Weather

Friday

Partly cloudy

LOW 72, HIGH 87

Saturday

Partly cloudy

LOW 73, HIGH 84

Sunday

Isolated t-storms

LOW 73, HIGH 84

Spotlight

Opinion Page 4

With new efforts being made in Congress to ban domestically-manufactured assault weapons, we must make sure that guns don’t take away more lives.

Life Page 5

Upcoming Events

Sunday, November 8, 3 p.m.: Bring the peace with more than 7,000 people and bands including Pearl Jam if it is a death day for bands like this one. Enjoy the family fun at the festival.

Miami Art Museum, open-free, April 12 & 13: During this trying time, it is essential to look at the faces be like this one. Inspire the artist in you at Miami Art Museum.

Miami South Beach Triathlon, April 13, 7:15 a.m. (904) 568-9621, “The South Beach” Daily Beach and Field Triathlon being held on the 904 Street and Ocean Drive.

Miami City Ballet, April 13, 8 p.m.: Let those you get to the get you away at the 37th Cuban Open House.

For the complete calendar, please see page 2 and FIU Today Calendar.

SGA Election Coverage

Complete results, coverage, analysis and student reactions coming Monday April 6

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RUBIKED

Christopher Lazaga

Staff Writer

Each day, countless students spend too much time driving in circles around the University Park campus parking lots and garages searching for a place to park. Some students idle their vehicles in the corners of the Red and Blue Garages in hopes of finding a parking space that doesn’t require a cross-campus odyssey to make it to class.

While many students complain about parking, few students take steps to inform the University administration of their parking difficulties. The answer may partially lie in the Continuous Quality Improvement Survey, a periodic questionnaire sent to all FIU students.

Earlier this semester, researchers at FIU’s Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness sent a link to the student body for the survey, which is conducted at least once every year and is one of the University’s tools for gauging the level of student satisfaction with the school.

“A lot of times, students don’t take the time to make their voices heard,” said Noelle Laforest, statistical research coordinator for OPIE. “This past semester the survey was sent out to an estimated 36,000 students, but as of today we have close to 1,400 responses.”

The survey’s purpose is to collect feedback from registered University students pertaining to academic issues, campus life, campus environment, campus safety, University/student communication, student services and student experiences in order to improve the FIU experience.

Laforest said that anything students suggest needs improvement is taken note of.

“The improvement survey is also used to identify departments and services that students have difficulty dealing with.

“Our main goal is to make sure the students are heard,” said Hesigis Perez, director of institutional research for OPIE. “If we see there is a pervasive problem in a particular area, we make it known to that area so they can choose to take action.”

According to Laforest, in the past, the survey has yielded a heavy student concern for campus eateries. Students wanted to see more variety in their on-campus diets.

Soon afterward, the food court

Opie, page 2

Candidates show diversity, experience

Julio Menache

Staff Writer

A faculty senate chairman, a clinical professor of neurology and the former president of a university in Saudi Arabia are just three of the 15 diverse candidates for the University’s presidency.

The resumes of each of the candidates were presented to the Presidential Search Advisory Committee, a panel of 26 members from the University and local community, designated to pick FIU’s new president.

The candidates were either nominated or responded to an ad placed by the University in different publications, such as The Chronicle of Higher Education.

“I’m impressed, we’re off to a decent start,” said committee member Thomas Breslin, chairman of the FIU Faculty Senate. “We have a reasonable amount of candidates and a good process in place.”

Members of the PSAC got a first look at the 15 candidates during the committee meeting on March 28.

The faculty members were broken into different small groups, where each group looked at four of the candidates with guidance from Jan Greenwood and Betty Asher, heads of the executive search firm Greenwood/Asher & Associates in charge of helping with the search.

As committee members, we are asked to look for leadership, management and resource development,” said outgoing Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus President Ana Maria Silva, who is the only student representative on the board. “We also look at different qualifications that are desired, but not obligated such as having a terminal degree.”

According to the University’s presidential search Web site, presidential candidates should have “successful experience in a complex university, industry or government environment with a distinguished record of leadership, management and resource development.”

Global Reach

The committee members were presented with a folder containing 227 pages with each of the 15 candidates’ resumes.

Greenwood/Asher & Associates was able to reach more than 400 different institutions across the United States.

“The people being considered are very accomplished,” Greenwood said to committee members during the meeting.

One of the candidates, Alan G. Goodridge, served as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs and as acting president for Alfaisal University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Creating
Online voting through Panthertouch for the 2009-2010 Student Government Association elections was experiencing difficulties on April 1, with many University Park students being given the options to only vote for president and vice presidential candidates and for a newly revised version of the constitution and no senatorial candidates listed.

“...trying to work with Acceleration, the company which helps us with elections, to figure out the coding involved for fixing the Panthertouch voting. It’s really a computer glitch,” said Jose Toscano, SGA advisor, during an interview on Wednesday.

Toscano urged students who were experiencing difficulties to vote in the Graham Center computer labs where paper ballots are currently being handed to voters.

The Florida Department of Transportation ended an existing deal on April 1 to build a $1 billion tunnel to the Port of Miami. It was announced, however, that private construction companies worldwide will be asked to submit new bids.

The existing bid was awarded in 2007 but had not yet been formally signed when the state agency halted the deal Dec. 12. Under that deal, the tunnel was set to be completed in 2012. However, with the delay, the tunnel may be held back until 2015 or 2016.

U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dimitri Medvedev entered into talks to further reduce the amount of nuclear weapons stockpiled between the two nations.

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Obama talks about nuclear weapons

Tunnel to Port of Miami construction delayed

Local

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Executive Board positions open to students

BARBARA QUINAO
Asst. News Director

The Student Organizations Council (SOC) at the Biscayne Bay Campus is looking for students to join and develop leadership skills that can be refined through the variety of opportunities it offers.

"Being a part of SOC is a great way to find out what kind of leader you are," said Didier Georges, SOC president. “Everyone has leadership skills, and SOC offers a variety of opportunities at different levels to see what you can do really well."

The SOC Executive Board is renewed every semester, and its current board is currently looking for interested students to join this student organization, which finances more than 35 clubs at BBC, making sure they run smoothly, according to Georges.

This council is the governing body of all student organizations on campus, serving these organizations through the coordination of activities to promote the academic, social and athletic interests of the students at BBC, according to its Web site.

Student clubs such as AdScene, Humanities Club: Circle of Women, On Point Poetry, Stonewall BBC, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and Hip-Hop Alliance are governed by SOC.

"It's a great leadership training opportunity by learning skills that may not be developed in the classroom," said Jessica Senorin, SOC vice president. "It's also a great networking tool, meeting the staff and faculty of other clubs.

Applications for students interested in becoming members of the SOC Executive Board are available on the Web site, as well as in the BBC Campus Life and Orientation Office located in WUC 141.

The deadline to apply for any of these positions is April 6 at noon.

Positions in the SOC Executive Board include president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, marketing director and events coordinator.

These positions are all paid for and the requirements to qualify for any of them include a minimum 2.2 GPA and for 50 percent of classes to be taken at BBC.

"Being a member gives you the ability to work together with a team," Senorin said. "It's not only one person doing a specific set of things.

The elections meeting, where candidates will be voted on, will take place April 6 at 2 p.m. in WUC 155.

At the meeting, applicants will give a two-minute speech on why they think they deserve the job, followed by a short question and answer session with the club members.

At the end, the Executive Board and club members under SOC will vote for the new board members.

"You can be the quietest or most outgoing person and still be elected," Georges said. "But what really matters is the speech, because club members base their vote on that, as well as the question and answer session."

For more information on SOC and to retrieve the application, visit the Web site at socbbc.fiu.edu.

Washing away your problems with style – Vegas style

I have a weird weekend tradition. I clean my car every Saturday afternoon at the Shell gas station by my house and fill up the tank. But this weekend, I decided to treat myself and have someone else do the dirty work for me and clean my car, which I have nicknamed Brian Williams.

"Well, I don't want to see you resist the urge!" I thought this place would be great to wash my car while I sit in the restaurant/longe area, called Berton Brick Oven Pizza and Lounge, to eat and do homework.

When I got to the lounge area, I was impressed by the variety of food – until I saw the prices. They charge $10 for a personalized veggie pizza that is, no joke, the size of an average DVD case.

I decided to get a spinach quiche for $4, and it wasn't even worth much. Maybe I am being a harrumph, but to me, presentation is everything and the server bringing me the food with a mop in her hand kind of unsettled me. I couldn't bring myself to take more than a bite out of the cold quiche that they swore they heated up for me. It was probably sitting under heat lamps, so the upper crust was not flaky, the spinach was dry and lacked flavor and the eggs that were inside of it didn't look edible.

Thinking I could help save the dish by adding salt and pepper, I looked around the table expecting to find a shaker or something; it turns out they just take those individually packed condiments and place them all in a dish on the table. I had to dig through mustard and sugar packets to find the salt at the bottom.

There was no pepper.

I got the supreme wash, which includes a vacuum, cleaning of the dashboard, outside wash and wax, and the shining of your tires and rims for $15. And once again, I over paid for something that was not worth it. The same wash varies in price depending on your car. Prices for this wash go up to $17 for a mid-size car, and $19 for an SUV.

They also offer a full-detail car wash for $169 for a compact, $189 for a mid-size car and $219 for an SUV. The wash includes a supreme wash, a full interior shampoo, a polish and a hand wash.

I ignored the term vacuum to mean that they would vacuum the entire inside of my car, including the area between the driver's seat and the door, but they left that part out of my package. And that dashboard cleaning they promised... didn't happen. How it took them an hour to do all of this, I don't understand.

Brian had the same amount of dust on the dashboard than it did before it got "cleaned."

By the end of the day, I was down $19, and Brian was not nearly as clean as I expected. So I brought my semi-clean car over to the Fabulous Casino Car Wash Miami, on 11705 Biscayne Blvd., Miami. These people actually know how to clean a car and cleaned up the mess the other place made to speak.

I had them revwash my entire car, inside and out, for only $15.99. Keeping the Vegas theme of this location, they call this wash the Texas Hold 'Em. This included interior vacuuming; a soft cloth and high pressure wash; an under-carrage wash; triple foam conditioning; tire and wheel cleaning; paint sealer; simmonize double bond; turfon protectant; turbo and hand dry; and a dashboard, console and doors jams wipe down.

You can also pay for the Casino Express wash for $9.99. You get a soft cloth and a high pressure wash, which includes a undercarriage wash; a triple foam conditioner; tires and wheel cleaning; and turbo and hand dry. The most expensive is the Casino Royale wash for $199.99, which includes high speed buffing and high gloss wax; exterior rubber and vinyl dressing; carpet, mat and upholstery shampooing; leather and vinyl cleaned and conditioned; a dashboard and seat belt cleaning; and a wheel and chrome polishing. Add an extra $10 for an SUV, van or truck and you get the Texas Hold 'Em wash.

The wash I picked included the vacuuming of the car, and this time they did not forget the little space between the door and the seats. My dashboard was wiped down, my seats were cleaned and I even got an air freshener. I was very pleased.

This is not to say that I am forever going to avoid getting my car cleaned by anyone but me. This weekend I spent two hours at car wash places, and paid $35 for the same amount of work I do for myself every weekend.

Heck, I even paid $5 more than I needed to and my gas tank was empty.

My recommendation: wash your car yourself. But if you must bring it somewhere to get cleaned, go to the Fabulous Casino Car Wash in North Miami. The staff there is very friendly and do a great job with your car. These people are fast, too. They cleaned Brian in about half an hour.

At Master Car Wash I felt like I was just another car, and the fact that no one spoke to me or even smiled when I thanked them for their work really threw me off.

Despite the time and money, Brian Williams is now sparkling clean from the inside out.

Until next week when it needs another cleaning.

Weekends with Paradise every other Friday for more tips on places to go in the North Miami area. If you have any suggestions, e-mail paradise.afshar@fium.com. The columnist pays for all food and experiences.
Recently there was talk in Congress of a ban on both automatic and semi-automatic assault rifles in an effort to curb the increasing number of violent crimes. This has led to a renewed effort to ban firearms in the United States. However, will this really help reduce armed crimes? This question has been debated for many years, but as someone who uses guns recreationally, the answer is simple.

Banning assault rifles will not reduce violent crimes; however, enacting harsher gun laws and imposing tougher background checks will. If a ban on guns is signed into law, armed robbers and assassins will not stop attacking victims. Criminals are still motivated enough to commit crimes and will only find more ways to work around the ban.

Furthermore, a ban on guns would only increase the risk of having arms taken away from law-abiding citizens. A survey of inmates convicted of armed crimes by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 80 percent of the crimes were committed with a firearm that was an illegal street buy. This indicates that a black market for guns has been established and a ban would simply expand that market. Take the prohibition movement: Alcohol was banned for 13 years because it was thought that banning alcohol would reduce crimes and solve many of society’s problems. Instead, bootleg alcohol was sold throughout the nation in underground illegal bars and the black market soared. Prohibition was finally abolished in 1933.

Also, a ban on guns would take away peace of mind from those who own and use firearms legally and responsibly. Many small business owners are now beginning to keep guns in their stores and offices for protection.

How many times have armed robbers gone into stores, pharmacies and other shops, and shot helpless clerks and employees in order to get a safe or cash register? Now think of how many times clerks and employees have been able to defend themselves, and fend off attackers and robbers because they had a gun under a counter or in a drawer.

This also goes for homeowners. Many home-owners are now beginning to keep guns in their homes for protection. According to a Gallup poll, 38 percent of Americans “reported having a gun in their homes.” Armed robbers at one’s home are a real threat.

Our right to own guns is granted to us in the Constitution in the second amendment of the Bill of Rights: “...the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.”

That should make it clear that any effort to ban any guns would be unconstitutional, though many argue that the founding fathers did not know that firearms would become as dangerous as they are now today.

Guns were lethal 222 years ago. They still are today.

So what is the solution, if there is any at all? It’s simple: Congress needs to pass stricter gun laws regarding background checks and law enforcement needs to crack down on the firearm black market. Background checks for the purchase of guns and the Concealed Weapons Permit need to include mental health history and be more detailed.

If lawmakers compromise and law enforce-ment officers can start an offensive against the black market, then we will have an effective compromise. Good people will be able to keep their guns and criminals will reduce crimes. This I believe, is the best solution to this decades-long debate.

JONATHAN DE LA TORRE
Staff Writer

The Internet has become a haven for security lapses, resulting in a race to reinvent it. According to The New York Times, Stanford University has a team of scientists pondering the inevitable question of how to deal with the current Internet’s inability to stop off-belligerent bugs that are capable of single-handedly taking down military and governmental networks.

In efforts to squash this wave of Internet crime, Stanford University’s Clean Slate Project attempts to remedy this and is in its early stages. Its mission, according to its Web site, is “to reinvent Internet infrastructure and services by creating ‘platforms for innovations in networking, computing and storage.’ But what does this mean for us? How does this affect the global Internet community at large? And, better yet, do we need to start over and wipe it clean?

I suspect that a new Internet, while certainly an ingenious idea, is not going to be the answer to all of our hacker nightmares.

First of all, what is the concept of the new Internet? According to the concept of the new Internet, what is the concept of the new Internet? It appears that the new Internet is still in its early stages. Its mission, according to its Web site, is “to reinvent Internet infrastructure and services by creating ‘platforms for innovations in networking, computing and storage.’ But what does this mean for us? How does this affect the global Internet community at large? And, better yet, do we need to start over and wipe it clean?

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Staff Writer

The reward of an “A,” for older students, means a better chance at getting into a good college – a much higher investment for students to grasp. It makes learning sound dirty. Getting paid for your grades is unfounded and unrealistic. (I can still admit it would be nice, though.)

And yet there are many of us (myself included) who receive money from the state in order to achieve a high GPA every semester. Isn’t that the same concept, but on a bigger scale? It’s simply Lottery-funded, positive rein-forcement: if Florida delivers, I deliver. But it’s not just the money that keeps me going, it’s the hope that I’ll find a career that will make me happy after I snag my degree.

I am unsure if children today genuinly want to learn for free. Keeping in mind the argument of nature versus nurture, I believe parents are ultimately responsible for their child’s desire to learn, and they shouldn’t resign them-selves if their son or daughter would rather play with their Nintendo DS than open up their textbook.

Learning shouldn’t be a job. It should be a reward in and of itself.

IRIS A. FEBRES
Opinion Editor

In March 2009, Lisa Guernsey of The New York Times wrote of the conundrum surrounding paying for grades. “Many parents and me – for every “A” I got, I’d receive $5; for every “B,” $2. And whenever they couldn’t pay me for my hard work, they’d instead make a trip to Chuck E. Cheese; I’d relish in their Web site to increase my intellectual capacity on any number of subjects. What about Google, the search-engine that offers us a plethora of Web sites ranging from A to Z? I would be lost without this handy electronic guru. It is understandable that we need tighter security when it comes to the Internet.

Surely, you have heard of the so-called “Nigeria Scams,” whereby latent, identity-hidden thieves send e-mails from cyber cafes offering to give away millions of non-existent dollars to unsuspecting citizens in return for cold hard cash. Additionally, The New York Times brings up a valid point as to the Internet’s inability to siphon off belligerent bugs that are capable of single-handedly taking down military and governmental networks.

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Gaining knowledge alone is a reward in itself. It’s to get money. And yet there are many of us (myself included) who receive money from the state in order to achieve a high GPA every semester. Isn’t that the same concept, but on a bigger scale? It’s simply Lottery-funded, positive rein-forcement: if Florida delivers, I deliver. But it’s not just the money that keeps me going, it’s the hope that I’ll find a career that will make me happy after I snag my degree.

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Learning shouldn’t be a job. It should be a reward in and of itself.
Electronic music festival draws eclectic, global crowd

CHRISTOPHER NECUZE
Editor in Chief

With beats that could be heard miles away and crowds of people so vast that they appear to be a sea of heads, the Ultra Music Festival invaded Miami and brought every fan of electronic dance music out of hiding for two days of hardcore partying.

The festival, now in its 11th year, drew both a local and international crowd; its organizers are calling it the most successful Ultra ever.

Nearly 70,000 followers of trance made the yearly pilgrimage to downtown Miami’s Bicentennial Park, which serves as the genre’s Mecca throughout the Winter Music Conference, a week-long electronic music event held in the city. The flagship closing event, Ultra, was held March 27 and 28.

The devotees were clad in everything from neon wigs, make-up, stockings, to elaborate costumes or even just underwear.

They came to worship those gods of trance; legendary DJs including Tiësto, Paul van Dyk and Moby, as well as the Prodigy, the Black Eyed Peas, Armin van Buuren and Erick Morillo, among other big names, in tow for the WMC.

In the same year when Langerado, an annual music festival also scheduled to be held in Bicentennial Park, was canceled due to poor ticket sales, the WMC and Ultra both thrived, attracting more visitors than ever before.

Cesar Bourdon, an exchange student from France working on his MBA, knows a thing or two about electronic music festivals as they are more common on the other side of the Atlantic. Still, he said he had never really seen anything quite like it.

“To describe it in one word: awesome,” Bourdon said. “I’ve lived in Europe, so I have something to compare with. I’ve never been to anything like Ultra.”

David Guetta and Tiësto were my favorite last year,” Coleman said. “I’m excited about Cut/Copy and Moby this year.”

Coleman was riding downtown Miami’s Metromover on March 28, the second day of the festival. Earlier in the day and on Friday, there was a problem with a “switch” and the system’s outer loop – the one going to Ultra – was out of commission.

“Can you believe this s**t?” shouted one angry man, dressed in a bumblebee outfit. He stormed off the train and began the six-block trek to Bicentennial Park.

“The festival has received worldwide recognition. It was the winner of the best music event category at the 24th annual International Dance Music Awards, held during the WMC. It was also named best dance festival at the 2008 Ibiza DJ Awards, known as the “Grammy’s for DJs,” and held annually in Ibiza, Spain.”

Margaret Coleman, who lives in Miami, has gone to the festival for three years in a row.

“It’s defi nitely true with Ultra.”

“For Margaret Coleman, everything always came together to create the perfect festival experience, year after year.

“This is my third year, and I know it’s going to be amazing,” she said. “Every year it’s like a whole new festival. By tomorrow, after everything is over, I’ll already be waiting for next year.”

THE CINEMATIC

Fast & Furious delivers cheap thrills

The gang is all here as the original cast from the 2001 hit movie The Fast and the Furious reunites eight years later to deliver fast action and fast cars in Fast & Furious.

Fast & Furious, the fourth installment of The Fast and the Furious series, takes place after the events of 2 Fast 2 Furious and before The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift. Now that we got that out of the way, Fast & Furious opens with an amazing sequence that involves heists, big explosions and oil tankers. It will make moviegoers breathless with so many close calls.

The man responsible for the heist is Dominic Toretto (Vin Diesel), who is still on the run from the FBI with his girlfriend, Letty (Michelle Rodriguez). A tragedy in Dom’s life leads him to return to the United States, where he

diversions

THE CINEMATIC, page 6
Cheesy lines, eye candy draws moviegoers in

THE CINEMATIC, page 5

rewinds and teams up with friend enemy Brian O’Connor (Paul Walker) to bring down a hernia importer by infiltrating his operation as drivers. We can admit as moviegoers that we do not go watch a new Fast and the Furious film for the acting. We watch these films to entertain ourselves and escape reality for an hour and a half or more. This is what Fast & Furious manages to do. We are greeted with images of slick cars and beautiful women that seem to fall under the category of “Look But Don’t Touch.”

Aside from the opening sequence, the film has many car races, including an interesting race that pits Dom and Brian against each other through the streets of L.A. where a global positioning system device in their cars tracks their movements. There are many close calls and many crashing cars as the racers drift in and out of the crowded streets.

Director Justin Lin took the helm following the footsteps of Rob Cohen and John Singleton. Lin took on the franchise three years ago with The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift. He does a better job with Fast & Furious as he manages not only to showcase car races and races, but also balance it out with other action sequences such as foot chases on the roofs and streets of L.A. Trying to follow the action with the camera bouncing up and down may be a little nauseating for people who have motion sickness.

Fast & Furious brings back the whole team that made the first movie popular, instead of just bringing one (Walker in 2 Fast 2 Furious) or the other (Diesel’s cameo role in The Fast and Furious: Tokyo Drift). While it is fun to see the cast reunite again, the performances are what you would expect from a Fast and the Furious film. There is no Oscar-caliber acting in this movie and Vin Diesel and the gang try to get by with their acting capabilities and a bad script. Vin Diesel’s dialogue in this film can inspire a book called “How to Say

The Cinematic is a weekly column that dives into film and filmmaking.
Softball faces top conference team on the road

STEFANIE GABRIEL
Staff Writer

During a three-game series in North Texas last weekend, the Golden Panthers’ sluggers totaled 20 hits in the three-game span and lushed the Mean Green’s dugout when three different FIU players sailed home runs out of the park in a single game.

The Golden Panthers will shift their focus to conference opponent, University of Louisiana, this coming weekend.

The team will travel to Louisiana to play three games against the Ragin’ Cajuns who currently have an overall record of 20-7, 3-2 in the Sun Belt Conference.

“We’ve played really well on the road too, so I’m glad we have them at their place,” said head coach Beth McClendon. “It’s not an easy place to play but we’ve done so much better on the road.”

McClendon said focusing on the road has not been a problem for her team this season.

“Sometimes it helps the team stay focused because there’s nothing to do but go out and win the game that day,” she said.

The Golden Panthers will look for continued success from the glorified slugger, Kim Rodriguez. With a .323 batting average, the Miami native has totaled 20 RBI already this season, while batting .453. Rodriguez has also blended in with the defense, making several plays at third base.

McClendon was also pleased with the way Hayley Bourgeois was performing this season. Bourgeois has posted a 1.22 ERA in 57 innings thus far. Bourgeois was also a Sun Belt All Conference Honorable Mention last year.

“Hayley’s really been consistent for us this season,” McClendon said.

The senior has also been tough on the road, with a 1.16 ERA in 10 road appearances.

“Defensively she’s also been consistent for us,” McClendon said.

Despite being new to the city, Alfonsi has made the transition to Miami, but it was easier due to the close distance.

They swept us last year so we owe them three wins.

Bath McClendon, head coach

SOFTBALL

Alfonso joins group of elite freshmen getting playing time

ALFONSO, page 8

reason that Raiko is on pace to be a player of the caliber of Mollica, one of the top three returning hitters in the conference, Mollica was at Central Florida Community College as a freshman hoping to play Division I baseball.

“Wow, that’s crazy,” Alfonso said when told of Mollica’s statement on him. “It’s good to hear that. He’s the team captain, so I look up to him.”

NOSTALGIC

Alfonso has made the transition to Miami, but it was easier due to the close distance.

In addition, baseball has brought Alfonso to Miami before.

“I mean I miss Key West, but I always used to drive in Miami to play,” Alfonso said. “There’s only about seven islands back home; it’s really big here, but I love it.”

Alfonso has also blended in with the Golden Panthers because he relates to the slew of other freshmen contributing to the team.

Pablo Bermudez, starting center fielder, who is also a freshman, noted that he is having more fun playing the game than any other level he has ever been. Alfonso concurs.

“It helps me a lot,” Alfonso said. “I mean all of us are freshmen and we are trying to compete here in college.”

Thomas has had no problem with playing the freshmen this season.

“They have played together in summer tournaments and are a good group of kids,” he said. “I have confidence in them.”

Alfonso’s versatility has progressed his development as a freshman by playing an array of positions in the infield, giving the team an ample amount of game experience.

“I mean as long as I’m in the rotation it helps,” Alfonso said.

Despite being new to the city, Alfonso has transitioned himself into an elite freshman on the team.

“He’s doing really well, he’s grown up a lot since the Fall,” Mollica said.

Linebacker corps more aggressive, stronger this Spring

FOOTBALL, page 8

corps is expected to be a strong point for FIU, and it showed this Spring.

“Discipline. We got more aggressive, getting off blocks and swarming to the ball, those were our main objectives,” said linebacker Scott Bryant of this Spring.

FIU will see an improvement in depth at linebacker this season, with Aaron Davis being more seasoned, and Winston Fraser returning from injury. The FIU brass is optimistic.

“Scotty’s always been a real steady football player, and all of a sudden you’ve got Winston Fraser who had to sit out last year, a very smart football player,” coach Cristobal said.

The Spring game will take place at the FIU Football Stadium and admission is free.

“We don’t hold anything back, truly. We’re gonna play football, and we’re gonna get better; we don’t have a day to blow off. We’re gonna knock the heck out of each other,” Cristobal said.
Infelder impresses co-captain, adjusts to Division I baseball

JOEY CRUZ
Contributing Writer

Raiko Alfonso is in a totally different atmosphere.

“It’s different you know, the pitching is a little different,” Alfonso said. “The speed is different, you see a lot better pitching often.”

It’s more than that, however. Alfonso has transitioned from the rural outskirts of the Keys to the metropolitan mega city of Miami. But the change hasn’t affected his bat or his glove.

The freshman is playing nearly every position in the infield while hitting nearly .300 for the Golden Panthers. As a primary backup on the team, Alfonso has been an intricate part of the team’s 17-7 start.

“Key West has won numerous state championships and Raiko played a major role in winning one of them,” said head coach Turtle Thomas. “I liked his athleticism and style of play.”

ALL OVER THE FIELD

Thomas has fielded Alfonso at nearly every position in the infield, and the rookie has responded. With a fielding percentage of .971, Alfonso has held his own in the batter’s box as well. Along with a .300 slugging average in 42 at-bats, he is also top five on the team in doubles.

“I like playing up the middle, you know middle outfield,” Alfonso said.

In a win against University of Arkansas - Little Rock on March 15, the freshman hit a single and was walked while going one for one in doubles. He has been impressed with Raiko’s performance so far.

“He just learned third base and is doing real well over there, and swinging the bat well,” Mollica said.

Mollica has tutored Alfonso on occasion, but believes the freshman will soon be an elite player himself.

“He’s pretty far along but I help a little bit,” Mollica said. “Plus he has really good hands.”

Mollica went as far as to suggest Alfonso was better at this stage of his career than himself, an All-Preseason Sun Belt first teamer.

Senior infielder Ryan Mollica is impressed with Raiko’s performance so far.

“Tied the game at five. Mollica conceded that Alfonso is more polished at this stage. Although it seems unfathomable to

He just learned third base and is doing real well over there, and swinging the bat well. He’s pretty far along but I help him a little bit.

Ryan Mollica
captain

ROOKIE REPORT: PART 2 OF 5

FRESH
UTILITY

Bullpen loses second straight game

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Director

The Golden Panthers lost another lead.

For the second consecutive game, the baseball team held a lead going into the final three innings of the game and ended up losing.

A 7-5 lead in the bottom of the eighth proved to be fragile as Jorge Marban allowed four runs. Rain and thunder forced officials to end the game early, and the Golden Panthers fell 9-7 to the Jacksonville Dolphins on March 31 on the road.

Jumping out to big leads has not been the issue for the Golden Panthers all season; they obtained a five-run lead in the top of the third.

Two Jacksonville errors coupled with a string of hits led to the five runs.

But without one of the team’s three top pitchers starting, the Golden Panthers allowed three runs in the bottom half of the third. The Dolphins managed to score the three runs due to four singles and a double. Daniel DeSimone, the Golden Panthers’ starting pitcher, would cough up another run during the bottom of the fourth to cut the lead to 5-4. A sacrifice fly by Derek Grimes tied the game at five.

In the top of the eighth, the Golden Panthers would score some runs for the first time since the third inning. They recaptured the lead with a wild pitch and a bunt. Nonetheless, they led 7-5 in the bottom of the eighth.

Jorge Marban entered the game and could not retire the first four batters. The Dolphins managed to muster only two hits in the inning, but three walks and an error were enough for them to score four times in the inning. The rain fell, and the game was called off with still just two outs in the inning.

DeSimone finished the night by giving up six runs in five innings of work. Marban was charged with his first loss of the season.

The second game of the series was rained out in Jacksonville.

Catch the results of the next game vs. Jacksonville for updated gamenotes, catch us online.

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BOB LYNCH/The Beacon

FOOTBALL

Team preps for Blue & Gold game

ANDREW JULIAN
Sports director

FIU will complete its 2009 Spring football campaign with the annual Blue and Gold game on April 3 at 6 p.m.

This will conclude a schedule of 15 practices for the Golden Panthers this Spring, following a 5-7 season where FIU looked like a conference contender at times.

“Guys are competing. Positions that needed work are getting better,” said head coach Mario Cristobal, who is entering his third season at the helm for the Golden Panthers. “Overall, we’ve got a better understanding of what we’re trying to do, and [looking] the next step in terms of changing the culture and where we need to get.”

Cristobal said:

Cristobal also addressed some of the specific players who’ve made strides, on both sides of the ball.

Wayne Younger, who started for FIU as quarterback in the 2007 season, but was unseated by Paul McCall last season, has had a good Spring, and the FIU head coach has taken note.

“Wayne Younger has really come on strong as of late. He’s done some really good things. He provides a different dynamic for us at quarterback,” Cristobal said.

Younger missed the final game of the ’07 season, an FIU win over North Texas, and saw limited action a year ago.

When asked what he saw in Younger this Spring, coach Cristobal was quick to respond.

“Decision making. I think his attitude is a lot better; it’s more hunger, rather than accepting a role as a backup player. Everything he’s doing is extremely impressive,” Cristobal said.

Another oft mentioned offensive player this Spring has been Jason Fierson. The sophomore receiver, also known as Ty, caught a touchdown pass in each of the final two games last season.

“Ty is just blowing things up out there and making plays,” said Paul McCall of Fierson, who led the Golden Panthers in receptions in 2007, but saw a more limited role due to the emergence of T.Y. Hilton and Greg Ellington.

Defensively, the linebacker