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 spot in the Miss Florida competition earlier this month.

“It was very nervous competing for Miss FIU,” Montesino said. “My nervousness further increased just a couple of hours before the big event when I injured my toes during rehearsal. But somehow pulled through by the end of the night when I was announced as the next Miss FIU. Although exhausted, with blood stains at the tips of my evening gown, it is a moment I will treasure forever.”

Out of the nine women who competed to be the next Miss FIU, Michelle won because “[The judges] saw her enthusiasm, poise and determination shine 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,” said George Philippidis, associate director of FIU’s Applied Energy 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 under $1.

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

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

“Now it becomes a matter of survival and necessity when you live on limited budget,” said George Philippidis, associate director of FIU’s Applied Energy 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 under $1.

“There is no reason to have cars which might mean more spaces,” sophomore Kaisy Maldonado, who registered the first week of its introduction, said. “I think that it will benefit the students by providing them with a safer and more cost effective way to travel.”

Registration is simple. Users enter their location and schedule information and are automatically matched with other users according to the fastest route to and from campus.

Users can then form carpool groups that must apply to the Parking Office for a GreenRide decal.

GreenRide, a Web-program with geographic information system software, offers users the fastest routes to and from campus.

“FIU offers better parking spaces in return for participating in a carpool— it’s a good compromise” said Linares.

The University is providing preferred parking spaces to registered users with designated GreenRide decals.

The department will only hand out a decal once a carpool group is confirmed. This allows students to meet up with others ahead of time so there are no insecurities in riding with someone the students hardly know.
Drivers look to save gas with GreenRide

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 cases, to minimize risk,” said Junior Jean Roseme.

According to Roseme, the program is “a step in the right direction,” but it might serve as a short-term solution if the current gas prices and University budget dilemma continues.

A suggestion that arose from student leaders was that the faculty, administration, and student organizations should take the initiative in creating carpool groups to increase involvement in the program.

“FIU administration and student leaders should lead the charge as 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.

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.

“I also do 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 playground by engaging 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 won the title of Miss FIU but get involved on campus as well,” Montesino said.

The Miss Florida Pageant, according to McGee, is a great job representing FIU at the national level.

Students are looking to sell cars online in order to save cash. Online car buying services are increasing in popularity, offering a more convenient and efficient way to purchase a vehicle.

Many students have expressed their interest in selling their vehicles through online marketplaces. These platforms allow for direct buyer and seller interactions, providing transparency and flexibility in negotiations.

However, it is important to note that online transactions can present challenges, such as ensuring the authenticity of the seller and the vehicle itself. Students are advised to conduct thorough research and take necessary precautions before making any decisions.

In addition, students should consider other options for saving money on gas, such as carpooling or alternative transportation methods. These strategies can help reduce costs and contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle.

For more information on selling cars online, students are encouraged to visit reputable marketplaces and consult with vehicle experts to ensure a safe and efficient transaction process.

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

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

www.fiusm.com
Grant funds new science certificate

DAINEYLS 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 $40,000 grant, laying the foundation for a new environmental studies program at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

BCC has a “unique advantage,” said Peter Craumer, chair of the Coastal Environmental Initiative Committee. “The campus has an accessible body of salt water. There is no other campus in the U.S. that has marine sciences, arts and science, a mass communication school and hospital all together ... educating so many minority students.”

The Coastal Environmental Initiative Committee was established to explore possibilities for a new certificate program with a coastal and marine science focus using existing resources at BCC. The committee’s members are from diverse departments and schools, including geography, English, humanities and biological sciences.

In April 2007, the committee released a report that was then turned into the proposal submitted to the Boston-based Jane’s Trust. The proposal requested a $200,000 budget, and Jane’s Trust contributed two-thirds of that amount.

The committee will pursue outside funding from other private foundations and internal funding from the University may also be forthcoming.

A yet to be hired environmental coordinator will conduct activities and programs, such as research, campus restoration projects and outreach community programs. The faculty coordinator, Craumer, will be in charge of the academic part of the program.

Funding will also be used to add tiki huts with picnic tables, a coastal nature trail and a public lecture series in coastal and marine issues to BBC.

The certificate will be available beginning in the fall of 2009.

“The first step is to get the courses offered,” said Michael Heithaus, assistant professor of biological sciences.

Thus, students can start taking classes this fall. Science courses will include marine biology, introduction to oceanography and marine and coastal environmental policy. Available electives include literature of the sea, cruise line management, coastal and marine tourism, hurricanes and the media, and ecology of South Florida.

Any student from any major can pursue the marine and coastal affairs certificate. All classes for the certificate will be held at BCC.

NEWS FLASH

Biscayne Bay Dramatics club hosts Game Show Day

BCC’s Dramatics will host Game Show Day on July 22 in the WUC Ballroom 244 from 2 to 7 p.m. Participation is open to all students and gift cards will be given as prizes. For more information, call (305) 919-5800.

Fitness Center offers free yoga classes and massage therapy

The Fitness Center hosts free yoga classes on Mondays from 3 to 4 p.m., Wednesday from 10 to 11:30 a.m. and Thursdays from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Free massage therapy is available Mondays and Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays massages are offered by appointment only. All fitness levels are welcome to attend. Call (305) 919-5307 for details.

Free HIV testing available at Wellness Center

The Wellness Center provides free HIV testing by appointment. Walk-ins will be accommodated according to the day’s appointment schedule. For more information, call (305) 919-5307.

Local band begins work on first album

MIKIALA C. TENNIE
Contributing Writer

Local band On a Square says its name doesn’t need a meaning: the music they make creates it. A band created after a series of members came and went, On a Square is ready to show South Florida what they are all about.

Described by listeners as having a sound reminiscent of The Beatles, On a Square is influenced by other bands such as The Beach Boys, Talking Heads, Pink Floyd, John Lennon and even a little of Broadway. While flattered to have such a comparison, the members of On a Square don’t believe their sound has an exact name.

“We’re not trying to sound like The Beatles,” explained Brandon Fulton, On a Square band mate in charge of percussion and background vocals. “We just want to sound like us.”

When asked about the comparison to the legendary pop group, Andres Ramos, On a Square piano player and background vocalist adds, “It beats being compared to Kenny G.”

Classical music also influences the band’s sound, as well as the necessity of earning money while doing what they love.

“We each teach our respective instruments either at clients’ homes or in the studio,” Ramos adds.

Ultimately, the band describes its sound as easy listening mixed with old school rock and roll.

“People will appreciate our music if they’re looking to hear good quality shows with a lot of musicianship. We have a welcoming atmosphere,” said Aniel Maharaj, lead vocalist and the band’s guitar player.

On a Square recently performed at the Student Organizations Council club fair on June 26 at Biscayne Bay Campus, and will return in August during Welcome Week.

According to On a Square, they are continually adding different elements to their music to keep things interesting. It’s not unusual to hear Ramos on the accordion or hear someone playing a ukulele in the background.

“I’m actually trying to pick up the mandolin,” Maharaj said.

“Like making music, creating it and manipulating it,” Fulton said.

Maharaj also points out that it’s not always about making the audience happy.

“Little bits of the music have to make you feel good, you know,” Maharaj said, as he and Ramos experiment with adding a harmonizing tag at the tail-end of a song.

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“I’m actually trying to pick up the mandolin,” Maharaj said.

“The only thing we’re missing is a bass player; we’re auditioning if anyone is interested,” Ramos said.

In spite of a missing bass player, On a Square continues on its path to fulfillment and success in the music industry. According to Maharaj, “Success for me will be to live off of social security and music.”

WAVES OF CHANGE

FALL FORECASTING: Phase one of restoration construction is underway at BBC’s pool. The first phase will focus on the relaying of the diving pool and the area’s surrounding landscaping. The project is slated for completion at the end of fall 2008.

FIU, Maharaj and Fulton attend Broward College. Fulton has already become a certified emergency medical technician, and is currently in his fourth and last semester of paramedic school. Maharaj, on the other hand, plans to major in English, hoping that he can apply his studies to his music. He has also completed his first novel.

“Hopefully I will be able to start publishing, maybe by the end of the summer,” Maharaj said.

Although they study different subjects, music will always bind them.

“I like making music, creating it and manipulating it,” Fulton said.

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

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 costs continue to rise as well. Many have been willing to do what it takes to get an education, but now many have new reasons 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 would probably 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 Americans’ 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 anyone else’s.

Students and are 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 $300 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 GreenKide 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 well 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 would probably be outweighed by the inefficiencies of starting your car and facing the awful traffic that constantly encircles the campus.

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 rise in be the 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 the coast of Florida and California placed under executive order by President George H.W. 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 oil shale, 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 in 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 relegate this 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 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 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 endowed 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 may 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 prices, “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 economy, should the drilling ban be lifted for good.

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor can be sent to opinion@fiu.com. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words and include the writer’s full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. The Beacon reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints.
As college expenses weren’t 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 like a good idea just about now, but they are going up in the red as well. According to the May 28 issue of The Miami Herald, mass transit would have “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 bikes look very appealing.

There are two factors that are affecting the prices at the pump: speculation 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 about 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 12 years.

According to CBS Evening News, gas prices are expected to jump 5 percent this year, which means that an average of $1 per gallon in the next New York bill will cost about $87 more per person. “Oil is pushing up and virtually controlling our inflation rate,” said Dr. Stephen Leatherman, director of 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 individual level, less money spent on gas, less traffic on the road, and less CO2 emissions polluting our atmosphere.

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

It doesn’t seem like much money at a glance, but it must be looked at from a broader perspective.

One can imagine how much more could be saved if the schedule 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 we call the energy crunch — an intuitive way to save a result of the statewide budget crunch — an intuitive way to save a result of the statewide budget crunch,” said Dr. Leatherman. “Emergencies require emergency measures.”

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 Department of Environmental Studies.

“We are looking at ways to reduce the size of our textbooks and make them more affordable,” said Dr. Leatherman.

Some say that the change will be beneficial, but others argue that it won’t be enough.

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

Continuing with the Catholic imagery found in his earlier work, the song is from the point of view of someone pleading with God as they watch a loved one’s life slowly slip away. “The Sessions,” which 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.

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 21. According to Panther Rage President Michael Halpert, the event has taken place every summer since he was a freshman four years ago.

“No 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 acquire 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 have 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/~rage.
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 a fuss. “Sequestered in Memphis” begs obvious Springsteen comparisons, with layers of harmonies and a story about the kids in this one getting scared of their 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 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 fearing a hangover,” 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 people use in describing kava’s effects, but it does have a bit more to it than that.

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

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TAPPING OUT

Linebacker wears shoulder pads during fall, trains in martial arts gym during summer

Heavy Metal: Construction continues at the new FIU Football Stadium. Rudy Armenta, senior project manager for Oddebrecht, gave FIU Student Media a tour on July 11. A photo gallery of the tour is available at fiusm.com.

Using his skills that developed at such an early age, Dominguez explained that wrestling is the most physically and mentally demanding sport that he has ever played and it has prepared him for Division I football.

"Evolving as a wrestler takes me from level to level. These levels take hours and hours, bring along sweat and blood, sometimes more blood than sweat," he said.

Dominguez began training at the Thumb Fight Gym this summer where he hopes to compete at the highest level possible, the professional ranks.

"I would love to have a few professional fights before the beginning of next season between football practice and training," Dominguez said.

As the Golden Panthers head into fall, Dominguez is looking to translate his fighting skills onto the football field to deal punishment to opposing offenses.

"I am going into next season hoping to shock the nation because in reality, as a team, we are not supposed to," he said.

"I am personally striving towards being a better linebacker.

"Dominguez was one of the county's leading tacklers and played a large role in the North Miami Beach Senior High School Chargers winning their first district title with 70 tackles and two sacks.

He was also ranked in The Miami Herald's top 25 Miami-Dade Recruits at the time. During his first full season at lineman in 2007, he ranked second on the team with 66 total tackles, two fumbles recovered and one interception.

Football is still his main priority as the Golden Panthers approach the 2008 season. Dominguez says the team is still trying to recover from two consecutive losing seasons with just one win in two years.

"There is a lot of scar tissue left on the team, and we are grinding to clean things up," he said. "You can just say we are going through rehab with a lot of potential."

Audrina Bigos
Staff Writer

From pounding players on the gridiron to knocking out an opponent in the ring, one Golden Panther linebacker is training to become a professional fighter after graduation.

Combining the physical intensity gained through football with forms of boxing, martial arts, kickboxing, wrestling and jiu-jitsu, sophomore Michael Dominguez uses the off-season to train at Thumb Fight Gym in South Miami.

The 224-pound mixed martial artist wants to strengthen every muscle in his body before the start of the 2008 season.

"Dominguez is working the muscles that he wouldn't use in football while training for fighting, so it can only improve his performance on the field," FIU defensive line coach Bernard Clark said. "His demeanor is what will take him far." Clark said. "He is focused and always trying to get better at what he is doing and that is going to help him more than anything else."

Latonisha Phillips/THE BEACON

Sportsmagazine

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Sports Editor

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Sports

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