Provost announces candidacy removal

JULIO MENACHE
Staff Writer

Executive Vice President and Provost Ronald Berkman has withdrawn his candidacy for the University at Albany’s presidential search, according to the Office of the Provost.

The announcement comes on the eve of a Times Union article that leaked information on the top five candidates for the University at Albany, New York, in what was supposed to be a covert and confidential process to pick the next president.

Two sources close to the proceedings leaked the names of Berkman, along with the other four finalists, to the Albany paper after members of the search committee signed a confidentiality agreement, promising not to divulge names of candidates.

Berkman, along with the other candidates, would not speak to reporters after the story broke.

According to an online update by the University at Albany’s search committee, the race has been narrowed down to three candidates and they promise a new president will be named “as quickly as possible.”

Aside from Berkman, the other finalists were also current president and chancellors from different universities.

As a finalist, Berkman met with members of the University at Albany community for off-campus interviews.

According to the University, all the travel expenses were covered by the University of Albany.

The Times Union article stated the likelihood that some of the finalists may consider withdrawing their candidacies after their confidentiality agreement was breached.

According to a search update posted on the school’s Web site on Feb. 17, all candidates recommended by the presidential search have remained in the race despite the leaked information.

“The desired confidentiality of the process was not preserved due to an unfortunate breach, we were successful in persuading our candidates to remain in the process - no small feat and a tribute to the conviction and the integrity of all directly involved,” said David C. Tomson, the University at Albany’s executive vice president and provost.

Berkman, page 3
Facebook deletes sex offenders’ accounts

Facebook announced Feb. 20 that it has removed more than 5,500 convicted sex offenders from its social networking Web site since May.

Visations were scheduled for Feb. 20. 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Fred Hunter Funeral Home in 6301 Taft Street, Hollywood.

Funeral services were scheduled for Feb. 21 at 9 a.m at St. James-in-the-Hills Episcopal Church at 3329 Wilson St., Hollywood, followed by his burial at Hollywood Memorial Gardens North Cemetery in 3001 North 72nd St., Hollywood.

“We are all devastated,” said Meira Langsam, SIMC program assistant. “He was a lovely man.”

Facebook to create ‘Bill of Rights’

Facebook is asking for its community of users to help contribute in the creation of a new, user-friendly term of service by asking them to give feedback on a newly formed Facebook group called “Facebook Bill of Rights and Responsibilities”.

“The thought or idea that someone can claim a random post or photo of you and claim it’s now their property is just wrong,” said Adrian Valladres, marketing major and Facebook user. “But still, if you want something to really remain private, you shouldn’t be posting it online.”

Facebook is ready to file a complaint called the Electronic Privacy Information Center was ready to file a complaint.

Various media outlets and online news sources also started publishing articles about Facebook’s terms of service change, causing widespread backlash from subscribers.

The Beacon is an editorially independent, student-run newspaper partially funded by student and services fees that are appropriated by Student Government.

The Beacon is published on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays charging the full and Spring semesters and once a week during Summer B. One copy per person. Additional copies are 25 cents.

EXPERIENCING: Trevor Nicholson, a junior international business major, was challenged to eat spaghetti while blindfolded during the Resident Hall’s Disability Dinner on Feb. 5. The dinner attempted to show students what life would be if they had a disability.

FIU

University to honor distinguished alumni

The eighth annual Torch Awards Gala will be honoring and paying tribute to distinguished alumni and members of the FIU community on Feb. 28.

The ceremony will also include a performance by University alumna and American Idol finalist Syesha Mercado.

The cocktail reception will start at 6:30 p.m. inside the Graham Center Ballrooms.

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Earlier in February, MySpace, Facebook’s rival networking site, removed 90,000 sex offenders from its site during a two-year period.

- Compiled by Paulo O’Swath and Pamela Duque

Corrections

The author’s year and major were incorrectly represented in the Feb. 20 Soapbox column. William-Jose Velez Gonzalez is a sophomore studying biomedical engineering.

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Over 120,000 Facebook users joined a group on Facebook in order to protest the change and the number is still growing.

An online privacy research group called the Electronic Privacy Information Center was ready to file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission over the civil liberties violations contained within the new terms of service.

“Given the level of exposure Face- book has to the entire world, I don’t agree with them using my name and face to do as they wish,” said Chris Sierra, business major and Facebook user.

And eventually, after extensive media coverage and threats from the EPIC, Facebook reverted to the previous terms of service.

“We’ve decided to take a new approach toward developing our terms. We concluded that returning to our previous terms was the right thing to do for now — we think that a lot of the language in our terms is overly formal and protective so we don’t plan to leave it there for long,” Zuckerberg said in a Feb. 18 Facebook post.

Zuckerberg said in a previous blog post that the company’s philosophy is that “people own their information and control who they share it with.”

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Facebook to create ‘Bill of Rights’

FACEBOOK, page 1

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At a time when gas prices are constantly changing, experts are looking to new types of affordable energy to power our day-to-day lives.


Scott Nauman, manager for economics and energy in the Corporate Planning Department of Exxon Mobile, will be giving the presentation which will consist of a detailed outlook of the global energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions as they relate to population growth and economic expansion.

This event has been presented around the country for decades. However, it has been held at FIU for only the past two years.

[“The Global Energy Outlook”] is widely viewed as one of the best in the world,” said Edward Glab, executive director of the Knight Center for Excel- lence in Management and co-director of EBF.

The reason for this, Glab said, is that any sort of political pressure does not influence Exxon Mobile’s presentation. This leads to an unbiased, extremely accu-rate report on the status of the world’s energy consumption.

To inquire about the event is to promote awareness of the energy crisis that the world faces and what it stands to face in the near future, where countries like China and India are constantly developing and their demand for fossil fuels is rising.

This year, the presentation will incor-porate the need for affordable, alternative energy resources and ways to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

“The reason we are trying to do is really raise awareness of the importance of developing alternative fuels, clean alternative fuels,” said George Philippidis, associate director of ARC and co-director of EBF.

The world will look to new, innovative technologies that will change the tendency of dependence on oil, coal and natural gas, which will continue to satisfy a majority of the world’s energy needs well into 2030.

According to Philippidis, Florida is a perfect place for certain types of renewable energy solutions, such as solar energy, to thrive.

Florida can also take advantage of gasification: The conversion of waste materials that normally occupy landfills into a gas that can be used to create energy.

Another possibility in the future is ocean energy. Underwater turbines can harness the limitless energy of deep underwater currents that flow between Florida and the Bahamas.

However, Philippidis stresses that this technology is in the development stage and needs to be commercialized.

ARC is currently working on various alternative energy projects, such as cellulose ethanol and biodiesel created from algae farms.

Both Glab and Philippidis say that University students can do their part by taking an interest and getting involved in the green energy industry.

“We need a lot of people to staff these new technologies. We’re talking about business people, scientists, engineers, policy makers,” Philippidis said.

Philippidis went on to say that students should request courses on green energy and global energy demand so that ARC can create these courses and start developing a workforce.

“I feel it’s very important for people to understand that energy and talking about energy is the crux of global warming and climate change,” Glab said. “It’s so important that they understand the more we can conserve energy, the more we are addressing this problem.”

Exxon Mobile’s presentation will be held on Feb. 27 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the College of Business Administration Complex, Special Events Center, Room 233. The event is open to the public, though EBF asks that attendees RSVP, as a free lunch will be provided.

Retention bonus, salary hike keeps provost on staff

BERKMAN, page 1

chair of the Presidential Search Committee for the University at Albany in the search update.

The FIU Office of the Provost did not specify why Berkman rescinded his candidacy.

This is the third time Berkman has withdrawn his name from a university presidential search. According to a Feb. 8 article in The Miami Herald, the provost was a finalist for the New Mexico State University presidential search, but dropped out of the search in October.

In an effort to retain the highly sought-after position, outgoing President M. A. Maidique reworked Berkman’s contract.

According to The Miami Herald, Berkman will get a $3,000 “retention” bonus, as well as a $3,000 annual raise to his $334,560 salary.

If Maidique’s successor chooses another provost, Berkman is entitled to a one-year paid sabbatical.

The University at Albany presidential search mirrors the search currently in place by FIU, where a search committee has been assembled with various faculty, staff and even business leaders from the local community.

The University at Albany has hired a search firm, Parker Executive Search, to recruit candi-dates for the position. The search committee later creates a pool of candidates that will be shortened and, then, creates a shortlist of finalists. The finalists will then speak with members of the University community.

Parker Executive Search has assembled the list of firms considered by FIU’s own presidential search committee.

Berkman has been repeatedly rumored to be a potential candidate for the University’s presidency, but he has yet to confirm or deny his interest in the position.

“Berkman has not made a decision regarding the FIU presidential search,” said head of FIU Media Relations, Maydel Santana-Bravo, in an e-mail to The Beacon.

Revision to elections code creates SGA accessibility

PARTIES, page 1

throughout one year. The bill also specifies that a party cannot spend more than $2,000 on any individual race.

At the moment, a presidential candidate can raise up to $3,000, while a representative at large can raise $800 toward their campaign.

All other senators can currently spend $400 on their campaigns.

“We want to make SGA more accessible to those who want to run.”

The way it is now, it seems to be set up for those who have a greater amount of money who can afford to run,” Cabralsaid. “I feel that elections should be determined by those who have the best set of ideas rather than those with the greatest amount of money.”

If implemented, the bill states that each party would be required to list at least four candidates for every general election.

“You wouldn’t want a party to be created solely for the purpose of selecting one candi-date,” Cabralsaid. “That would be a way for a candidate to circumvent the spending limits established in the elections code.”

Other revisions to the elections code would require the elections board to publish and post the records of candidates before elections including their roll call votes, how much money they’ve spent on their campaign and their campaign literature so that voters can access this information.

A chairman would lead a party and be responsible for registering and creating a name for such party.

The chairman would be required to have a minimum of six credits during the semester they serve their term. However, a chairman cannot be a member of SGC.

The proposed bill would also require members of the elections board of SGC to not state a specific party affiliation or support a given candidate.

“These revisions can make a significant impact and change how SGA elections are conducted for the better,” Cabralsaid. “By passing these reforms, the 2008-2009 Senate can distin-guish itself as a group of legislators willing to take risks and make bold decisions to protect and enhance the rights of students to get involved in their government.”

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Latin American and Caribbean Center School of International and Public Affairs

Arts & Sciences
Florida International University
Civil rights icon to talk about Obama

LORENA ESTRADA
Contributing Writer

He was a highlight at President Barack Obama’s inauguration and a civil rights icon who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Rev. Joseph Lowery will speak at the Biscayne Bay Campus Feb. 25 at 2 p.m. in the Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre. The event is free and open to the public, with a suggested donation of $10 to benefit the BBCENCE Excellence Fund — a foundation generally used to cover the University’s needs, including scholarships and leadership activities.

“This is a great opportunity for our students to see a historical figure up close and personal,” said Janice Spann-Givens, associate director of Multicultural Programs and Services. “He will probably talk about a combination of things, from his long history in the civil rights movement to his experience and role at the inauguration ceremony.”

Lowery will also discuss his part in the civil rights movement and where America is as a country today, according to Craig Cunningham, director of Campus Life & Orientation.

The conference, sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Programs and Services, BBCENCE Life & Orientation and BBCENCE’s Student Government Council Lecture Series, will be paid for by SGC-BBC’s lecture fund.

The money, 25 percent of which comes from Multicultural Programs and Services, goes to the agency representing Lowery.

“Student portions is really $12,000,” Cunningham said. “The lectures committee submits ideas and we try to bring people that would be interesting and bring value to the student population at BBCENCE and community members.”

After watching the great benediction Rev. Lowery gave at the inauguration of President Obama, we thought it would be perfect timing for this to have been in and speak during Black History Month,” said Brittany Brewster, member of the SGC-BBC Lectures Bureau. “It will be exciting to see someone who has been so instrumental in the civil rights movement at FIU.”

Lowery, a longtime Methodist minister, has been at the forefront of the civil rights movement for more than half a century and was named Ebony Magazine as one of the nations “15 Greatest Black Preachers.”

His advocacy for civil rights began with the arrest of Rosa Parks in the 1950s, when he led the desegregation of buses and other public accommodations in Mobile, Ala.

Along with King, Lowery co-founded and was president from 1977 to 1998 of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which eventually became one of the most influential groups in the civil rights movement.

Throughout his career, Lowery received several prominent awards, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Center Peace Award and the National Urban League’s 2004 Whitney M. Young, Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award. Lowery also received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the NAACP at its 1997 convention and was hailed the “dean of the civil rights moment.”

Doors open at 1:30 p.m. and students are advised to have their IDs with them.

Smell something fishy? Must be former dump

SERGIO MONTEALEGRE
Staff Writer

The Biscayne Bay Campus promotes its waterfront view to attract students, but an invisible problem has had students’ noses burning for a while now.

It can be described as a very strong and unpleasant scent that permeates around the campus from time to time. Simply put, the way the process works, according to Pliske, is that organic solids, which can include leaves from trees or human waste, fall into a pipe or tank, an example of anaerobic processes where no oxygen is present to break down the material.

According to a 2007 Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department document titled "Alternative Water Supply Plan and Reuse Feasibility Plan Annual Progress Report," the North Dorriz Wastewater Treatment Plant provides the water used to irrigate the lawns on campus, thanks to a distribution line to BBCENCE.

The water treatment plant plays a much larger role for BBC than just being a neighbor. According to a 2007 Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department document titled "Alternative Water Supply Plan and Reuse Feasibility Plan Annual Progress Report," the North Dorriz Wastewater Treatment Plant provides the water used to irrigate the lawns on campus, thanks to a distribution line to BBCENCE.

The city has a cap of 5 million gallons per day. MDWASD currently delivers an annual average flow of 0.99 MGD for irrigating 40 acres of landscape," the report said.

This is the primary reason why signs around the campus urge students not to use the water being sprayed around the lawns.

There may be another factor: The former Munisport landfill, though reportedly cleaned, is still a concern in aquatic contamination.

“Although there are doubtless organics buried in the Superfund dump site to the south of the entrance road, we are more worried about water pollution and the possible release of synthetic toxins than of the [hydrogen sulfide] from that source,” Pliske said.

Though the site has fundamentally been cleaned and was removed from the Environmental Protection Agency Superfund National Priorities List in 1999, according to an EPA document titled, “Sites in Reuse: Munisport Landfill Superfund Site,” the contaminants once posed “an unacceptable risk to wetlands and aquatic wildlife,” according to a 1988-1989 remedial investigation by the agency.

Although the possibility exists that the landfill could still have trace contaminants seeping into the ground and bay waters, the hydrogen sulfide gas from the wastewater treatment plant and the mangroves can be neither eliminated nor minimized.

“Hydrogen sulfide is released into the atmosphere in small quantities by nearly all waste-water treatment plants and is a natural product of anaerobic soils,” said Pliske. “Especially mangrove communities.”

Senior business and sociology major Kertus Toussaint doesn’t mind the smell — as long as it’s not dangerous.

“I never truly paid attention to it. I always thought it was something natural,” Toussaint said. “I don’t want the school trying to spend money to find a solution and [prefer they] just let nature run its course.”
With the No. 15 ranked recruiting class, according to perfectgame.org, high expectations followed the Golden Panthers into the 2009 season. So far the team has lived up to some of the hype as it outscored its first two opponents of the season 24-4.

FIU 4, JACKSONVILLE 3

When the FIU baseball team made three errors in the top of the seventh to lose its lead, Junior Arrojo called a meeting on a mound to deliver a message to his teammates.

“I told everyone to calm down,” Arrojo said. “I just had that feeling that we were going to win the game no matter what.”

One out away from heading into extra innings, Arrojo delivered one more message on opening night, a bunt single to drive in the game-winning run.

The Golden Panthers (1-0) defeated the Jacksonville University Dolphins (0-1) 4-3 as Tyler Townsend redeemed himself with a game-tying home run in the eighth inning after an errant throw error in the previous inning.

“Right when I bunted it, I knew it was over,” he said.

Arrojo said this type of win was something missing from the 2008 season.

“We didn’t get one of these wins last year,” he said. “We would lose late.”

FIU 20, JACKSONVILLE 1

After a thrilling game decided in the Golden Panthers’ final at bat, FIU cut the dramatics in the next game and routed the Jacksonville Dolphins 20-1 on Feb. 21 at University Park Stadium. Whereas in the last contest the winner emerged in the final inning, the Golden Panthers put this game out of reach in the third by scoring 10 runs. At that point, the score was 14-0, but head coach Turtle Thomas didn’t want his team to become complacent.

“You never know when the script is going to change,” Thomas said. “Until the 27th out is made on defense, you can’t relax.”

Outfielder Lammar Guy provided the first batch of runs by belting a three-run home run in the second inning. Just those four runs were enough for the Golden Panthers’ starting pitcher Tom Ebert, who dominated Jacksonville’s batters with his fastball.

The 6-foot-6 right hander finished the night holding the Dolphins to no runs, two hits through 6 2/3 innings. He also struck out nine batters and did not walk a batter.
**2009 Position Breakdown**

**This Preview Has Been Approved for All Audiences**

### PITCHING

New arms solidify starting rotation, strengthen bullpen

**Andrew Julian**

Sports Director

A youth movement will be at both the front and back of the 2009 FIU pitching staff. The top two names will be junior college transfers Scott Romoser and Tom Ebert, who ranked as excellent outings in their first starts, combining for 12.2 innings pitched and 18 strikeouts while walking just two and striking out just four hits in the two games.

Ebert, a junior, hails from Fargo, N.D., by way of Iowa Western Community College. Rembisz is a sophomore college transfers Scott Rembisz and pitching staff.

The top two starters will be junior Justin Leith, getting the first cracks. No. 3 starter for FIU.

### CAPTAINS’ LEADERSHIP HELPS PITCHING STAFF, TEAM’S DEFENSE

**Sergio Bochilla**

Asst. Sports Director

The Golden Panthers’ infirmary is manned by the veteran presence of second baseman Ryan Mollica and catcher Steven Strepp. Head coach Terry Thomas says the rest of the team respects the two leaders.

“They are great team leaders,” Thomas said. “When we voted for team captains, they got all the votes.”

This is Stropp’s second year with the team.

### INFIELD

Captains’ leadership helps pitching staff, team’s defense

### RELIEF PITCHER

**Daniel Desimone**

Pitcher of the Year and Leith was a 31st round draft choice for the St. Thomas said. “When we voted for team captains, they got all the votes.”

This is Stropp’s second year with the team.

### RELIEF PITCHER

**Daniel Desimone**

### OUTFIELD

Recruits to shake up lineup, compete for outfield positions

**Chris Towers**

Asst. Life Editor

### 2009 Position Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Starting Pitcher</strong></td>
<td>Corey Polizzano</td>
<td>#6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tom Ebert</td>
<td>#34</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel Desimone</td>
<td>#39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Berkowitz</td>
<td>#22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relief Pitcher</strong></td>
<td>Corey Polizzano</td>
<td>#6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel Desimone</td>
<td>#39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eric Berkowitz</td>
<td>#22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catcher</strong></td>
<td>Steven Stropp</td>
<td>#29</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shortstop</strong></td>
<td>Junior Arroyo</td>
<td>#13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Base</strong></td>
<td>Javi Sujo</td>
<td>#25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Javi Sujo</td>
<td>#25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Base</strong></td>
<td>Ryan Mollica</td>
<td>#12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ryan Mollica</td>
<td>#12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Third Base</strong></td>
<td>Chris Allen</td>
<td>#7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chris Allen</td>
<td>#7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outfield</strong></td>
<td>Pablo Bermudez</td>
<td>#7</td>
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<td>Pablo Bermudez</td>
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### GOLDEN PANTHERS' CAPTAINS

The Golden Panthers are hoping that a mix of heralded young recruits and a few returning players will be able to stabilize and work with the infield to establish a potent offense.

During the 2008 season, much of FIU’s offense was generated through a strong infield that continued for 14 of the team’s 51 home runs.

The outfield featured a revolving door throughout all three positions, with no one player able to take command of a starting role. Each outfield position featured as many as four players who started at least one game, and none of them were able to start more than half of the games at any one position.

The Golden Panthers are hoping that a mix of heralded young recruits and a few returning players will be able to stabilize and work with the infield to establish a potent offense.

Last season was Lewis Gay started the most games in center field. But this season, he will move to left field and split time with part-time first baseman Ty Towers.

With his experience playing center last season, Gay should provide added range in right and improve the team’s outfield defense, as he was an all conference defensive MVP at Lake Brantley High School.

The junior’s bat produced a batting average of .219, with a .399 on base percentage and .412 slugging percentage. If he is able to raise his batting average, he will be a productive center outfielder with his speed and power potential.

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The Golden Panthers are hoping that a mix of heralded young recruits and a few returning players will be able to stabilize and work with the infield to establish a potent offense.

Last season was Lewis Gay started the most games in center field. But this season, he will move to left field and split time with part-time first baseman Ty Towers.

With his experience playing center last season, Gay should provide added range in right and improve the team’s outfield defense, as he was an all conference defensive MVP at Lake Brantley High School.

The junior’s bat produced a batting average of .219, with a .399 on base percentage and .412 slugging percentage. If he is able to raise his batting average, he will be a productive center outfielder with his speed and power potential.

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Pitchers choose college over Major Leagues

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

Justin Leith didn’t have to think about it much. Doug Joyce had to spend his whole summer pondering it.

But regardless of how the freshmen made their decision, they both chose FIU.

After being drafted in Major League Baseball’s First-Year player draft, Leith and Joyce elected to accept scholarship offers from FIU over offers from MLB teams. The two budding players elected to be a part of the Golden Panthers’ recruiting class, which ranked 15th nationally.

Joyce, selected in the 41st round by the Kansas City Royals, was hard pressed to take the opportunity to play professional baseball, not to mention the financial lure of it.

“I was close to taking. I got $150,000 in signing bonus they were going to give me.”

“I really liked it a lot and I really wanted to go to school and Leith will be eligible again for the draft in three years. When I came to campus I really liked it a lot and coach Thomas said all the right things. Here I figured I would have a better opportunity to play earlier on,” Leith said. “When I came [Thomas] was talking about the idea of helping build another power in baseball, kind of like UM already is. I want to be a part of that.”

“If I would have gone into the minor leagues it would have been a really good chance to get an education, he said. “Here I get to have fun and play baseball and get some school.”

“I think he has made the right pick,” Stropp said of Joyce’s decision. “He has a lot of potential but he’s a heavier role early as a catcher, whereas if I would have gone into the minor leagues it becomes kind of a job,” he said. “Here I get to have fun and play baseball and get some school.”

“WISE CHOICE”
Senior catcher Steven Stropp believes the newest Golden Panthers made the right pick.

“He has a lot of guys he can learn from,” Stropp said of Leith. “He has a very good changeup and that’s a really tough pitch to learn out of high school. A lot of guys, it takes them four years of college to learn that and he’s already got it mastered.”

“Hopefully in three years I can get drafted again,” he said.

The choice was not as hard for Leith, a left-handed pitcher out of Barron Collier High in Naples, Fla., who will bring a devastating changeup to the mound for the Golden Panthers.

Leith’s ability will give him a chance to carry a heavier role early as opposed to Joyce, whose potential is promising but needs to find consistency.

“I like throwing inside to hitters with fastballs and throw changeups away from them. I have also been working on the cutter while I’ve been here, which is a bit slower than a fastball and it moves,” Leith said. “I can also throw a curveball and slider.”

The cutter will add to Leith’s already impressive group of pitches, and he will have more options to get hitters out.

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THAI LEWIS
Contributing Writer

That’s it! The Pittsburgh Steelers have won their sixth Super Bowl! The mar in the stadium was deafening as the commentator made that announcement with nine seconds left on the clock. A sea of white and gold immediately flooded the field.

Just a stone’s throw away, amid the celebration, the unemployment and the downsized hearted lined the cold streets of Tampa with dim hopes of receiving a few mosids of food. The Super Bowl took place in what The Miami Herald called the community with the highest number of homeless people in the state, with 9,500 at the last count. Homelessness is everywhere and is becoming rampant in our neighborhoods. A few years ago, average stereotype of a home- less person was that they were lazy. Only the mentally ill or the burdens of society (the drug and alcohol addicts) become home- less, were my thoughts. However, as our economic conditions wors- ened, my image of the homeless slowly began to change.

When I see a home- less person on the street, I no longer set a bar or a “crazy.” Instead, I see a poor soul down on his luck who more than likely lost his job and lost his home. At close to 600,000 jobs lost in January and the unemployment rate rising to 7.6 percent within the last month, this reposition is creating more and more homeless people every day. According to a census by the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, there were 4,574 homeless people in Miami-Dade in January.

If you take a look at Palm Bay’s mobile home park in Davie, you will notice a few things missing: mobile homes. This park is one among many that is closing in gates and saying goodbye to thou- sands of its tenants. Its closure forces 500 public school students to pick up and leave with their families, right in the middle of the school year.

Most of the families that resided there cannot afford to live anywhere else due to high rent prices and are therefore rendered homeless. Schools are reporting a drastic increase in the number of homeless students. According to a national survey, one in five school districts saw an increase in the number of students that became homeless in fall 2008.

Schools and social services are starting an effort to help fami- lies like those in Davie. They have already assisted over 1,300 students this year. However, state- wide, there are 34,735 homeless students. This number is six times higher than it was a few years ago.

With the stimulus plans and bailouts going out to help the car manufacturers and banks around the nation, there is surely something that can be done to ease the plight of those that have no choice but to succumb to homelessness. Some Miami activists have taken upon themselves to issue their own, “bailout” plan. They are moving homeless people into foreclosed homes.

“We’re matching homeless people with people-less homes, one activist said to a news crew. Granted, what they are doing is illegal but at least they are doing something to help those in need.

Homeless shelters are filled to the brim and are forced to turn away families due to lack of space.

Some are even forced to cut back on resources, or worse yet, close their doors, because of a decline in governmental funding. Acutely aware of this problem, Holland America Cruise Lines began to donate its unused or partially used toiletries to a program in Fort Lauderdale known as the Cooperative Feeding Program, which provides these cleansing gifts to the working poor and homeless.

The government should be doing its part as well. A recovery plan that increases funding for homeless shelters, allowing them to stay open and provide tempo- rary housing to those that lost their homes ought to be the order of the day. All of the power does not lie in the hands of the government, however. As a society, we are all joined together by this recession.

By doing their part, the homeless in minority and unimportant, such as donating clothes, food, toil- ets and other objects to shelters and donating their time to shelters, we are doing our part. We’re doing our part.

NOWHERE TO GO
Crisis gives new meaning to ‘homeless’
SCARED SEXLESS

Chlamydia ranks first on campus

RAECHEL CONGDON
Contributing Writer

We all know the best way to prevent sexually transmitted diseases is to abstain from sexual acts, but let’s be realistic: sex happens.

More than half of all the people in the United States will have a sexually transmitted disease or sexually transmitted infection at some point in their lives, according to the American Social Health Association.

We live in Miami, which is one of the top cities in the country for acquiring the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, so we have to be careful and face facts.

As young adults, most of us are experimenting with our sexuality and spreading our wings in this STD-ridden city. In Miami-Dade County there are more than 34,000 people living with HIV or AIDS, while more than 20,000 people living with HIV/AIDS reside in Broward County, according to Care Resource, Florida’s oldest HIV/AIDS service organization.

So how do you know when to get tested?

Chances are it is time to get checked when you’ve had unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex. Even if you are using a condom with your partner, it’s a good idea to get tested if you question his or her sexual history.

The American Social Health Association suggests you look for the following sign and symptoms to help you determine if you need to get checked: pus extruding from the penis, odd vaginal discharge, or pain or burning during urination. These symptoms can double for both chlamydia and gonorrhea according to ASHA.

It can be hard to admit that you have engaged in any of those activities, but taking a trip to the University’s Health and Wellness Center would be in your best interest.

The FIU Health Complex offers a plethora of sexual health options, while the wellness center offers HIV testing at no cost. The FIU Health Services Clinic offers a variety of sexual health tests, none of which cost more than $40.

But what happens if you test positive?

Psychological services offer individual and group counseling.

Women are also given a confidential option by visiting the Women’s Center.

Getting a yearly pap smear is one of the best ways women can make sure their reproductive system is in check, according to senior health educator Casandra Roache.

But the best way to avoid this whole getting tested and possibly having an STD situation is by having a monogamous relationship and practicing safe sex, said Roache.

Roache claims that chlamydia is the No. 1 STD within the FIU community. However, this figure cannot be confirmed, as the University Health Services Department does not collect data for specific STD statistics.

Just remember: Don’t be a punk, wrap your junk!

For more information on FIU’s health center you may contact the following: Health Services Clinic, (305) 348-2401; Health and Wellness Center, (305) 348-2401; or the Women’s Center, (305) 348-2401.

You can also check out its Web site, http://www.fiu.edu/health/index.html.

SEX IN AMERICA

134,000 new cases of syphilis are occurring each year, the highest infection rate in 40 years.

1.3 million new gonorrhea cases occur annually.

24 million new cases of human papilloma virus (HPV) occur annually, including a high percentage among teens.

63% of all sexually transmitted disease (STD) cases occur among people less than 25 years of age.

AIDS is the leading killer of Americans between the ages of 25 and 44.

Condoms provide virtually no protection against an STD called the human papilloma virus. HPV is the most common medical problem seen by gynecologists and causes almost all cervical cancer in the U.S.

Source: Lawrence U.

Education enhanced by video games

DAVE KOLPACK
AP Writer

The software company which publishes the video game Gears of War, is studying the reactions of avid gamers to see whether video gaming can promote learning skills that carry over to the classroom.

“We want to figure out what’s compelling about ‘Gears,’ ” said John Mundie, head of gaming research for Microsoft. “If we can find out how to make the games fun and not make them so violent, that would be ideal.”

Microsoft has put up $1.5 million to start The Games for Learning Institute, a joint venture with New York University and other colleges. The goal of the research is to see whether video games — and not just software specifically designed to be educational — can draw students into math, science and technology-based games. The institute has begun lining up middle school students to study.

Microsoft is not the first to explore whether video games could enhance education. For instance, University of Wisconsin researchers have found that playing World of Warcraft can encourage scientific thinking. The researchers noticed that players used mathematics and models to deal with situations in the game’s fantasy world.

Even so, groups that monitor gaming say Microsoft’s entry into the research will bring needed money and credibility. Many studies so far have focused on educational games, not shooter games.

“There isn’t a lot of good research out there,” said Linda Burch, chief program and strategy officer for Common Sense Media.

Parents also want a closer look at potential long-term psychological and sociological effects on frequent game players.

“I would hope that the goal is to have video games that can help develop reaction and problem-solving skills, without blowing everything up in sight,” said Dave Walsh, president of National Institute on Media and the Family in Minneapolis.

Many shooter games force players to track “how many bullets and bombs and missiles I have, and how do I spend and where do I go get more of them,” Mundie said. In “Gears of War,” players must navigate underground tunnels and buildings, monitor weapons systems, gauge their health and find places to take cover.

The idea that there is broader educational value in such activities is sure to find skeptics.

Vince Repesh, a counselor at the University of Minnesota at Duluth, said he fears that gaming is replacing education, not adding to it. He recalled a couple of students coming to him for help after they got hooked on “World of Warcraft.” “One student had gone from straight A to flunking out.

video gaming club at Fargo South High School. She wanted to meet other gamers and buildings, monitor weapons systems, gauge their health and find places to take cover.

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video gaming club at Fargo South High School. She wanted to meet other gamers and believe it’s a good complement to academics club was started by English teacher At Fargo South High School. English teacher Chuck Lang started a video gaming club. He said he believes Microsoft is doing a good thing in researching the potential of games, even if it might benefit the company through increased sales.

“Why not spread this market out?” Lang said. “Why not promote somewhere where kids are having fun?”
Medieval times relived in new live-action sport

ROBERT VICENS
Copy Editor

Imagine yourself running through a green field, grunting as you do alongside your fellows, waving a sword over your head and charging at an armored legion of screaming foes.

Sound like fun?

“Dagorhir, pronounced ‘dagger-here,’ is a live-action battle game where you are the warrior!” reads a flyer advertising Storm Guard, the soon-to-be official Miami chapter of a national organization with chapters in several states including Maryland and Ohio.

Mike Meyer, a business major and junior explains the mission of the game.

“We are a historical reenactment group. We practice combat techniques from the days of yore,” he said.

Storm Guard is open to all and encourages anyone to show up on a practice day and swing a medieval weapon just to try it, whether it’s to let out some pre-school stress or for the thrill of learning the art of swordplay.

“At the end of the day, the best part is you can hit someone as hard as you can but still shake hands with them and say, ‘I love how you killed me,’” said junior Jacob Barrens, founder of Storm Guard and Asian studies major.

Dagorhir is safe and uses handmade weapons.

“We use contact adhesive, foam and duct tape. We make our own weapons,” said Barrens. “We get the plans from the Internet and sometimes other members with more experience.”

With swords, maces and even shields, dagorhir is a creative sport that allows participants to be crafty.

Members can go as all out as they want in making armor and accessories for use while getting a good workout that includes beating friends’ heads in.

Storm Guard is among the largest of the daggerhir chapters in Miami and already looks forward to joining Ragnarok this coming June, according to Barrens.

Ragnarok, held in Ohio, is an annual festival where more than 1,800 people congregate for a week long camping event with large-scale battles, sword fighting classes and medieval reenactment.

When asked about his experience of the reception of dagorhir on campus, senior and computer science major Rick Blanco, member of Storm Guard since last semester, said surprise and curiosity characterized most of onlooker’s reactions.

“Reactions have been pretty positive from the onlookers; neutral at worst,” Blanco said. “I like dagorhir because no matter what it looks like, it can get pretty exhausting and I encourage people to try it.”

The group officially meets on Mondays at 5:30 p.m. at FIU in the large fields near the Graham Center, but has an extra practice on Wednesdays at the same time for those who can’t make it the first session.

For more information contact jaemeyer@hotmail.com, (727) 698-2563.

When my editor, Susana, offered me a weekly music column a few months back, I readily accepted the opportunity to rant and rave about whatever I wanted as often as I wanted.

For someone as into music as I am, this column should be effortless, tossed up with an hour’s preparation every Thursday night before my Friday morning deadline.

However, the thing about weekly columns is that they have a tendency of coming up every week. I know this might seem like an obvious thing to say, but when you have to come up with a different topic every week, it starts to catch up with you and the ideas start to wane.

Every Thursday afternoon, I check my work budget and realize that, once again, “Pop & Circumstance” needs to be written. It’s amazing how quickly a week comes and goes in relation to my column.

Comparatively, a week of classes seems to drag on forever and the same goes for the weeks leading to a concert I’m looking forward to.

It almost seems as if Thursday is pushing its way in the calendar, shoving Tuesdays and Wednesdays out of the way so it can get here quicker.

So here I am, eight hours into Friday, trying to figure out exactly what I’m doing with this space I’m given every seven days.

Now, I am not complaining about my duties, or trying to shirk them in any way.

Oh sure, using my allotted weekly stipend of 500 words to write an intellectually lazy, self-serving rant about deadlines might sound like complaining to you, but I’m just being honest.

A columnist needs, more than anything else, a willingness to be open and honest with his readers. “Well, whatever. Shouldn’t you stop wasting my time with all this whining and start writing about music, and not yourself, you narcissist pratt?”

That is absolutely a fantastic question, dear reader, and one I intend to answer shortly. I am of the opinion that it is impossible to write about music in a vacuum. Each of our own personal experiences subtly shifts the way music affects us, and more than any other medium of art, our personal enjoyment of music is intrinsically linked to where you happen to be at any given moment.

For instance, my favorite movie of all time is probably The Big Lebowski. I can watch that movie back to back every day of the year and not get tired of it.

Conversely, my favorite album ever is undoubtedly Wilco’s Yankee Hotel Foxtrot. However, despite the high place I hold for it, I couldn’t possibly be in the mood for it all of the time. It offers too few moments of pure, unadulterated joy for me to appreciate it all of the time.

What does this have to do with your previous query, you are wondering? Well, writing about music is, essentially, writing about you. It is an autobiography, masquerading as cultural criticism.

It is impossible to remove your preconceptions and past from your experience with music. After all, you experience music not just with your ears but with the entirety of your self. And because of this, you cannot write about music without writing about yourself and that’s all this column is supposed to be.

It just so happens that this week, I decided to cut out the middle man. It is my hope that in the coming weeks, I will be able to do what I haven’t thus far in the column’s run, which is introduce my audience to new sounds around town and the country to look out for, but in the meantime you’re stuck with just me.

Pop & Circumstance is a weekly column discussing all things pop music.
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