Rionda sends bill back for revision

FRANCISCO MARADIAGA
Staff Writer

The senate at Student Government Council in Modesto Maidique Campus decided to send the resolution opposing mandatory health insurance back to the authors because some senators said that it was misinformed.

SGC-MMC Staff Writer

Back for more

Injuries not stopping Panthers

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

When describing the state of the Golden Panthers, head coach Mario Cristobal mentioned a recent book on the NFL’s Baltimore Ravens named Near Man Up. The way the 2009 season is unveiling, FIU might be a good idea for part two of the book.

According to Cristobal, 13 different starters have missed significant time or have been knocked out for the season with injury. The Golden Panthers have had a revolving door at an array of positions. Key cogs like Ash Parker, Toronto Smith, and the confidence of our residents,” Tomas Regalado had nearly 72 percent and Joe Sanchez had just over 28 percent.

“We’re going to recover our city and the confi dence of our residents,” Regalado said, according to The Miami Herald. “And we will do it by not wasting money.”

Said Sanchez said he called Regalado to concede, but spoke with his chief of staff.

“Those situations oftentimes become a reality and sometimes to a greater extent than what you could ever even imagine. That is certainly the case this year.”

Although Hilton and Gainer will play at Middle Tennessee State University (5-3, 3-1 Sun Belt) on Nov. 7, FIU (2-6, 2-3) will continue to tap into the fountain of youth as inexperienced players are being thrust into action.

One of the underclassmen picking up a key role is linbacker Aaron Ford.
Senate advised to read bills twice

The state bill, CS/CS/HB 885, entitled the “Student Health Insurance Protection Act,” would have given state universities the power to mandate health insurance as a requirement for registration.

“I died,” Nursing Senator Alejandro Garcia told the senate anonymously.

“The intent of the resolution was to not deny education to those who could not afford health insurance,” said senator from the Honors College, Vignesh Doraiswamy, another sponsor of the resolution.

Of one of the more controversial lines in the resolution contends that the State Legislature would require mandatory health insurance without any financial assistance.

The Senate also passed a council bill that would create an insurance program that would cover the in-network providers for the major student health providers in the state, and of collecting fees for services rendered from the providers.

The first-year defensive back from North Miami Beach High played roughly 90 plays last week between safety and special teams.

He was a guy that since the day he’s been here has completely committed himself to being a great football player,” Cristobal said. “We ask a lot of him and he embraces it. If you come here late at night, he’ll be here late at night. You’ll find a light on in that film room and that’s him. He’s a little bit ahead of his time in terms of his mental approach.”

The Blue Raiders dual-thrust quarterback is eighth nationally in total offense and leads an MTSU unit that has accounted for 468 rushing yards combined in its last two games, which is 43 more yards than its previous four games combined.

In last season’s victory over the Blue Raiders, FIU did not face Dasher for most of the game because he did not start the contest, but Dasher accumulated nearly 300 total yards against FIU in a 47-6 loss to the Blue Raiders in 2007.

“We have a chance for a lot of great things and we just beat UL for the first time in the program’s history,” Cristobal said. “We have a game coming up against a team that’s sitting right at second place in the conference standings. Several of our goals are still intact. We have a chance to beat the best conference record ever by FIU and besides our conference games, we have a tremendous opportunity at the University of Florida in a couple of weeks as well.”

Ford becomes St. Petersburg mayor

The Miami Herald, the lawsuit, filed by state officials, asserting that the companies have kept millions of dollars in Florida sales taxes.

The state of Florida has sued discount travel Web sites Expedia and Orbitz for backed taxes.

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture was shipped to various retailers, such as BJ’s and a mass shipment of tainted ground beef.

The lawsuit added that according to industry officials, the lawsuit, filed by state officials, asserting that the companies have kept millions of dollars in Florida sales taxes.

The state of Florida has sued discount travel Web sites Expedia and Orbitz for backed taxes.

Two University staff members have been involved in another incident of procurement card abuse.

The University staff accused of procurement card abuse, on Sept. 17, Rosenberg sent out a similar e-mail in which he announced that a faculty member had misused the card.

The Beacon is not responsible for student health insurance providers in the state, and of collecting fees for services rendered from the providers.

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88.1 Kendall, Homestead
95.3 University Park, surrounding community
96.9 Biscayne Bay Campus, surrounding community
School competes for first prize in barbecue brisket cook-off

MELODY REGALADO
Staff Writer

After winning first prize last year, students from the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management and the Gourmet Wine and Food Club will go up against four culinary schools this year in a barbecue brisket cook-off challenge.

The competition, called the Flamingo Family Food Festival, will be hosted by the South Florida Chapter of the American Institute of Wine & Food, and will take place Nov. 7 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Flamingo Gardens, which is located at 3750 S. Flamingo Rd. in Davie, Fla.

AIWF is an organization founded by Julia Child and other chefs. It helps its members develop their passion for food and wine through educational programs, scholarships, and social activities.

“The school competed in last year’s cook-off and won first place with a menu of papaya-glazed ribs with jicama mint slaw, and a frozen mojito shooter with coconut rum. Their prize: a ceramic pig.”

“It could be four months or eight months,” said Chef Instructor Michael Moran, who is a HTM graduate student and club president; Michael Vidal, an HTM senior and the club’s vice president; Rebecca Reppert, an HTM graduate student and club president; Michael Vidal, an HTM graduate student and the club’s treasurer; and Lindsey Darces, Christian Poole and Albano, all junior HTM majors and club members.

“The students were chosen to compete because of their culinary backgrounds and involvement in the Gourmet Wine and Food Club, according to Rojas.”

“It will give FIU a chance to show off some of the talent this school has to offer,” said Poole. “It would be great to show off some of the talent this school has to offer.”

Study abroad programs give students culture experience

PHILIPPE BUTEAU
Staff Writer

David Funesco, a senior political science major, has been studying in Tianjin, China, since Aug. 23. The study abroad program is scheduled to end in December, but he doesn’t know when he’s coming back home. He loves the experience too much to come back.

“It could be four months or eight months,” said Funesco in an interview with The Beacon via Skype. “It’s a great experience. I think I’m going to like it here. I think I’m going to love it here.”

The schools of Hospitality and Tourism Management and Journalism and Mass Communication offer students the opportunity to experience culture in China, Europe and South America.

HTM has a program in Tianjin, China every semester for both undergraduate and graduate students. The trip costs $4,800 and includes airfare, accommodations, travel and health insurance, as well as tuition, books, food, a tour of the city and personal expenses for one semester. Pell grants and need-based scholarships are available for study abroad students.

The deadline for the Spring semester trip has already passed, and the specifics of the Summer trip have yet to be determined, according to Dawn Fagan, enrollment manager of HTM’s study abroad programs. Those specifics include when the deadline will be and what classes will be offered.

“Students won’t come back the same person. I opened my eyes.”

Senior HTM major Sebastian Garcia, who also studied in Tianjin, said he learned to be sensitive to other cultures during his trip.

“Students will be taking courses that they need to graduate anyway, but they get to experience them in this international destination,” Fagan said.

Philippe Buteau is a member of The Beacon.
CHANGING
OF THE
GUARD
By Charlie Grau

2009 Men’s Basketball Preview
• Player Breakdown
• Staff Predictions
• Thomas Feature
• Full Schedule
A New Chapter

FEAR OF failure has never stopped Isiah Thomas from taking risks. When the New York Knicks gave the Hall of Fame guard a second chance as coach in 2008, everyone thought it was a disaster. Thomas' journey to FIU filled with peaks and valleys.

Thomas’ journey to FIU filled with peaks and valleys

**CHARLIE GRAU**

Staff Writer

Isiah Thomas believes his a blessed man. For over 25 years, the NBA Hall of Famer has been involved in some form or another with the game he’s loved all his life. Even during his tumultuous tenure as coach and president of Basketball Operations for the New York Knicks, he never once wanted to skip a day at the gym.

"Every morning I wake up excited to go to the gym," Thomas said. "I never looked at basketball as a job and I hope that never happens."

Thomas gets to continue his trips to the gym as FIU’s head basketball coach. Although he’s served as head coach for two NBA teams, this will be his first job at the collegiate level.

The goal is still the same. Thomas said the most difficult part about college basketball is learning the NCAA rules.

"I’m just trying to absorb and understand it all, but once you get on the court it’s basketball," he said.

With so much to learn in a short amount of time, Thomas has reached out to several NCAA coaches for advice, like his former coach at Indiana, Bob Knight, and Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski.

"The best advice I’ve received so far was from Coach K," Thomas said. "He just reminded me that he’s from the West Side of Chicago and I’m from the West Side of Chicago and to just go back to being yourself."

With all the advice he may receive, he knows it will never substitute learning from making mistakes and he realizes that.

"This is a game that no one ever masters. It’s always evolving and you’re always learning, always listening and trying to get better," Thomas said.

Many have been labeling Thomas’ first time coaching at the collegiate level as an opportunity to start a new chapter of his life and get away from the drama that has followed him.

But Thomas views it differently.

"I’m extremely comfortable with myself. I’m not trying to remake myself. I just look at this as an opportunity."

HOW IT ALL HAPPENED

At halftime of the 2009 Bowl Championship Series title game at Dolphin Stadium, Thomas was opposed to meet up with University of Florida men’s basketball coach Billy Donovan, but the Gators coach got pulled into a meeting with New Patriots coach Bill Belichick.

While grabbing a bite to eat, Thomas bumped into FIU Athletic Director Pete Garcia.

The two chatted for a while, caught up and exchanged numbers.

A week or so later, Thomas received a call from Garcia with a question.

"I want you to think about something and don’t answer. Would you ever be interested in coaching college basketball?" Garcia asked.

At the time Thomas was talking to a couple of coaches through their search committees.

Then Garcia said, "Well don’t answer the question, but would you be interested in starting your own program and starting it from the bottom and building it up if you answered no?"

"Yeah I’m sure. You see you got to see what can be, not what is, I see what can be of this. And that’s why I’m here," he said.

LEARN FROM HIS MISTAKES

During his basketball career, Thomas has had great success: two NBA titles, 12 All-Star appearances, an NCAA Championship, and had his number retired by the Detroit Pistons.

But he has also seen his share of failures. His most criticized and recent came as coach and president of the New York Knicks.

During that time the Knicks were regularly at the bottom of the standings despite a large payroll. Beyond the court, he was entangled in a lawsuit for sexual harassment.

He admits that his tenure in New York was unsuccessful.

"There has been a lot of us so called Hall of Famers who have failed in New York. Why so much has been made about my failure is still a mystery to me... New York is the greatest challenge because it’s the hardest nut to crack. A lot of have tried and failed."

But despite all the bad press and public backlash, Thomas believes his failure will help him in the future.

"Courageous people are people who take the hard jobs and fail. But we need those people even if they fail. They lay the foundation for others to follow."

"Ish Thomas’ men’s basketball coach

Courageous people are people who take the hard jobs and fail. But we need those people even if they fail. They lay the foundation for others to follow."

(The Beacon's 2009 Men's Basketball Preview)

Main Cast

**NEW YORK STATE OF MIND:** While serving as coach of the New York Knicks, Thomas’ team finished at the bottom of the standings with a team that had one of the highest payrolls in the NBA.

**THE BEACON'S 2009 MEN'S BASKETBALL PREVIEW**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Jersey</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Stephon Weaver</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>210</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Cedric Essoola</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>J.C. Otero</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Marlon Bright</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Tremayne Russell</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>J.C. Otero</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Antoine Watson</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Marvin Roberts</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Martavis Kee</td>
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<td>190</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Nick Taylor</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Anthony Anderson</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Phil Gary Jr.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>110</td>
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</table>

The transfer arrived 12 points in a game where as Phil Gary Jr. at Oakland Cal State Community College. Coach Thomas is a good point guard who manages the offense and is ready starting to get a feel for the game tonight. Gary put an unassuming 12 points in all other contests.
## What people are saying about FIU Basketball:

### PRESEASON SUN BELT COACHES POLL

**East Division**
1. WKU **77 (12)**
2. Troy **62 (1)**
3. Middle Tennessee **53**
4. South Alabama **40**
5. Florida Atlantic **21**
6. FIU **20**

**West Division**
1. North Texas **85 (9)**
2. Denver **73 (1)**
3. Louisiana-Lafayette **56 (1)**
4. UALR **53 (1)**
5. Louisiana-Monroe **45 (1)**
6. Arkansas State **36**
7. New Orleans **17**

### STAFF PREDICTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>11-20</th>
<th>14-17</th>
<th>10-21</th>
<th>12-19</th>
<th>13-15</th>
<th>11-20</th>
<th>12-21</th>
<th>31-01</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris Towers</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>14-17</td>
<td>10-21</td>
<td>12-19</td>
<td>13-15</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>12-21</td>
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<td>Joey Cruz</td>
<td>10-21</td>
<td>12-19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonathan Ramos</td>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>14-17</td>
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<td>Asst. Sports Director</td>
<td>10-21</td>
<td>12-19</td>
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</table>

### PRESEASON ALL SUN BELT TEAMS

**FIRST TEAM**
- Nate Rohrer, Denver
- Desmond Yoaks, Middle Tennessee
- Eric Traemull, North Texas
- Brandon Hazzard, Troy
- A.J. Slaughter, WKU

**SECOND TEAM**
- Chris Graap, Louisiana-Lafayette
- Josh White, North Texas
- Richard Darby, Troy
- Sergi Kerasch, WKU
- Stafford Pettigrew, WKU

**THIRD TEAM**
- Donald Boone, Arkansas State
- Tony Hooper, Louisiana-Monroe
- Malcolm Thomas, Louisiana-Monroe
- Michael Wiggles, Troy
- Jeremy Evans, WKU

### ABOUT THE COACH

Isiah Thomas, a first ballot NBA Hall Of Famer as a player, was a two-time NBA Champion with the Detroit Pistons as a player and won an NBA Finals MVP award in 1990. At the collegiate level, Thomas won an NCAA Tournament Championship in 1981 and was the Tourney’s Most Outstanding Player. Had a .456 winning percentage as a head coach of the Indiana Pacers and New York Knicks over five seasons in the NBA.

### 2009 SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 09</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>at Chapel Hill, N.C.</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 13</td>
<td>Monmouth</td>
<td>at West Long Branch, N.J.</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 15</td>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td>at Tuba, Okla.</td>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>Fla. Memorial</td>
<td>at Bowling Green, Ohio</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 20</td>
<td>N.C. Central</td>
<td>U.S. Century Bank Arena</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 22</td>
<td>James Madison</td>
<td>U.S. Century Bank Arena</td>
<td>6 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 23</td>
<td>Murray State</td>
<td>U.S. Century Bank Arena</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 28</td>
<td>Eastern Kentucky</td>
<td>at Richmond, Ky.</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Bowling Green</td>
<td>at Bowling Green, Ohio</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 03</td>
<td>Florida A&amp;M</td>
<td>at Tallahassee, Fla.</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 06</td>
<td>Florida State</td>
<td>at Tallahassee, Fla.</td>
<td>1 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 12</td>
<td>Fla. Gulf Coast</td>
<td>at Fort Myers, Fla.</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Dec. 17</td>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>at Denver, CO</td>
<td>9 p.m.</td>
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<td>North Texas *</td>
<td>at Denton, Texas</td>
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<td>Dec. 22</td>
<td>Sun Houston St.</td>
<td>at Huntsville, Texas</td>
<td>8 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 31</td>
<td>South Alabama *</td>
<td>U.S. Century Bank Arena</td>
<td>Noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 02</td>
<td>New Orleans *</td>
<td>at New Orleans, La.</td>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Jan. 07</td>
<td>La.-Monroe *</td>
<td>U.S. Century Bank Arena</td>
<td>8 p.m.</td>
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<td>Troy *</td>
<td>U.S. Century Bank Arena</td>
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<td>Jan. 14</td>
<td>Middle Tenn. *</td>
<td>at Murrell's Inlet, S.C.</td>
<td>8 p.m.</td>
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<td>Jan. 16</td>
<td>W. Kentucky *</td>
<td>at Bowling Green, Ky.</td>
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<td>Ark.-Little Rock *</td>
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<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>FAU *</td>
<td>at Boca Raton, Fla.</td>
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<td>La.-Lafayette *</td>
<td>at Lafayette, La.</td>
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<td>Feb. 11</td>
<td>South Alabama *</td>
<td>at Mobile, Ala.</td>
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<td>Feb. 13</td>
<td>Troy *</td>
<td>at Troy, Ala.</td>
<td>8:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Feb. 18</td>
<td>FAU *</td>
<td>U.S. Century Bank Arena</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 25</td>
<td>Middle Tenn. *</td>
<td>U.S. Century Bank Arena</td>
<td>8 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 27</td>
<td>W. Kentucky *</td>
<td>U.S. Century Bank Arena</td>
<td>8 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes conference game

### SOUNDBITES

- On part ownership of a popcorn company, Dale & Thomas: “I love everything about popcorn. Growing up it was the one food that we could afford. My mom would make a big bowl on Thursday nights and we would watch Batman and the Green Hornet.”
- On getting lost in Miami: “A lot of people don’t get lost anymore because they’ve got NeverLost and GPS. I wanted to get a feel for the city and its people.”
- “What stood out to me about Miami is that most cities I lived in preached diversity, I see diversity here culturally. That’s the coolest thing. It’s not about integrating races but cultures.”
- “Critics aren’t always wrong. There are some good things you can draw from criticism.”
- “Well, they’ve got us picked last [in the coaches poll]. Man, I’ve been picked last all my life.”
- “I never go into a job thinking I’m going to leave a legacy. I look at it as another chance to go to the gym.”

### ROSTER

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### SECTION STAFF

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Playing the terrorist

Video game’s violent scene adds depth to experience

JORGIE VALENS
Asst. News Director

Politicians and uptight parents tend to blame all types of video game violence as unnecessary. In most cases, people see violence in a video game superficially, and don’t see it in context.

A recently leaked scene from Infinity Ward’s highly anticipated first person shooter, Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2, depicts a violent scenario in which the player must kill various civilians while undercover with a terrorist cell.

The scene takes place in an international airport terminal on Russian soil. Emerging from an elevator into a crowded transit hub, the player is commanded by the leader of the group to immediately gun down a large circle. The scene is designed to evoke the atrocities of terrorism,” Activision said in a written statement to Joystiq, a popular video games blog run by AOL.

Activision added that the game would feature a “mandatory checkpoint” that will allow the player to choose whether or not to play that part. Also, the game has been clearly rated “M” for Mature by the Entertainment Software Ratings Board.

Apparently, Hollywood’s idea of a “terrorist” is a concept that is tired and repetitious. The terrorist strikes, the good guy hunts the terrorist down, the terrorist and the good guy square off and the good guy wins.

I have played or watched countless video games, movies and TV shows that follow this same formula and more often than not they are monotonous and leave no lasting impact.

The terrorist is rarely a character who can be explored and the viewer – or player in this case – can never really understand why or how this man is evil.

However, I think this scene in MW2 seeks to address this problem, and really helps put into perspective the threat the player faces in the story.

Infinity Ward wants players to understand why he is hunting down the game’s villain, Vladimir Makarov.

“Call of Duty is just a game. It’s not too violent for the age group it’s meant for. I don’t think any video game can be so violent that it can trigger violent tendencies.”

“Nos, videos games are too violent and graphic, but all video games have a rating. It’s also up to parents to do their job in order to protect their kids.”

“I don’t think video games are too violent nowadays. Because of the times, the more realistic things are, the more fun it is. They do have ratings, and it’s up to parents to take care of their kids.”

Matthew Colon
Junior, English

“In the game, according to Activision, Makarov is “dedicated to bringing the world to the brink of collapse” and wants to do this by igniting a global war.”

That’s easy to say and easier to assume. In the end, the player won’t know why this dude is garning down civilians; they have just been told they should.

The enemy in the previous Modern Warfare game was clear, and the shocking events that transpired in the game, such as the detonation of a nuclear device during a U.S. occupation – seen through the eyes of a U.S. soldier on the ground – are ingrained in my mind almost two years after its release.

That is exactly the goal that Infinity Ward has in mind when creating the story for this game.

The airport scene in MW2 is not excessively violent, or some attempt to create controversy to generate hype, Infinity Ward doesn’t need to do that.

This scene exists not only to provide perspective but also ignite emotions, making the single player experience a memorable and lasting one.

“Video games are violent but playing them is not differ- ent than going to watch a violent movie; it’s only escapism.”

Stephanie Rodriguez
Junior, English

President Obama can certainly give a good speech, but the real question is: Can he dance?

Health care reform has become the defining issue of his presidency. Yet, with his approval ratings far from their stratospheric heights, and Joe Lieberman nearing his ugly head, Obama and the Demo- crats need to do something drastic to regain the attention of the American people and give reform the push it needs.

Let’s face it. Most people don’t find the day-to- day intricacies of the health care process very interesting.

A recent Gallup poll found that only 36 percent of Americans closely follow national politics.

That’s why, after months of trying to get conserva- tives on health care, it’s time Obama lived up the debate and settled this health care battle once and for all.

Obama should abandon the conventional law making process and pass health care reform through more enter- taining means. Like a dance-off, or an arm wrestling competition. Sure, it isn’t constitutional, but if this prede- cessor taught anything, it’s that a good leader doesn’t let the constitution stand in the way of getting things done.

First, he could challenge the Republicans to a dance-off to decide the fate of health care reform. This approach has many advantages. For one thing, a dance contest would draw huge ratings, more so than any meeting of the Ways and Means committee. Fox chose to broadcast an episode of “So You Think You Can Dance?” over the president’s speech in September for a good reason.

Another little known advantage is the fact that Democrats in Congress are far better dancers. Nancy Pelosi has been known to draw a mean robot, and Harry Reid’s slick moves at his eighth grade formal are still the stuff of legend.

A dance competition hasn’t decided the fate of a bill, decided the fate of the Dancing 97th Congress, but it may be time for Democrats to finally break it down.

If Reid or Pelosi balk at unleashing their stunning moves, Obama and the Democrats could challenge the Republican leadership to an arm wrestling competition. By all accounts, the president is in good shape, while John Boehner just barely beat Eric Cantor in arm wrestling for minority leader.

Failing these exciting new approaches, Obama could just stick with the current boring process. Yet if Obama is bold enough, he can not only pass health care reform, but go down in history as the pres- ident who brought change (and the cabbage patch) to Washington, D.C.
SPIRIT to be revived by FIU theatre department

“It’s really exciting and really frightening at the same time,” Yauney said. “I don’t want to give anything away, but at the climax of the play we have very unhappy ghosts who take our characters on a journey.” Yauney added that the crew is attempting some of the most ambitious feats in the special effects department.

“Making that happen in a university involves calling on everyone’s imaginations to figure out ... Can we make a cushion fly from the couch into someone’s face?” Yauney said. “It’s a really fun show to do. My (fellow) cast members are a trip.”

For more info contact the FIU Theatre Department at (305) 348-0496

Cheryl Wittenauer
AP WIRE

A Turkish-Canadian man was sentenced Tuesday to two years in federal prison for receiving a plane in Canada and flying over three states before landing along a dark southern Missouri highway.

Adam Dylan Leon might have received only 12 to 18 months. But U.S. District Judge Charles Shaw went beyond federal sentencing guidelines in deciding punishment.

Shaw said the 31-year-old’s actions posed risks to himself and others, cost the government $230,000 to keep fighter jets in the air for seven hours tracking him, and caused the Madison, Wis., capital to evacuate.

He also had some advice for Leon who said he had hoped to be shot down. His attorney, Lucille Liggett, had asked for leniency, saying her client suffered from severe depression from the death of his parents in 2002 in Turkey.

Shaw told Leon it would be worth his while to see ‘It’s a Wonderful Life,’ the classic Frank Capra film starring James Stewart, about a despairing man who comes to know through an angel what life would have been like if he never had lived. Leon said he didn’t see it.

Assistant U.S. Attorney John Sauer said the sentence was fitting for a “dangerous and harmful course of conduct,” and hopes it will deter others from such behavior.

“Law enforcement response was excellent, competent and swift,” Sauer said. “It never ended up being a serious imminent threat to anyone’s security.”

Brady Randus, a friend from Confederation College Flight School in Thunder Bay, Ontario, where the plane was stolen, wrote in a letter to the judge that he knew Leon was “honest, trustworthy and dependable” and an intelligent student who was at the top of his class and well liked by others in the program.

He wrote that Leon’s actions were “shocking” and “totally out of his character.” The friend’s father, Karl Randus, agreed, saying in his letter that Leon’s actions came on the anniversary of his parents’ death. “We can’t imagine what he was thinking, but we care about Adam, he is a good person, and we hope there will be a chance for leniency for him.”

Leon, who was born Yavuz Berke in Turkey before moving to Canada, changed his name, and becoming a naturalized citizen, admitted that on April 6, he stole a four-seat Cessna 172 from his flight school and crossed the U.S. border. Leon landed the plane more than seven hours later on a road off of Highway 60 near Ellisville, Mo.

U.S. Department of Defense aircraft intercepted the plane after it entered American airspace and tried unsuccessfully to contact him. Authorities said the plane was nearly out of fuel when Leon landed it near Ellisville.

The Highway Patrol said Leon got a ride from a passer-by to a store, where he bought a Gatorade and sat at a booth until authorities arrived.

Leon pleaded guilty in August to interstate transportation of a stolen aircraft, importation of a stolen aircraft and illegal entry.
Ms. Gaga not the only diva set to rock Miami in ‘09

I am always impressed by beautiful women who can perform in stilettos. They can end a show with their hair and makeup a sweaty mess but their legs will always look great upon those painful looking things. Although I am sadly going to have to accept the fact that I may not get to see Lady Gaga this year, there are still other dance divas coming to South Florida that are well worth seeing. I know some might be rolling their eyes at this confession, but anyone who can sing and play the piano while wearing a gryoscope will win my vote.

Afrobeta, an electro-funk duo, will be playing on Commodore Street at the Grove Block Party on Nov. 7. Cuci Amador is their sultry, 80s loving front woman providing the vocals and vamping while keyboardist Tony Smurilo brings the space-age beats and beeps. I saw them once at Jazid and was thrilled. It’s the playful, enthusiastic and playful sensibilities that Afrobeta shows in their live performances that will surely make them a favorite at the free Grove Block Party this Saturday.

The song “Nighttime” is a popular single of theirs, and it proves that this duo has real potential to come into the mainstream market. Also on the list of divas to see is Peaches, of “F—K The Pain Away” fame. Peaches is touring for her new album I Feel Cream at Revolution Live on 200 West Broward Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale. Peaches is known for her outrageous live shows as much as she is for her loud and crude music. In the past, Peaches’ shows have featured beards, leotards, capes, hologram projectors and inflatable genitals. The album is loaded with songs produced with a European dance sound from names like Soulwax, Simian Mobile Disco and Digitalism.

The title track is a homage to Donna Summer’s “Day’s of Love” with one of Peaches’ signature raps tucked in for good measure. In both the title song and “ Lose You,” Peaches does something she isn’t usually known for: actually singing.

Tickets are still available for under $20, and judging from her past shows, this tour is certain to be the kind of freak show that we love down here in South Florida. Although Lady Gaga may be conquering Miami for only two nights when she comes at the end of this year, South Florida will never be lacking beautiful women who love to dance on stage. I’ll get my fix of femme fatale one way or another.

“ Neon Nights” is a weekly column focusing on Miami nightlife. Look for it every Friday in The Beacon and on FIUSM.com.

Food Web turns on tasty competition

Although the Network and its competing Web site will always have a special place in my heart, another site is in producing some stiff competition. Chow.com is a Web site that offers a wide variety of food-related content. In addition to more traditional cooking subject matter, such as holiday entertaining guides and beginners with one of Peaches’ signature raps tucked in for good measure. In both the title song and “Lose You,” Peaches does something she isn’t usually known for: actually singing.

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True, Chow.com does not have a long history. Even so, it still manages to put out useful, witty information that food enthusiasts will savour and enjoy.

Food for Thought

Food Web turns the heat up on the tasty competition

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I HAVE RETURNED: Students Fernando Lambert and Carolina Pozo in a scene from Blythe Spirit. The production is sponsored by the FIU Theatre Department and directed by Professor Michael Yawney.

LIFE!

WIFE OF THE LIVING DEAD

Spirit of ex-wife wreaks havoc in new theater production

NATAIE LEVY

Staff Writer

Blythe Spirit is the story of a woman who gets herself into big trouble with the two women in his life: his wife and his dead wife. Since its London debut in 1941, Noel Coward's creation has had two films adapted from its original script, has been seen on Broadway, and is currently in revival both on Broadway and at FIU.

"Even though it was written in 1941 and even though the characters are supernatural, I guarantee you that whoever’s ever had a boyfriend or a girlfriend or a husband or a wife can really relate to it... or anyone who’s ever had an ex may be more accurate," said Professor Michael Yawney, the director of the production.

The story focuses on Charles, an English man who has since remarried after the death of his first wife, Elvira.

"He’s reasonably happily married until the ghost of his first wife shows up and moves in with him and his second wife. As it goes on we start to see the problems as he goes through the trouble of living in a house with two wives," Yawney said.

The cast of characters include a married couple, a maid, a strange and mysterious medium, and a ghost.

Carolina Pozo, who will be portraying Elvira in the FIU production of Spirit, explained: "She’s been called back and she doesn’t know why. She causes a lot of chaos between her former husband and his new wife. There’s a lot of flirting with the husband to make the new wife angry."

The play has been widely lauded as a truly masterful comedy ever since its introduction.

IS IT WORTH IT?

‘Potter’ film worth seeing despite very boring protagonist

DAVID BARRIOS

Staff Writer

A good friend of mine once looked at me with regret and said, "If I’d had known that a movie about a boy wizard with a scar on his head would make billions of dollars, I would have written it."

Sadly, neither of us wrote the book. J.K. Rowling did, scribbling it down on cocktail napkins as the famous story is told. Hence, the birth of Harry Potter, a multimedia phenomenon that still manages to connect to so many people around the world.

Many know the story of the boy wizard, orphaned after his parents fought off the dark lord, Voldemort. Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince picks up during Harry’s sixth year at Hogwarts with Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) doing the typical teen-ager thing: trying to figure out women, balancing school with play, and deciding whether he really is the chosen figure to defeat Voldermort.

The sixth film is a much more brooding piece than the earlier films. In a film like Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone or even into Prisoner of Azkaban, there was a sense of child-like youth and a refreshing sense of discovery.

The plot revolves around an aging Harry being sent by his mentor, Albus Dumbledore (Michael Gambon), to visit retired Professor Horace Slughorn (Jim Broadbent) and retrieve Slughorn’s memories of an old student: Tom Riddle, the boy who would become Voldemort. The whole purpose is to try and find a weakness to what is the logical conclusion of the series.

The film unfolds in several parts with memories of Tom Riddle swirling in and out as Dumbledore privately tutors Harry and prepares him for what looms. And then there’s the Quidditch, the girls and the continued friendship between Harry and his friends Hermoine (Emma Watson) and Ron (Rupert Grint).

As the series has continued, Harry has had to enter darker and darker realms as death and peril grow to be stronger presences in his life. This is a transition moment in the series though and, as such, it is much more subdued. No climactic battle or rah-rah moments. It’s an important chapter in the series but has no closure.

Also, it is difficult to overlook the jarring transitions between the “teenage” elements of the plot (i.e. dating and friendships) and the “adult” elements (i.e. death and fear).

Of course, it’s also a problem that Harry is just boring. A Christ-like figure (yes, I went there), destined to battle evil and, with great expectations laid upon him, you don’t find that much frustration in Radcliffe’s performance. Sure, he huffs and puffs and has doubts as to his abilities, but his performance throughout the series is wooden. He’s grown older and more handsome – but wise? Well, that’s what the movie and the screenplay tells us, but it’s hard to see. It’s hard to have an emotional bond which is problematic because if you can allow yourself to get submerged into Rowling’s world, you’ll find this to be a compelling coming-of-age tale.

It’s not hard to fall into this world. The supporting cast is impeccable. Gambon is spot-on in his portrayal of Dumbledore. He brings great presence and intelligence to his role. He is a father figure to Harry and is part of the emotional core to the audience. Of course, Alan Rickman is wonderful to watch; hero or villain, detachable or honorable, he brings layering to his work.

I got lucky with this series. I read the first four books as a child, so I have them for reference and I’ve been familiar with the plot. If, however, you’ve been out of the loop of the series, good luck. I give a solid recommendation of this film for its fans and those who have kept up with the series. Those who haven’t kept up, I suggest you start if you’re planning to see it.

“Is It Worth It?” is a weekly feature rating the relative quality of films screened by SPC. Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince will be screened in GC 140 at 5 and 8 p.m. on Fridays, Nov. 6.