April to 10.4% in May.

As director of the Center for Energy and Technology of the Americas at FIU, Dr. George Philippidis suggests that “Conservation and better energy efficiency measures need to be implemented at the individual and corporate level.

With this dismal view of the world, so much can be done. It is time to change our habits. Dump the gas-guzzling machines and start using mass transit or carpool.

We only do have to change our habits, our government must pitch in as well.

“This is going to have to be a permanent change,” said Dr. Leatherman. “Miami-Dade County must get on the ball and ex- tend the metro system – they have been stalling for years.”

The best way to reduce significant oil demand is by mass producing and utiliz- ing plug-in electric cars. The first ones will be commercial by 2010. If on top of the plug-in feature we make those vehicles flex fuel (capable of using ethanol), then our gasoline (and oil) use will be reduced drastically.

The increasing price (and pain) at the pump won’t bate soon.

[“It] all depends on how seriously the US embarks on an energy conservation and better efficiency effort and on how fast we introduce into the market more alterna- tive fuels, like sugarcane ethanol from Latin America and later cellulose ethanol from...”

ODETTE BARRIENTOS
Contributing Writers

Through all the cutbacks we have endured as a University – as a result of the statewide budget crunch – an intuitive way to save energy and cut costs has emerged as proof that creative thinking can help alleviate problems in dire situations.

It’s a four-day-a-week, 10-hour-a-day, summer-modified schedule that started June 6 and will follow through until July 25.

This 49-day period is expected to save a minimum of $250,000 in energy costs.

After taking the initiatives to battle global climate change, Governor Charlie Crist has not only considered energy efficiency in his politics but has also inspired the current alternatives UniSuper teachers are a part of today.

This is more than ideal for FIU, it’s a win-win situation – for the school and for the planet. When the result of budget cuts, the University has cut expenses in every possible corner.

From eliminating various programs, to letting employees go and finally, allowing classes to be extended.

As damaging as these budget cuts have been to the institution, the modified summer schedule is actually the most strategic and productive move in a very long time.

“This is only one piece of a larger package, which should be FIU positioning itself as an envi- ronmental leader. In general, it has shown very little leadership about environmental issues,” said Professor David Bray from the Department of Environmental Studies.

“It’s been taking some steps, but they have a long way to go.”

We also cannot disregard that individual gas consumption would be significantly less after eliminating one whole day of commuting to work and back home for employees abiding by the schedule.

It helps more than just one cause.

Not only does it help the school, but also students and select faculty members on an indi- vidual level, less money spent on gas, less traffic on the road, and less CO2 emissions polluting our atmosphere.

“It was a little challenging get- ting used to the new schedule, but I think we get more accomplished. And we save gas,” said Yisell Bray, a career coach at Career Services told *The Beacon*.

“It doesn’t seem like much money at a glance, but it is much broader than a more specific view. One can imagine how much more could be saved if the sched- ule was extended for more than 49 days.

If the minimum FIU expects to save during this period is a quarter of a million dollars, then that would equal to about $1 million in savings.

Not too shabby, considering the fact it also plays a role in the environment.

“We are headed into what climatologists describe as a planetary emergency,” said Bray. “Emergencies require emergency(energy).”

So in this context, FIU might want to consider going back to the Monday- Wednesday, Tuesday-Thursday class schedule.

Of course, many will oppose the idea of extending this to say, Fall and Spring semesters and making it a long-term change.

Some don’t think the change will be as effective as expected.

“I believe that it will save some money, but not a lot of mon- ey – less than predicted. I think the savings are relatively small,” said David Lee, a professor in the Biological Sciences department.

“One of the reasons for that is that although the administrative offices are closed on Fridays, many of the facilities are not closed,” he said. “The Labs in the science departments are open. We have sensitive equipment such as organisms – we have to have a handle on temperatures in there.”

At the end of the day, a change as minor and temporary as this one should not go without praise.

On the contrary, it should be recognized and encouraged so that more positive, environmen- tal approaches are considered in the future.

Moreover, it is possible to see cost cutting measures that do not involve destroying degrees or purging professors.

The University has a long way to go, this can be regarded as a baby step.

With a bit of praise and hope, perhaps this institution can take some larger steps in the future.

So much can be done. It is time to change our habits. Dump gas-guzzlers and start using mass transit or carpool.

Positive environmental action a result of cuts at FIU
Band pays tribute to influences on album

Trying to balance the line between creating your own unique voice and paying homage to your influences is a battle every artist of any sort has to deal with in some way, and the Hold Steady’s lead singer and songwriter, Craig Finn, is no different. However, instead of shunning his influences like some, Finn has always managed to wear them proudly on his sleeve while still maintaining his status as a significant, singular voice. Seamlessly blending the riff rock of Zeppelin or Aerosmith with the dense, story heavy lyrics of Bruce Springsteen — and a little of his gruff, powerful vocals — the Hold Steady’s newest album, Stay Positive, doesn’t often veer too far off the course charted on the band’s three previous albums.

The songs are mostly about kids getting drunk, getting into fights and getting into trouble. This time around, though, a few of them do delve into the realities of having to grow up and deal with leaving that life behind, or hopelessly clinging onto it, in some cases.

“Lord I’m Discouraged,” in particular, is a bit of a departure for Finn in that it examines the effects of these themes from another point of view.

For the most part Finn’s songs allow the band to do what they do best: big, crunchy, power chords, riffs that ride a groove, and sing along choruses.

Kassandra Pool
Staff Writer

They bleed and dress in blue and gold.

Their bodies and faces are covered in blue paint.

They are ready to cheer and stomp their feet to support their FIU teams.

Making it one of their signature events, Panther Rage is hosting Heatstroke on July 25. According to Panther Rage President Michael Halpert, the event has taken place every summer since he was a freshman four years ago.

“It’s a good way to encourage the student body to come together and support Athletics,” Halpert said.

Planning for the event began a month ago at a retreat. This year students should expect to have a good time near the pool with music, games such as volleyball and water polo – and the company of their fellow students.

Sophomore Patty Rivera is excited for this year’s Heatstroke.

“When I first heard about the event as a freshman, I thought it was a warning about the weather, but I later found out it was a pool party,” Rivera said.

The event will take place in the housing quad at University Park starting at 1 p.m., students will be able to enjoy the food provided by Quiznos and will have the opportunity to win free gear. Students interested in becoming an official member of the organization must obtain seven points. Points can be obtained by going to general meetings, sports games or helping out at Panther Rage events. Each member must maintain their membership by acquiring at least three points each month.

The group works together with Athletics to promote school spirit and get students to come out and support FIU during home games. Members are rewarded each month with special privileges.

In the past, members had the opportunity to be at the sidelines for football games, travel with the team as well as meet and greet some of the players.

During the fall, meetings are held every Monday at 4:30 p.m. in Graham Center 140. Their next meeting for the summer will take place on July 21.

“All students should come out and get hyped up with school spirit for the upcoming athletic season,” said sophomore Ruben Diaz-Neda, treasurer of Panther Rage.

The next event will take place in the fall. For more information, e-mail rage@fiu.edu or visit their Web site www.fiu.edu/~ragex.
Rock band refines its sound

THE HOLD STEADY, page 6

For the most part, however, Finn’s songs allow the band to do what they do best – big, crunchy, power chords, riffs that ride a groove and sing along choruses.

The best examples of this are the two songs that kick off the album: “Constructive Summer” and “Sequestered in Memphis.”

“Constructive Summer” echoes “Stuck Between Stations” from their last album, but instead of a biographical story about a suicidal poet, the kids in this one are planning on spending their summer getting hammered on water towers and raising toasts to “Saint Joe Strummer,” their “only decent teacher.”

“Sequestered in Memphis” begs obvious Springsteen comparisons, with layers of decent teacher.”

In search of a relaxing state of mind, some people turn to yoga or meditation to clear their minds, while some look for a little help from nature. A plant native to the Pacific Islands may provide another avenue towards this end.

Kava is a tea that has been brewed using the roots of the aptly named kava plant. The plant has been used in various forms as a drink for thousands of years in the Pacific, and is starting to become more widely available in the United States.

Since 2002, Nakava has provided the locals of Boca Raton, as well as the curious from all parts of the area, with kava in a relaxed environment by channeling the roots of kava’s Pacific ancestry and mixing it with the familiarity of your own backyard.

Ken Hoyumpa, Nakava’s manager, discussed the drink and its place in North American culture.

“Kava is natural, it’s relaxing, a great alternative to alcohol and its something you can do in the middle of the week without fear of a hangover,” he said.

Nakava opened its doors in 2002, when Ken and owner Jeffrey Bowman, who attended Florida Atlantic University together, decided to open the bar and set his plans in motion with a little help from his friends. Though the bar may be the only establishment in the area thus far, expansion is on the horizon, according to Ken.

“The only issue is the capital and investment, which we’re working on,” he said.

Hoyumpa noted that the crowd that frequents Nakava skews young, but he did say that most that stop by are beating classification simply because of the buzz being generated.

“Most of our regulars order the Black Sand Kava, but we have such a variety of fresh drinks that it creates the perfect atmosphere for people to try what they want,” he said.

“Of course, as with any type of stimulant, there are health concerns, both with the plant itself and the method of production. Most products based on the Kava plant are banned in the UK, as well as in France, Switzerland and even the Netherlands. The United States Center for Disease Control released a report in 2002 specifically detailing the possibilities of severe liver toxicity, but does specify that the problems arose from supplements containing kava being mixed with alcohol.

The main thing to note with this is that it is the kava extract in supplements that has been linked to the liver damage, not kava prepared as a tea.

Another key to the potential hazard is that pharmaceutical companies don’t limit themselves to the root of the plant for the kava extract; the supplements contain anything from the stems to the leaves of the plants.

Those concerns aside, the main thing people will want to know is what effect kava has on the mind. Euphoric is usually the first term regular drinkers will come up with. Though rare, less than 1 percent of all who try the drink will experience allergies, generally similar to the types of reactions associated with pepper allergies. When it came to the safety concerns, Ken reassured that the FDA has even inspected the shop and left without raising a fuss.

“The only issue is the capital and investment, which we’re working on,” he said.

Continuing the age old ritual of kava as a form of relaxation and well being doesn’t come hard to Nakava because they represent a different approach to marketing the product, one that comes with a high level of respect for the past, and an eye on the future.

Kava helps South Floridians attain nirvana

Nelson Hernandez

Staff Writer

Kava is natural, it’s relaxing, a great alternative to alcohol and its something you can do in the middle of the week without fearing a hangover.

The best examples of this are the two songs that kick off the album: “Constructive Summer” and “Sequestered in Memphis.”

“Constructive Summer” echoes “Stuck Between Stations” from their last album, but instead of a biographical story about a suicidal poet, the kids in this one are planning on spending their summer getting hammered on water towers and raising toasts to “Saint Joe Strummer,” their “only decent teacher.”

“Sequestered in Memphis” begs obvious Springsteen comparisons, with layers of decent teacher.”

In search of a relaxing state of mind, some people turn to yoga or meditation to clear their minds, while some look for a little help from nature. A plant native to the Pacific Islands may provide another avenue towards this end.

Kava is a tea that has been brewed using the roots of the aptly named kava plant. The plant has been used in various forms as a drink for thousands of years in the Pacific, and is starting to become more widely available in the United States.

Since 2002, Nakava has provided the locals of Boca Raton, as well as the curious from all parts of the area, with kava in a relaxed environment by channeling the roots of kava’s Pacific ancestry and mixing it with the familiarity of your own backyard.

Ken Hoyumpa, Nakava’s manager, discussed the drink and its place in North American culture.

“Kava is natural, it’s relaxing, a great alternative to alcohol and its something you can do in the middle of the week without fear of a hangover,” he said.

Nakava opened its doors in 2002, when Ken and owner Jeffrey Bowman, who attended Florida Atlantic University together, decided to open the bar and set his plans in motion with a little help from his friends. Though the bar may be the only establishment in the area thus far, expansion is on the horizon, according to Ken.

“The only issue is the capital and investment, which we’re working on,” he said.

Hoyumpa noted that the crowd that frequents Nakava skews young, but he did say that most that stop by are being classified simply because of the buzz being generated.

“Most of our regulars order the Black Sand Kava, but we have such a variety of fresh drinks that it creates the perfect atmosphere for people to try what they want,” he said.

Of course, as with any type of stimulant, there are health concerns, both with the plant itself and the method of production. Most products based on the Kava plant are banned in the UK, as well as in France, Switzerland and even the Netherlands. The United States Center for Disease Control released a report in 2002 specifically detailing the possibilities of severe liver toxicity, but does specify that the problems arose from supplements containing kava being mixed with alcohol.

The main thing to note with this is that it is the kava extract in supplements that has been linked to the liver damage, not kava prepared as a tea.

Another key to the potential hazard is that pharmaceutical companies don’t limit themselves to the root of the plant for the kava extract; the supplements contain anything from the stems to the leaves of the plants.

Those concerns aside, the main thing people will want to know is what effect kava has on the mind. Euphoric is usually the first term regular drinkers will come up with. Though rare, less than 1 percent of all who try the drink will experience allergies, generally similar to the types of reactions associated with pepper allergies. When it came to the safety concerns, Ken reassured that the FDA has even inspected the shop and left without raising a fuss.

“The only issue is the capital and investment, which we’re working on,” he said.

Continuing the age old ritual of kava as a form of relaxation and well being doesn’t come hard to Nakava because they represent a different approach to marketing the product, one that comes with a high level of respect for the past, and an eye on the future.

Kava helps South Floridians attain nirvana

Nelson Hernandez

Staff Writer

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Children from the D.A.R.E. program filled the lower FIU Arena cheering for both teams, including the women’s basketball team on Dec. 14. The Athletics department looks to build up on that game and have 15,000 kids attend all FIU intercollegiate sporting events at no cost this up-coming season.

FIU’s plan called the Raymond James Kids Club Community Partners, hopes to build a positive relationship with the local community by bringing kids to games, and encouraging student-athletes to join mentorship programs.

“With all the budget cuts, the community needs help,” assistant athletic director for student athlete development and community relations Liz Borrell said. “So we’re giving kids the opportunity to come see a sporting event and have one-on-one interaction with our student-athletes.”

Kids will be offered free tickets, transportation and T-shirts to all FIU intercollegiate legame. Admission to every event is free, except football games. If the kids are going to a foot- ball game, donors have to pay for their tickets. Steve Cisco, assistant athletic di- rector for ticket sales and operations, says he wants the kids to remember the first time they went to a Division I game.

“I remember the first time I went to a collegiate event,” Cisco said. “I would hate for a kid to never have that experience.”

For the most part, the program aims to help kids from financially deprived homes, but it is also includ- ing a variety of children from other backgrounds.

“We are giving free ad- mission to youth programs, schools, church youth groups. All organizations that have to do with the youth and the community,” project coordinator Mike Hernandez said.

In addition to give- aways, the athletics depart- ment’s plan is making student-athletes become involved in the community by joining mentorship pro- grams like the Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

“For us, it’s about devel- oping a relationship with kids show up at the stadium, having our athletes either mentor their students or to give them presentations on how to make better deci- sions in life, how to perse- vere, how to stay focused,” Borrell said.

The Raymond Jones Kids Club was incorpo- rated into the Athletics depart- ment in 2004, but it did not have a titled sponsor. Raymond Jones was a fre- quent donor but in 2006, with help from season ticket- holder and FIU alum Frank Abis, it brought the program’s naming rights.

“Talk to your season tick- et holder and then they donate to the program,” Cisco said. “Without a ti- tled sponsor, the program would not have blown up as we was in the way it has. Raymond Jones has really afforded us this opportunity to really make this program big.”

Admitting kids to games coupled with the mentor- ship programs are ways the Athletics department is establishing relationships- with local kids from an early age.

“You try to build that bridge so that maybe when those kids have kids, they will take them to FIU sports.”

“We need to build better relationships with people in the community when they come and support us. It’s a win-win situation. We help them; they help us.”

Only the Oct. 11 foot- ball home game against Middle State Tennessee is sold out. Once the fall sea- son starts, the Athletics department is eager to see how excited the kids com- ing out to the games will be.

“No one wants to see there and make all the 100 kids, it’s a win-win situation. We help them; they help us.”