Conflicts between security, fans addressed

Sergio Bonilla
Rick Martinez
Student Media

During Saturday’s home football game, an incident involving a student and an FIU employee left many students with questions regarding conduct policy during football games.

Panther Rage President Michael Halpert spoke to Athletics over the weekend hoping to have a representative from the department speak to students on Oct. 15. Senior Associate Athletic Director Julie Berg, along with Director of Special Events Sandra Perdomo, attended the meeting to answer students’ questions and concerns.

Halpert was pleased to have students express their feeling following the meeting. “I completely understand them,” Halpert said. “That’s their right. It was good to see them get things off their chests.”

Berg and Perdomo answered every question based on the information they knew at the time of the meeting. Members of Student Media along with students asked a series of questions regarding the incident.

Rick Martinez: How did you guys become aware of the situation with the accusation of an Athletics employee assaulting a student?

Berg: It was seen. Most of us saw something going on. We didn’t see exactly how the whole thing started, but we saw it. We had a couple of employees. And unfortunately we had a couple of injuries as well: one FIU employee and one Contemporary Services Corporation employee.

Rick Martinez: Student Media was in attendance to answer students’ questions regarding the incident. What was the atmosphere like?

Berg: As far as the atmosphere, it was a collaborative effort between team members. The team consisted of papaya-glazed ribs with jicama mint slaw and a frothy mojito shooter with coconut rum. The teams prepared ribs with their own secret ingredients, as well as two side dishes.

The winning menu, which was a collaborative effort between team members, consisted of papaya-glazed ribs with jicama mint slaw and a frozen mojito shooter with coconut rum. The entire team came up with the menu. I was just their adviser. My role was to take their ideas and try to bring them to life,” Moran said.

This is the third year that FIU students participate in the cook-off, but it is the first time they win first place. In the two prior years, they came in third place. This year, they came in first place.

One-on-one with new VP

EDUARDO MORALES
Staff Writer

After 15 months, the new Vice President of Advancement, Robert Conrad, was hired on Oct. 1. He will begin working on Nov. 3 and comes to the position with over 20 years of experience in university advancement positions.

As he begins his last two weeks at the Florida State University Foundation, he took the time to have a phone interview with The Beacon regarding budget cuts and acquiring private funds for the University.

The Beacon: For the readers, what does the VP of Advancement do exactly?

Conrad: Hopefully, at FIU, I would say that I will be responsible for raising private support, maximum private support for the institution and in a way that is honorable, ethical and enhances the mission of the University. It’s done in a variety of ways: our student callers who call alumni, parents and friends, to folks who are going out to corporations, the people who are talking to donors and always trying to bring in that private philanthropy.

TR: How can FIU get by during the budget cuts?

RC: Any time you deal with budget cuts it’s always a difficult situation. Not knowing exactly what FIU has had to deal with, it’s hard for me to comment specifically. But you know what I can say is, it’s my hope that we will generate funds that will soften that blow. Over time, there has been increasingly less and less
Conrad looks to secure private funds

You’ve got excellent programs to be successful, all the wonderful community, - a large community that certainly has the raw materials for successful philanthropy. You’ve got the dedicated alumni, strong support from the faculty and staff, you seem to have it all. Just now the last piece seems to be building a strong advancement program.

RC: I’m very eager to get down there. I’m very impressed with the institution, the energy that I see around campus, and I’ll do my best to equal their energy and maximize private support for the institution.

I’m very impressed with the institution… and I’ll do my best to equal their energy and maximize private support for the institution.

Do you have any expectations or goals set for your first year at the University?

RC: I want to get in and get a feel for the personalities, the culture of the institution, so it would be difficult for me to say how exactly the dollar figures would be.

Parading: Students hold flags during the Honors College Convocation on Oct. 13.

The Beacon office is located in the Graham Center, room 210, at the University Park campus. Questions regarding display advertising and billing should be directed to the Advertising Manager at 305-348-2709. Mailing address: Graham Center, room 210, 5051 W. McArthur Boulevard, Miami, FL 33199. Fax number is 305-348-2712. Business hours are 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. E-mail: TheBeacon@fiu.edu.
Med School accepts new students

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. News Director

The FIU College of Medicine is sending its first batch of acceptance letters to students across the country on Oct. 15. The students have four weeks to pay the $200 deposit and decide whether they want to reserve a seat.

Members of the College of Medicine are not allowed to disclose how many letters are being sent.

Director of Admissions and Records Betty L. Monfort said she is also unable to say how many students were accepted from FIU, but she was impressed with the University’s applications.

“I’m very pleasantly surprised out of the pool of FIU candidates, how well they filled the community service requirement,” Monfort said. “Approximately 2,700 students applied to the College of Medicine, and students from all IV League schools were accepted, according to Monfort.

Some of the minimum requirements to be part of the inaugural class included a 3.0 GPA and a 25 MCAT score.

Monfort said she could not say the mean MCAT scores of the students accepted, but she is satisfied with the type of applicants interested in attending the College of Medicine.

“We’ve been overjoyed with the number and caliber of the applicants,” Monfort said.

All medical school hopefuls have until May 15 to have just one seat reserved, according to Barbara Roller, College of Medicine assistant dean for student affairs.

A hard look at football game security demanded

RAGE, page 1

formed that one FIU employee was arrested or detained by Public Safety.

Berg: Not to my knowledge.

Kristen Smith: I know you said there’s an investigation going on into the incident, but at the moment has anything happened to the FIU employee? As an FIU student, I personally don’t feel really comfortable with him on this campus.

Berg: He is actually still on right now pending the investigation.

Eduardo Selgas: Who is the official oversight of the investigation? I’m guessing it’s an internal investigation, so who’s investigating it at this point?

Berg: As far as the investigation goes, I’m gathering a lot of information. Ultimately, the decision maker in all athletics is Pete Garcia, but I am working with Bill King, so Bill and I will be doing the investigation for the most part.

Smith: What’s the status of the student? Do we know what happened? Berg: He was not arrested, he was not injured, he’s fine.

Adam Johnson: From what we saw, there was a student scratched up and bleeding from the face. Does that not count as an injury?

Berg: I was told point blank that the student had not a single mark on him. That’s what I was told from the police.

Johnson: Being in the student section, I feel treated like an animal. The way the security and the police officers go about it, I would think that’s the way they would treat prisoners.

Berg: That’s your home, man. That is your stadium. And we’re very proud of it and we want you guys to feel totally at home there and that is definitely not the atmosphere we want you to feel there.

SGC-UP President A. J. Meyer: Many students are upset because of the fact that, not only did the Student Government Association increase the athletics fee, but SGA also gave you guys a couple million for the expansion for the field. And now some students feel like they got a slap in the face and are now considering boycotting games.

Berg: That would be absolutely devastating for athletics because that’s not something we want here. This is a very unfortunate incident. There will be a full investigation. It will be handled appropriately, pending the outcome.

And, I think that would be very sad if it carried over that far. We’re going to deal with the repercussions that he’s going to have to encounter for that, and I would just hate to see that this causes that big of an issue on the campus with you guys.

HPV FACTS: #4

HPV OFTEN HAS
NO SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS

HPV.COM

NEWS FLASH

FIU

University to freeze PantherSoft system

The University’s PantherSoft Student Administration system will be “frozen” to make way for a new upgrade. The system will be available with limited capabilities from Oct. 18-27.

During this time students will be able to view their student information, but will not be able to request official transcripts, change system data, make online payments, or post any transactions on their accounts.

The system will also shut down between 2:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. on Oct. 18 to make way for the upgrade.

Psychology students collect shoes for areas hit by hurricanes

A group of psychology students have begun a shoe drive for areas affected by hurricanes this year, such as Haiti.

The students are teaming up with www.shoestoforhaitiskids.com to collect shoes for children and are shipping them to Haiti using containers they have been able to secure by making contacts in Miami.

The students are asking for new and gently used shoes and anything flat (such as sneakers), as this is what is really needed in Haiti.

Local News

Florida to invest $15 million on renewable energy

Gov. Charlie Crist is asking public and private entities to submit renewable energy and energy-efficiency proposals for state grants. Florida will spend $15 million in grants, with $8 million going towards bioenergy projects.

Compiled by Julio Menache
Tender ribs, manners aid in securing top spot

DOUGLAS FORTE
Contributing writer

Students with leadership qualities seeking to give back to the school now have the chance to do so.

As of Sept. 27, the 2009 peer adviser application is available to students. Peer advisers assist new students, and help implement and plan orientation programs throughout the year.

“Peer advisers are student leaders and university experts,” said Joanne Oates, graduate assistant in the Campus Life office. “They also participate and help out in an annual conference including schools from about seven or eight Southern states.”

The peer adviser position lasts one year, from January 2009 to January 2010. To be eligible, applicants must be current students, have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5, have completed at least 12 credit hours at the University after the Fall 2008 semester and have met all employment requirements.

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New club puts African culture on the forefront

HEATHER DULMAN
Staff Writer

In an effort to promote African culture, history and heritage, Esther Hamilton came up with an idea for a new club at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

The hospitality management senior said it took her three months of preparation, and that the club’s main goal is to travel to different nations in Africa each year, starting with Egypt.

“Our club has a lot to do with history. We want to inform students about the rich history and heritage of Africa,” said Hamilton, who is the club’s president. “[Africa] is a continent, which many people are shamefully not aware of. There are over 50 countries, each with many different ethnic groups, history, religions, languages, cuisine, fashion, music, etc…”

Club Africa has been active since August 2008, and it already has 30 members, according to Hamilton. Its executive board members include Hamilton, as well as Vice President Ida Tafari and her mother, Lidj Tafari, professor of anthropology of the African and African Diaspora Studies Program and the faculty adviser.

“Africa is still the center of the world. Most of the world is fighting to be there, to own African resources and once experiencing Africa, gain a deep understanding of its importance,” Tafari said. “Since we hear nothing of Africa in this hemisphere, we are currently seeking sponsors to help us promote and develop our event.”

The festival’s goal is to raise money for the club’s trip to Egypt, which will be its first international trip.

The club is also hosting a South African Wine Tasting with the Friends of Wine club on Oct. 27, in the Hospitality Management dining room at 4 p.m. There will be a $5 admission fee for the event.

According to Hamilton, Publix in Aventura and Fresh Market on Biscayne Boulevard has Golden Kaan wines imported from South Africa; one of their well-known blended wines is called Pinotage.

As the club’s meetings are held every other Tuesday, in which they discuss various issues currently affecting children, men, women and, according to Hamilton.

“The majority of the educational part of our club will be discussed in our meetings,” Hamilton said. “Including China’s development in a wide variety of African nations, the genocide in Rwanda and Sudan, tourism, education, epidemics [such as] HIV/AIDS, Ebola and Malaria, sexism in political systems, female genital mutilation, religion, sports, shamanism, famine, etc…”

Neville Gayle, a club member and senior in sociology, said he was passing through a club fair and thought the idea was great for a club.

“The idea of Club Africa, for me, presented a good learning experience that could be shared with peers,” Gayle said.

The club wants dedicated and active students to join, Hamilton said. She wants to focus on portraying and presenting the many positive sides of Africa.

KICK IT: D.J. Jose Vallejo, vice president of Sigma Alpha Mu, provided live music for the grand opening of the new BBC cafeteria, Oct. 13.

The current members who attend meet-ups are all of African descent, but the club is for all students on campus regardless of race, nationality, and ethnicity, and the events are open to the public, according to Hamilton.

“As long as you’re an FIU student, you can join the club. We’re not standing at the doors scanning for melanin,” she said.

Meetings are every other Tuesday at the Wolfe University Center, room 159. For more information e-mail Hamilton at clubafrica@gmail.com.

Julia Cardenuto contributed to this story.

What was your first reaction to the new cafeteria?

Adriana Egozcue
Junior
“it’s great. If I would have had Subway one more time, I would have thrown up.”

Brian Harris
Sophomore
“Not a lot of diversity. They have a lot of places to eat at the other campuses.”

Brian Krass
Sophomore
“Finally, it’s open! They are really cheerful at Moe’s. It has a nice view.”

Hannah-Grace Oxar
Sophomore
“The place is nice, but I wish they had healthier choices.”

Roshana Gossoff
Junior
“Lowering A&S fees because a lot of money is going to places we don’t know.”

Briana Krass
Sophomore
“Where's Subway?”

Lianamar Davila
Junior
“It’s beautiful, nothing on the campus looks like this.”

Natalie Lopez
Senior
“Where’s Subway?”

Yagen Gutierrez
Junior
“I love it! It’s so different from the other campus.”
Polling place campaign ban shouldn’t include tees

OLGA VELEZ Staff Writer

A restriction in polling areas may be in violation of the First Amendment. This restriction is defining the meaning of the word electioneering to include wearing politically-oriented clothing. According to an article from the Associated Press, poll workers in Harrisburg, Pa. would not allow Sue Nace to vote without first ruffling up her pro-Obama shirt sleeve.

According to the poll workers, merely wearing a politically-oriented t-shirt is considered inappropriate electioneering. In this same article, GOP chairman Robert Gleason agreed with new regulations stating that allowing partisan clothing, which in itself is not intimidating, could create a loophole for intimidating electioneering in Florida.

The first thing would be a button or a shirt, and maybe the next thing would be a musical hat," Gleason said.

According to the official Web site for the Florida State Legislature, the current law prohibiting electioneering in Florida states that "the terms 'solicit' or 'solicitation' shall include, but not be limited to, seeking or attempting to see any voter, fact, opinion or contribution; distributing or attempting to distribute any political or campaign material, leaflet, or handout, conducting a poll except as specified in this paragraph; seeking or attempting to seek a signature on any petition; and selling or attempting to sell any item.

Any attempt to actively campaign for a candidate at a polling place should not be permitted. Doing so could intimidate voters to change their minds and make them decide to vote for a different candidate.

According to Andre Smith, an assistant professor of law at FIU, wearing a shirt that promotes a particular candidate should not be allowed to campaign in the polling areas. "There is too much risk of intimidation. I would also prohibit voters from bringing a sign because, to me, that is campaigning. Intimidation of voters at the polls is something that can’t be tolerated," Smith said.

However, if someone is simply wearing clothing that supports a candidate without actually trying to force another person to vote a certain way, how can that be electioneering? While I do agree that wearing a politically-musical hat under this law would be considered an attempt to sell a particular candidate I do not agree it is a good enough reason to prohibit passively expressing political beliefs using clothing.

If the person is only passively expressing his or her political beliefs without trying to force another person to agree or disagree, then wearing partisan clothing should not be considered anything more than a form of expression. It is also a form of expression that should be protected under the First Amendment. Professor Smith also felt that merely wearing a shirt that promotes a particular candidate does not constitute electioneering.

I think wearing shirts should be allowed. It is a stretch to call wearing a shirt electioneering; it is so passive that it is not really campaignng and it should not be prohibited," Smith said.

State Democratic Party Chairman T.J. Rooney said GOP support for the dress code is a partisan effort to scare away new voters.

To go [to the polls] and engage in an expression of democracy is not intimidating; it is something that one feels comfortable with. There is no other criteria besides having a pulse. It just so happens, that sometimes, the smartest, most informed thing a person can do is to exercise their right to vote.

Sophomore Amandine Smith, an international relations major, also feels that campaigning in polling places is not only intrusive but also unnecessary.

"It [electioneering] should not be necessary because people should have already made up their mind on election day," Smith said. "When you go to the polls to vote you should have already made up your mind. Seeing someone else wearing clothing that is partisan really shouldn’t influence or intimidate you."

Right to vote: a choice that shouldn’t be forced

MATTHEW RUCKMAN Staff Writer

It seems strangers with clipboards approach you at every square of sidewalk, asking if you have registered to vote. Their mission: to combat the voter apathy so prevalent at FIU.

But is voter apathy a problem? Something is troublesome about these solicitors, apart from their ability to make you lie, because while they may have good intentions, promoting participation in the democratic process, they are also making the statement that there is no other criteria besides having a pulse.

In a 2005 Harris Interactive Survey, only 55 percent of adult Americans surveyed could correctly identify the three branches of government.

The survey suggests that a little under half of the U.S. population does not understand how the government works, much less what that guy in that White House actually does.

A scary thought given that, like motorists, most people think they’re above average, when in all probability they’re just average.

The average are unable to explain the Presidential powers, which would only delude them into even more of a political rut, once they vote and act upon.

What votemongers like Rock The Vote, Youth Voter Strategies or those people bothering you on the street, don’t seem to get is that being a citizen isn’t too much defined by your ability to vote, but rather, by your ability to understand.

Any monkey can pull a lever after all. So soliciting a voter, who may not know what they’re voting for, negates another possibly informed vote. These solicitations essentially deconstruct what democracy is meant to accomplish by this gradual addition of ignorant votes.

The sum effect: an apathetic individual casting an ignorant vote that leads to the inauguration of an ignorant president into office.

With this in mind, what’s wrong with a little voter apathy? According to the U.S. Census, only 47 percent of 18 to 24 year olds voted in the 2004 presidential election. Some see this as horrible, an affront to democracy and equate this right to vote with an obligation to vote.

They tell the average student, that apathy is a disease, and they don’t care.

I don’t care either. If someone ignorant of the issues shows no inclination towards improvement, why should he or she be encouraged to vote? They shouldn’t. If apathy can’t be cured, if the voter doesn’t want to learn what their candidate is actually capable of once he makes it to office, at least it can be quarantined, by allowing said person to voluntarily retreat from the democratic system.

It just so happens, that sometimes, the smartest, most informed person a citizen can say is, “I don’t know,” and withdraw, to learn something for next time.

Apathy, by itself, can’t hold the blame entirely. People dissociate only when there’s nothing substantive to associate to. So apathy is understandable. Withdrawal is a symptom, abandonment is a sign, not just of a disinterested citizen, but a failure by government, and by extension the election.

So what happens to the voter turnout in this time around, if only a portion of those who are eligible turn out, it will be no surprise.

What when a citizen is given the choice between poison and poison, between big government and bigger government, they, for good reason, don’t want to make a choice, and apathy is the only rational alternative.

Maybe it is.
World’s cleanest car now headed stateside

KEVIN CASTRO
Staff Writer

Driving the world’s cleanest car is no longer a luxury for the affluent environmentalists. Motor Development International, a French-based company, has finally developed what is believed to be the first affordable and efficient air car.

The air car, recently renamed FlowAIR, uses a new compressed air engine in addition to gasoline and biofuels to run. This new engine is what separates the air car from any other car. Unlike hybrids, which need either large amounts of electricity or water and gas, the air car only needs air and little to no gas.

According to manufacturer, Zero Pollution Motors’ online center, the air car can be refilled with air at home or in your parking garage by plugging it into a power outlet. The air tanks are each comprised of 3,200 cubic feet of compressed air at 4,500 psi.

“That’s 306 atmospheres of pressure. It’s a lot,” said Dr. Brian Raue, an associate professor in the University’s Physics department. Current plans at ZPM indicate that refilling the air tank will only cost consumers $2 a month. In addition, the compressed air tank automatically refills when driving at higher speeds.

Not only are the fuel costs low, but oil changes will be required every 31,000 miles since there is no combustion taking place. There is also reduced maintenance as the air car does not use cooling circuits or hot gases.

According to ZPM, these attributes are not the primary benefits of the air car. They say it will also be the world’s cleanest vehicle.

ZPM states that when travelling under 35 mph, the air car is running exclusively on compressed air, emitting only air and therefore releasing zero pollution.

The air expelled from the tail pipe is actually cleaner than the air used to fill the tank. This is because before compression, the air is run through carbon filters to eliminate dirt, dust, humidity and other urban air impurities that could hamper the engine’s performance.

At speeds over 35 mph the air car uses small amounts of fuel; either gasoline, propane, ethanol or biofuels. These fuels are used to heat air inside a heating chamber as it enters the engine.

This process produces emissions of only 0.141 pounds of CO2 per mile.

“It is four times less than the average. Yes, it is significant,” said Dr. Krish Jayachandran, associate professor of soil science for the Environmental Studies department.

ZPM states that the air car is designed to make a major difference in urban areas, especially where motor vehicles are the single largest contributor to ground-level ozone, a major component of smog.

The air car is also touted as safer than most vehicles. The body is composed of fiberglass and injected foam, which, according to ZPM, is safer, easier to repair and does not rust.

To guarantee a secure joint, the chassis is composed of aluminum rods and is glued similarly to aircraft.

“You could have a strongly built car with epoxy [glue], after all, airplane wings are largely held on with glue,” Raue said.

ZPM is planning to release the car in the spring of 2010 for a manufacturer suggested retail price of $17,800.

“I highly recommend it,” Jayachandran said.

Low fuel costs - You can get an equivalent of 106 MPG. It can cost as little as $2 to refill your tank with air.

World’s cleanest car now headed stateside

Mini FlowAIR: Three-seater compressed air vehicle (formerly known as the MiniCat): not in production as yet.

One FlowAIR: Economy/utility compressed air vehicle (formerly known as the OneCat): production in 2008.

City FlowAIR: Six-seater, family-size compressed air vehicle, not in production yet; planned for US market; estimated 96mph top speed and up to 800 mile range; Compressed Air Engine (CAE) powered and Compressed Air Multiplier (CAM) enabled; three models to choose from.

http://zeropollutionmotors.us/
Artists draw inspiration from their morbid fascinations

On Oct. 11, the Wynwood Art District had its monthly gallery walk. All participating galleries in the art district are open from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. on the second Saturday of every month serving wine, cheese and very contemporary art.

My top pick from the galleries and their exhibitions this past Saturday is “The Living Dead” exhibition. It is located at the Harold Golen Gallery and showcases two contemporary painters, Pooch and Paul Torres.

The potency of some of the work was so bad it was good, and the renderings clearly portrayed the art being alive and taking over the world, at least in that moment. Pooch and Torres express a common zeitgeist in pointing out our love for corruption, greed, sensationalism, violence and desensitization.

When I looked at Pooch’s work I saw influences of HR Geiger, who fathered the blockbuster series “Alien,” starring Sigourney Weaver. I also see early childhood influences of Guns N’ Roses album covers and tattoo parlors.

Both artists’ work repulsed me - in a good way. I felt removed from the social commotion as the paintings sucked me in while strolling through the exhibition. The renderings clearly portrayed the art being alive and taking over the world, at least in that moment. Pooch and Torres express a common zeitgeist in pointing out our love for corruption, greed, sensationalism, violence and desensitization.

The artist’s work is well-known for the use of grotesque imagery to illustrate moral and religious concepts and narratives of his time, receiving numerous commissions. Much like Bosch, Pooch seems to have his own stigmata to reinvent and depict current society, clearly defining our love for vulgarity and desensitization. I see this translated in his “Absinthe Drinkers,” as well as in “Sawblade Salute.” One would think he was making a statement about the blockbuster horror series “Saw.”

Considering that Pooch is a self taught artist, he renders his whimsical ideas well. I highly recommend the second Saturday at the Design District and encourage a visit to the Harold Golen Gallery, where admission is free.

Info

-The show runs from Oct. 11 through Nov. 1, 2008
-Admission is free
-Harold Golen Gallery, 314 North West 24th street. (Off of NW 2ND Ave.) Wynwood Art District, Miami, Florida

NOTRICA 32ND STREET MARKET: Torres’ piece, including many of his others, may be seen at the “Living Dead” exhibition.

EVIL HAS A NEW FACE.
TWO OF THEM, TO BE EXACT.

JOIN OUR STAFF!

The BEACON is always looking for talented individuals to join the staff. If you have an interest in writing, photography or even grammar, don’t be shy. Stop by one of our offices located in GC 210 and WUC 124.
Members of the Jewish faith reaffirm their commitment

I haven’t had a morsel of food or a sip of water for 23 hours – almost a full day. I’m getting a little bit dizzy. It’s tough to stand. I’ve been in synagogue for almost 10 hours since sundown last night. I sit down in my seat for a minute to compose myself, regain my concentration. I look around, take some of the environment in.

Today is Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, is a phenomenon unlike any other in the world. A Jew participates in Yom Kippur mainly for himself, to refill his own moral gas tank.

Today, I start anew, no baggage. I will wake up tomorrow ready to shock the world, all while being the best Jew I can. In order to repent completely, show dedication to myself, my family, my community, my people and, most importantly, to G-d, I will restrain from eating and drinking for 25 hours. Humility, a pillar of Judaism, overtakes someone when the simplest pleasures in life, such as food and bath, are not allowed.

Although each of us is just a small part of a whole, the things we do affect other people, so it is very important to neither desecrate nor shame Judaism – we have enough trouble in the world.

I apologized to my two younger brothers, mother, grandparents and friends. I apologized to G-d. Yom Kippur teaches the Jewish people to be responsible for their actions because there are consequences – a higher being closely watches the actions of the chosen people.

Inside the synagogue, I see a group of old men standing, toughening it out. My grandfather is one of them – praying, repenting and atoning for his wrongdoings. These men have lived full, prosperous lives raising families. Some have endured a proverbial hell because of their religion, and they are fasting too, finding the strength to continue to stand.

Unbelievable, I think to myself. In communities all over the world, in synagogues just like mine, millions of Jews are united as one, dressed in white, fasting, weeping, begging and pleading with G-d for forgiveness, for themselves and for their peers.

The many sifrei torah sit peacefully in their place, gleaming with beauty.

The final prayer is recited aloud. “Our Father, our king, tear up the evil decree of our verdict... seal us in the book of redemption and salvation... seal us in the book of forgiveness and pardon.” The shofar is sounded. Yom Kippur is over. I can now go back to living my life, but I will go about it a little bit differently than I did last year. I will try to be a better person, treat myself with more respect and treat others like I would want to be treated.

I might have lost five or six pounds along the journey, but what I’ve gained can’t be put on paper.

I’m glad I was able to share this unbelievable experience with my community, my synagogue, and Jews worldwide.
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NOTEBOOK: FOOTBALL

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HITTING THEIR STRIDE

Volleyball holds serve at home with weekend victories

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The FIU women’s volleyball team remains unbeaten at home (7-0), topping the Denver Pioneers in an exciting 5-set Friday night (24-26, 22-25, 25-21, 25-18, 15-13) and disposing of North Texas, sweeping the Mean Green in 3 sets on Sunday afternoon (25-18, 25-17, 25-20).

FIU 3, DENVER 2

It was looking bleak for FIU early in a 5 set marathon win vs. Denver Friday night (24-26, 22-25, 25-21, 25-18, 15-13). Denver hadn’t lost in nearly a month and was in control of the match early, winning two sets to none. FIU held a 24-23 first set lead until Denver strung together 5 straight points to take the set 26-21. Denver edged FIU 25-22 in the second set, controlling the set and trailing to FIU only once, 1-0. The last time FIU was down 2-0, they were swept at Iowa State.

In the third set, FIU led 23-18 until Denver fought back to make it 23-21. FIU called a timeout in an effort to avoid being swept by giving up their second late set lead of the match. Isadora Rangel won the next two points and FIU took the set 25-21.

FIU dominated in the fourth set, and led 21-18 late. Yarimar Rosa served the next four points to help FIU tie the match at 2 sets a piece with a momentum shifting 25-18 victory.

The Golden Panthers improved to 3-1 in five set matches this year with a 15-13 5th set clincher. With FIU up 14-13, Denver committed one of their eight service errors of the match to give FIU the set and match.

“When we were in the locker room [after the second set] we knew we couldn’t lose our first home game,” All-American Outside Hitter Yarimar Rosa said. “I think after coach talked to us, everyone changed their attitude.” Rosa, leading the nation in kills per set, notched a season high 33 kills hitting an excellent .452. Rosa added solid defense with 16 digs. Outside hitter Isadora Rangel committed one error and added 21 kills, hitting .408. Setter Natalia Valentín set a career-high with 64 assists and added 13 digs on defense.

“We turned it up in the third set,” Head Coach Danijela Tomic said. “I told the team in the locker room ‘we are playing for the Sun Belt Championship’. I’m just very proud of them. They are such a young team and to be able to come back after losing the first two sets says a lot about the character of our kids.”

FIU 3, NORTH TEXAS 0

FIU won via sweep for the 9th time this season, taking care of North Texas in sets (25-18, 25-17, 25-20). FIU led for most of the match; with North Texas taking the lead just once, and tying the match twice. FIU wasn’t the sharpest on the offensive end, but a strong defense propelled them to victory. FIU collected 18 blocks, including freshman Sabrina Gonzalez contributing 6. Outside Hitter Yarimar Rosa contributed 17 kills on offense, with Setter Natalia Valentín adding 29 assists and four aces.

FIU dominated the first set and led 24-18, and Freshman Andrea Lakovic scored the clincher with one of her 3 kills.

In the second set, North Texas pulled within 2 at 8-6. The Mean Green couldn’t close in, and FIU took the match 25-18.

The third set provided the most efficient play from both squads. FIU hit a .367, their best of the afternoon, and North Texas hit .184.

A tale of two games: Volleyball continuing to mature

The FIU volleyball team has put the Sun Belt Conference on notice, going 3-1 over the last two weekends, and improving to 15-4 over all and 5-1 in league play.

Taking the focus off the wins, and placing it on the how, some interesting questions arise, and projects an interesting dichotomy is projected on the volleyball court.

On the Friday hand (vs. Denver), you have a team that started sloppy, but was able to play a close opening two sets, despite the fact that FIU held a hitting percentage average over the Denver Pioneers. FIU was still able to come up with a thrilling five set win over a previously unbeaten conference opponent in a match that could hardly be described as anything but epic.

On the Sunday hand (vs. North Texas), the Golden Panthers picked up a sweep of SBC West cellar dweller North Texas, but in an uninspiring fashion.

FIU allowed a season best, .054 hitting percentage and 12 team blocks, but was not satisfied with its defensive performance. “Every time we play a team not on [our] level, we seem to go down [to their level]” said FIU setter Natalia Valentín.

The let down that Danijela Tomic looked to avoid after the five set Western Kentucky win came to pass, but her team was able to find a way to defend its home court for the seventh time in as many tries this season.

I mentioned earlier in the season that it takes time for young teams to learn how to win, when the Golden Panthers won their first five set match of the season, over Old Dominion. Now the Golden Panthers, who are 3-1 in five setters this year, are hitting that point in the season where sophomores become juniors and juniors become seniors.

Maturity is setting in for the Golden Panthers, and it can be seen in the two ways they won this previous weekend, and those manners were far different, first fighting through a slow start to rally in a marathon win over WKU, and finding the energy to make short work of UNT.