Gender identity discussed at forum

ALEXANDER MILLER  Staff Writer

The Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine hosted its first World Conference on Sexual Differentiation Disorders, providing new research and hopes to clear up guidelines for Olympic athletes dealing with ambiguity in gender cases.

The conference will offer Continuing Medical Education credit for physicians through the dual sponsorship of the College of Medicine and the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, according to the University press release.

The three-day conference took place from Jan. 15-17, examining gender issues based on research findings from a wide range of the world’s best scientists.

The conference was meant to bring together the world’s experts who are working both in the genetic and hormonal basis of conditions in which the genital development is not normal.

“It’s an exciting scientific agenda. You are interested in the best in the world, so you want to [trust] the most knowledgeable,” said Dr. Joe Leigh Simpson, M.D., professor of human and molecular genetics and professor of obstetrics and gynecology for the College of Medicine.

With the research provided, the conference also aimed to clear up gender issues in response to the debate of South African runner Caster Semenya’s gender-test controversy. It was said during the conference that in places such as South Africa, Semenya’s home, there were an increased number of reported cases of disorders of sexual development among black Africans.

“There seems to be a genetic susceptibility to acquiring disorders of sexual development existing throughout the decades. It may be lessened if there were more mixing of races,” said Eric Vilain, one of the presenters at the conference, and professor of human genetics, pediatrics and urology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Many articles, such as the Sept. 7, 2009 Sports Illustrated article concerning Semenya’s gender, have discussed the topic of what constitutes a man or a woman.

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“This represents a birth defect involving these organ systems much like
The Zoological Society at FIU has been recently formed with the aim of creating a community that is interested in attending lectures, seminars, and conventions relating to biology, ecology, and mammology, among other studies. "I want to educate the student body about the different roles of the zoological world," said ZSFIU President Andrew Zamora, a biology major. The group is working with advisor Professor Philip Stoddard of the biology department.

"I’m very pleased the students have started this society and I am pleased to be their sponsor," Stoddard said. ZSFIU plans on holding community service, including environmental cleanups and opportunities to work with the World Wildlife Fund and other organizations. They will also be hosting discussions and lectures on new discoveries and journals throughout the academic year.

The Zoological Society also looks forward to scheduling field trips throughout South Florida, including a trip to Jungle Island.

This society provides students a chance to connect with the FIU Zoology Department and other persons dedicated to the study of zoology and biology in general.

Fifth faculty member 'removed' for abusing procurement account

A fifth faculty member has been removed from the University due to improper use of their procurement card account. In Jan. 22, e-mail addressed to all faculty and staff, University President Mark Rosenberg called this instance “particularly regrettable” because the employee was a senior faculty member and former high-level academic administrator. Rosenberg also emphasized that policies and procedures are in place to “ensure the public’s continuing trust in the University, as well as the safeguarding of financial resources.”

“We must ensure that all units are operating in ways that are consistent with University policies, procedures and state law,” he stated.

President Rosenberg did not mention the name of the faculty member removed, or the amount of money spent on the procurement card. Procurement cards are issued to members of faculty and staff who make purchases for their respective department’s needs, such as University business expenses or travel. The University monitors purchase histories on these cards.

University Chief Financial Officer Kenneth Heidtke believes that they have the appropriate systems in place to protect the integrity of their credit card system. However in a previous interview with FIU Student Media, Rosenberg stated, “No matter what system we have, there will always be an opportunity for abuse.”

Procurement cards have previously been reported on four separate cases of faculty members being removed from the University due to improper use of the procurement card.

Editor’s note: David Barrios.

Additional report contributions by David Barrios.

Commissioener’s work schedule a concern, creates debate at meeting

The conference topics covered a wide range of aspects involving Disorders of Sexual Development (DSDs), such as treatment of Ovotesticular DSD, the number of titles and responsibilities with SGA, she is also an intern for the Office of the University President Mark Rosenberg.

Her resume also states that she is a current event staffer for the Miami Herald and El Nuevo Herald.

Flores also reminded the speaker that her duties as lecture coordinator ends in mid-February when the final lecture of the year, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., will be held.

She was confirmed with an unanimous vote. Senator of Arts and Sciences Alatanese Phenelles described Flores as “hard working” and “neutral” during debate.

Flores has previously told Student Media that her current load is manageable, and that she is not the only person in SGA with a full plate.

Gender testing for athletes explored

The conference topics covered a wide range of aspects involving Disorders of Sexual Development (DSDs), such as treatment of Ovotesticular DSD, the Genetics of Ovotesticular DSD, and panel discussions on sexual identity and future directions of sexual determination. All of the discussions and presentations involved sharing research findings bearing statistics on cases of the DSDs.

The conference is also providing information in hopes of assisting the International Olympic Committee and the International Association of Athletics Federations in drawing up guidelines for testing athletes whose gender is in question.

According to a London Associated Press article, the IAAF is reviewing testing results to answer the question of Semenya’s gender and whether she is eligible to compete as a woman. The London Associated Press also states that the IAAF refused to confirm or deny any media reports that the tests indicate Semenya has both male and female sex organs.

“The purpose of the conference was to help educate us on how to deal with these issues and treat these disorders,” Dr. New said, in Semenya’s defense. “When you’re dealing with a person who comes from a rural area where there is little medical advancement, it is incumbent upon the governing body to handle the situation prior to the competition, and handle it correctly.”

With 15 official members and more than 50 students on their mailing list, ZSFIU is looking for students to fill the positions of vice president, secretary, chairman of community service and chair of education. In addition, the group provides field specific positions, such as the ornithology chair.

ZSFIU also offers students the opportunity to join an organization fully dedicated to learning about the species that are encountered in diverse environments. "I have been wanting to learn more about animals and, through the club, I could learn about zoology," said member Natalie Lopez, a freshman psychology major. ZSFIU is an independent club that differs from other societies such as the Zoological Society of Florida in the sense that they do not limit their work to zoos, it is an academic organization.

The Zoological Society at FIU is hoping to expand in the future. "We are aiming to someday become national, and create an honor society for students interested in the field of zoology," Zamora said.

ZSFIU can be found online through Council of Student Organization’s OrgSync site and Facebook.

The group meets every two weeks to plan events that will give students, faculty and staff a chance to get closer to the world of zoology and learn about other species’ behavior, physiology and evolution.
**Heat ticket sales raise funds for scholarship**

LOTAYA BURGESS Staff Writer

The Student Government Council at the Biscayne Bay Campus will bring the heat to the University in an effort to gain additional funding for the First Generation Scholarship.

On Feb. 24 from 12-2 p.m. BBC and Modesto Maidique Campus will sell Miami Heat game tickets during their pep rallies, for $15; $5 from each ticket sale will go towards the First Generation Scholarship.

The First Generation Scholarship is designed to help our students who are the first in their family to go to college.

Robert Conrad, executive director of the FIU Foundation, came up with the idea of using Heat game tickets to fund the scholarship. He was unable to be reached for comment.

Sholom Neistein, SGC-BBC president, says aside from student’s being able to purchase game tickets, there will also be other attractions to entertain the BBC crowd.

“I am pushing for a meet-and-greet for a few selected students to meet players and a basketball hoop where students will compete,” Neistein said.

According to SGC-BBC clerk, Larissa Adams, Activities and Service fees don’t cover the scholarship because “those fees only go toward Activities and Services.”

Neistein feels this is unfair.

“It’s a little hypocritical on the government’s part because the government takes our tax money and gives it to welfare; why don’t we take the money and give it to individual students who are suffering?” Neistein said.

Students who purchase tickets can enjoy the big game on March 24 at the American Airlines Arena.

**‘Writers on the Bay’ series begins**

MIKIALA C. TENNIE Staff Writer

Award-winning author Diana Abu-Jaber will read some of her work on Jan. 28 at 8 p.m. in the FIU Biscayne Bay Campus Bookstore as a participant in FIU’s Writers on the Bay series.

Abu-Jaber has written four books: Arabian Jazz, Crescent, The Language of Baklava and Origin. Crescent won the 2004 PEN Center USA Award, recognizing her excellence in literary fiction, and the Before Columbus Foundation’s American Book Award, recognition of her work by other writers.

Abu-Jaber’s books range from cultural tales about Arab-Americans and their lives between the two worlds to suspenseful mysteries about serial killers.

An associate professor at Portland State University, Abu-Jaber teaches courses within the English Department. She is also a writer-in-residence.

The Writers on the Bay series held three book readings last semester and is known for bringing distinguished authors to BBC to enhance the student experience.

Authors who participated in the series have visited creative writing classes and met with students at book readings.

All of the readings are free of charge and open to everyone, including non-FIU students.

The reading series is supported by Bames and Noble Booksellers.

If you have any questions, please call the BBC English Department at 305-919-5857.

**Marti’s legacy to be honored during annual celebration**

MELODY REGALADO Staff Writer

More than 100 years after his death, one man still stands as a notable writer and symbol of Cuban independence, and FIU is set to honor him on his birthday.

Jose Marti will be commemorated at the Jose Marti Celebration on Thursday, Jan. 28 in the Mary Ann Wolfe Theater at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

“Through life I have read and reread many of Marti’s works and they have served as inspiration and comfort,” said Uva de Aragon, associate director of the Cuban Research Institute at FIU and a published poet and fiction writer.

Marti was born Jan. 28, 1853 in Havana, Cuba and died at the age of 42. His struggle to liberate Cuba began at a young age, when he was exiled to Spain at the age of 17 for opposing Spanish rule through his writings.

He was a prolific writer in both journalism and poetry, particularly writing about the injustices in Cuba. He studied law and continued in his efforts and writings for a free Cuba in every country he lived in, including Mexico, Guatemala and the United States.

Today, because of his unceasing passion, he is revered as a hero and the father of Cuban independence.

FIU has honored Marti’s life and accomplishments at BBC since 2001.

This free event is open to the public and begins with a continental breakfast at 8 a.m.

After breakfast, a panel consisting of FIU professors will discuss different aspects of Marti’s life, which will be broadcast live on WQBA 1140 AM. This begins at 9 a.m. and is hosted by Cuban journalist Bernadette Pardo.

Panels include Aragon; Teresa Ponte, chair of the Journalism and Broadcasting Department and associate professor at the School of Journalism and Mass Communications; and Fernando Figueredo, chair of the Public Relations and Advertising Department and professor of strategic and multicultural communications.

Aragon will be giving a biography of Marti’s life and describing his significance.

Aragon said Marti has been a great influence in her life starting with La Edad de Oro, a children’s magazine turned book which she read as a child.

“In those pages I learned many values such as honesty and integrity, and how, at the end, we are all the same in death,” she said.

Ponte will be discussing Marti’s role as a journalist, since he served as a newspaper director and published columns in several newspapers.

Figueredo will also speak about how several developments evolved that gave way for Marti to become one of the leaders of the Cuban independence movement in the early 1900s.

“Those developments involved my great-grandfather, who himself was another of the leaders of that movement,” he said.

His great-grandfather, Fernando Figueredo Socarrás, moved to Key West from Cuba, and in January 1892 was visited by Marti and other revolutionaries and founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party.

After the broadcast of the panel’s discussion, this year’s recipients of the Jose Marti Scholarship will also be announced.

This $700 award honors full-time (12-credit) undergraduate FIU students at BBC with a minimum GPA of 3.5. They must also be U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

To apply, students submitted a one-page essay on how Marti’s works or history inspired their educational goals, along with the application form and unofficial transcript.

Aragon encourages students to read some of his works and come out to the breakfast.

“Reading him is like coming home,” she said. “I welcome any opportunity to honor him and to try to transmit my admiration for this great man.”

For more information or to RSVP, call 305-919-5700.
The following column is brought to you by FRITO-LAY: The taste of freedom has never been so delicious and lightly salted. Thanks to the recent 5-4 ruling in Citizens United v. FEC, corporations can now spend an unlimited amount of money on political campaigns. Previously, the only way for corporations to influence elections was by setting up PACs or political action committees made up of their employees, and collecting contributions subject to individual limits.

Those PACs and 527s could then run ads advocating for a specific issue or attacking or saying positive things about a specific candidate. Now, thanks to this ruling, corporations can spend an unlimited amount of money on ads or issue campaigns using money from their general treasury. They can potentially spend hundreds of millions more than before on trying to affect the political process.

Since the decision allows big business to have even more power over our elected officials, some have decried this decision as a threat to our democracy. Of course, I couldn’t disagree more. Sure, elected officials will now have to fear an even greater onslaught from big businesses if they choose to defy them but, what’s wrong with that? I mean, under what circumstances would it be wrong to mix the interests of big business with the interests of the public? I certainly can’t think of any. That’s why I’ve sold the sponsorship rights to this column to Frito-Lay, a company whose products, as we all know, are universally enjoyed for their uniquely robust flavor. Political discourse and corporate interests go together quite nicely, much like a bag of LAY’S® Chile Limon Flavored Potato Chips and an ice-cold Pepsi.

The Supreme Court decision is expected to greatly benefit Republicans who tend to favor fewer restrictions on big business. That has left many members of the GOP salivating, much like a bag of FRITO-LAY® Chili-Cheese Flavored Corn Chips. Unfortunately, the decision, like the chips of Frito-Lay’s competitors, has left a bad taste in President Obama’s mouth.

“It gives the special interest lobbyists new leverage to spend millions on advertising to persuade elected officials to vote their way – or to punish those who don’t. That means that any corporation will be able to directly spend hundreds of millions of dollars to defeat legislation or oppose officials that don’t do their bidding. This will for sure cause members of both political parties to bend to their will or be broken – just like the average Joe.”

Of course, the logic of this decision has它的 share of skeptics, unlike the unquestionably great taste of DORITOS® Diablo Flavored Tortilla Chips (now with 50 percent more Diablo).

Russ Marcus of the Washington Post is highly critical of the decision. “The ‘conceit’ of corporate personhood, as Stevens called it, does not mandate absolute equivalence. That corporations enjoy free-speech protections does not mean they enjoy every protection afforded an actual person.”

Is a corporation entitled to vote? To run for office? she asked. Mr. Marcus may have a point. However, thanks to this decision, they probably won’t need to. So, as you sit back and watch political events unfold, make sure to healthcare some Frito-Lay products and remember that in the not too distant future, unless legislation is passed, even more of our nation’s elected officials will be brought to you by special interests and big business. What could be better than that? Besides CHEETOS® FLAMIN’ HOT® Cheese Flavored Snacks?

ABOUT TIME

US nation soon to be run by big businesses like Frito-Lay

The line between politics and media stardom has been growing ever thinner and the two are beginning to blend. The scarriest part is that no one seems to notice.

Politicians, who necessarily hold a biased position, are beginning to blend. The scarriest part is that no one seems to notice.

People like CNN’s Lou Dobbs and radio personality Rush Limbaugh have both made their openness to a political position of some sort public knowledge.

However, despite the seemingly parallel scenarios, I find myself more apprehensive about these two than the former. Sarah Palin’s Fox debut took place last week on “The O’Reilly Factor” in which an interview/news commentary hybrid took place for half an hour or so.

Instead of discussing important issues in their advertised “Fair and Balanced” way, Bill O’Reilly spent most of the time discussing the fact that Palin now has a forum to set the record straight – her personal record, that is.

“There will be a lot of that going on,” she replied. Is that really the direction society needs its news sources going in? Beyond the regrettably biased nature of news as it already exists on both ends of the political spectrum, the increased abundance of commentary and opinion operating under the guise of “news” is alarming – not to mention a very dangerous thing for our democracy.

As articulated by Mark McKinnon, a former John McCain aide, the role of news commentator is “an easy job with very little accountability”, but it is also a very powerful one. Pandits and news correspondents alike exist outside the realm of government, and thus are granted far more accuracy/leeway than a politician might have.

Reaching vast audiences who either ignorantly or knowledgeably accept opinion as fact, they play an instrumental role in (mis)informing the nation.

The grudges I hold aren’t personal or particular in regard to Sarah Palin or Fox “News”, but rather directed toward the trend of combining news with commentary, and the ill effects it’s wreaking on society.

What happened to the days of experts and Ph.D.’s, facts and measurable data? What grants Palin her legitimacy in informing the public on national issues, her B.A. in communications? What authority does Fox have to call itself news when it so clearly delivers facts with more than just a slight tinge of red?

Where and from whom we get our information are two vital aspects in the formation of one’s own views, and in the ability to distinguish personal opinions and beliefs from someone else’s.

Fox News: new and improved with more Sarah Palin

Katy Huddleston Staff Writer

Recent news of Sarah Palin joining the team at Fox “News” (and yes, I will be keeping the “news” part in apostrophes) comes to much of America as a logical matchup with very little shock value.

Fox, a conservative outlet with some top-notch well-informed and legitimate source of news, joined forces with Sarah Palin, the previous GOP vice presidential candidate and an ice-cold Pepsi!

“Fair and Balanced” way, Bill O’Reilly and radio personality Rush Limbaugh have both made their openness to a political position of some sort public knowledge.

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T
LEONCIO ALVAREZ  
Staff Writer

There was no place for vanilla this weekend at the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. The fourth annual International Chocolate Festival took place from Friday to Sunday, taking in all who are crazy for cacao.

For the first time in four years, the festival was held throughout three days and invited two new tastes: coffee and tea. Economically, these crops are important worldwide, the latter becoming the most popular beverage in the world following water.

Fairchild members were allowed complimentary admission, non-members paid $20 to enter the chocolate mecca. The beginning trail hosted rare, beautiful flowers and plants and led to the Garden House Lawn, where most of the food vendors were set up, ready to sell anything from seagrass hats to really thick milkshakes (literally, that’s what the sign read), to chocolate mole sauces.

These sauces were offered byHey Mon Caribbean and breads from the Crackerman, a specialty store located in Bay Harbor Islands.

One sauce, dubbed “the hottest in the world,” included four different peppers and should have been given with a gallon of water and a hose down right after.

All kinds of spices and teas were displayed by World Flavors next to The Coffee Cup’s fresh brews, which originated from parts of Central America.

Crunchy, chocolate-covered coffee beans and shots of coffee were handed out by Marc Davis, CEO of D&Q Imports, the import of The Coffee Cup.

The Fairchild Chocolate Shop was also located here and attendants could buy extras like chocolate cookbooks, candles and chocolate-scented T-shirts.

Next to the shop, patrons could learn about and buy numerous chocolate, tea and coffee plants. Volunteers were on hand to explain how a cacao plant does not necessarily need a rainforest environment to flourish; they can grow just fine in South Florida under the proper care.

Volunteer Marcella Cruz spoke about the processing part of the chocolate-making.

“By adding milk and sugar to the cacao paste and [processing in a coffee grinder], you get more fat in your chocolate, making milk and white chocolate,” Cruz said.

That cacao paste is what all the fuss is about, according to Chef Allen Susser of Chef Allen’s in Aventura. Allen is an innovator in New World cuisine. During his cooking demonstration on Sunday, Chef Allen explained – after sharing his recipe for a simple chocolate cheesecake with an Oreo crust – that the cacao paste acquired from the

CHOCOLATE, page 6
Peace Corps helps broaden students’ global outlook

John Brakeall, a graduate student at FIU, is pursuing his master’s in environmental studies through an integrated program between the University and the Corps. “It provides a highly rewarding opportunity for individuals to take their skills and experience overseas to help developing countries that need it most,” Brakeall said when asked about the positive impact of the Peace Corps.

Brakeall also serves as the FIU Peace Corps campus recruiter. He provides information for opportunities to join the Corps, as well as advice on how to improve one’s chances of passing its rigorous standards for choosing qualified candidates.

The organization seeks to send the best possible candidates on their various global missions. The application process usually lasts around nine months. This allows time for careful consideration for the Corps as well as for the applicant. The Corps requires a strong commitment from those who are interested, and may not be suitable for everybody.

The minimum requirements for applying are that an applicant be at least 18 years old, in good health and a U.S. citizen. Applicants must also be willing to spend 27 months in training and service abroad.

Ninety-five percent of applicants have an undergraduate degree and many volunteers should be expected to possess some type of skill, work experience or education level related to their program of interest.

The Peace Corps programs include agriculture, business and information and communications technology, education, environment, health and youth and community development. Applicants can indicate a preference for the application, but a program is ultimately chosen based on interest and experience with it.

Volunteers with the Peace Corps receive a monthly living allowance, full medical and dental care, 48 paid vacation days, professional skills and training, as well as intercultural experience.

Peace Corps alumni may also receive future benefits, such as school loan deferment or cancellation, graduate school opportunities through scholarships, credits for service or completion and credentialing and future benefits, such as school loan deferment and cancellation, graduate school opportunities through scholarships, credits for service or completion and credentialing.

A former FIU student, Brakeall spoke about her experience as a volunteer in Cambodia. While serving there, she taught English and promoted HIV awareness. Her first three months in the country were spent training; learning the language, developing her cross-cultural understanding as well as health and safety skills.

While in Cambodia, she lived with a local family in the community. She paid them a monthly living allowance, full medical and dental care, 48 paid vacation days, professional skills and training, as well as intercultural experience.

The Peace Corps offers students an opportunity to receive a master’s degree in environmental studies through an integrated program.

Diversions

Coffee, tea make first appearance at fourth annual chocolate festival

Chocolate-making process was all that was necessary to start any recipe involving dark chocolate. He also stressed how the chocolate has no sweetness to it at first.

Inside the Garden House the first thing visible was a long table with many different kinds of chocolate cakes, all ready for a blue ribbon. This was the chocolate cake and cupcake center.

“It’s the first year we include cupcakes so, as you can see, no one brought any,” said volunteer Stephanie Athanas. “Hopefully now that people know they’ll bring some next year.”

Chocolatiers, including the Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory and Mr. Ganache, along with bakers from La Petit Pain French Bakery and L’Atelier Gourmet, filled the perimeter of the Garden House as visions of chocolate fountains – big and small – bonbons and candy apples greeted visitors.

Back in the lawn, the smell of hot popcorn tempted those exiting the Garden House. Bags of what seemed to be light caramel popcorn were actually kettle corn seasoned with the most harmonious blend of sugar and salt imaginable.

Under the hamburger Kettle Corn tent, owner Bryan Moore clarified why he chose to bring popcorn to a chocolate festival. “We brought the popcorn to other festivals here in the past and have sort of received a following,” Moore said.

Down the path from the Garden House awaited the Chocofpa, where the aroma of chocolate soaps and candles filled the air. Rob Valdez from Earthistry gave samples of handmade soaps he made specifically for the event.

“For this weekend I made chocolate, chai, green tea and coffee soaps with ground bean exfoliation and without,” he said.

Valdez also sells his soaps and cocoa body butters at local farmers markets, including the one outside of the Graham Center, every Wednesday.

Massages were offered by students of the American Massage Academy while sitarist Stephan Mikes soothed their ears. Miami chocolate lovers learned new things about their old favorite this weekend while sampling the tasty treats offered.

For a $20 admission, and with most foods inside ranging from $3 to $20 themselves, the International Chocolate Festival at the Fairlawn is a good weekend rendezvous for a group of friends. Make sure to keep it in mind next year.

The Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden is located on 10901 Old Cutler Road. Membership for students is a yearly fee of $30. For more information, call (305) 667-1651 or visit www.fairchildgarden.org.

Chocolate fountain was present at many of the booths throughout the fair.

Contributing Writer

ANASTASIA MOHAMMED

With the recent events in Haiti, many FIU students are wondering what they can do to help. The Peace Corps, which held an information session Jan. 25 in GC 314, is one option.

The organization seeks to improve the quality of life for people of other countries. Through education and the sharing of skills and technology, volunteers put into practice the adage of “giving a man a fish and teaching a man to fish,” providing the knowledge to help these people improve their lives.

Through an integrated program.

The positive impact of the Peace Corps.

For those interested in service and a different cultural experience, and those who wish to find a way to help other countries in need, find out more information about the Peace Corps by going to http://www.peacecorps.gov or contacting John Brakeall at his office in ECS 157 in the Modesto Maidique Campus by e-mail at jbr200901@fiu.edu.

Brakeall agrees.

“The Peace Corps provides an opportunity to make a real difference in other people’s lives while being given the opportunity to learn a new language, culture and grow as a person through a life-changing experience.”

For Peace Corps alumni may also receive future benefits, such as school loan deferment or cancellation, graduate school opportunities through scholarships, credits for service or completion and credentialing and future benefits, such as school loan deferment and cancellation, graduate school opportunities through scholarships, credits for service or completion and credentialing.

For a $20 admission, and with most foods inside ranging from $3 to $20 themselves, the International Chocolate Festival at the Fairlawn is a good weekend rendezvous for a group of friends. Make sure to keep it in mind next year.
Sophomore expects to return to mound in 10

BY CHRIS TOWERS
Staff Writer

Playing in a wooden bat summer league, sophomore infielder Garrett Wittels’ Luray Wranglers were down big to the New Market Wranglers, 8-3 in the sixth inning.

Wittels, the starting second baseman, told his coach to put him in to pitch and see if he could have better luck. “I told my coach to put me in and I’ll pitch,” Wittels said.

As a freshman, Wittels flashed a strong arm in his 28 appearances at third base last year. He shook off the rust of a year and earned himself more opportunities on the mound, finishing the short season with a scoreless inning.

Wittels impressed in his first appearance and earned himself more opportunities on the mound, finishing the short season with 10.1 innings pitched, 16 strikeouts and just one earned run.

He also earned a vote of confidence from Wranglers manager Mike Bocock. “My coach talked to Coach [Turtle] Thomas and asked him why I wasn’t a closer,” Wittels said. “So now I’ll be a two-way player.”

Thomas sees Wittels playing a vital role for the Golden Panthers on the mound as well as in the field.

“We’ve got four guys to play three positions [third base, shortstop, second base],” said Thomas. “By all means, Garrett Wittels is going to get lots of playing time in the field.”

Thomas said Wittels figures to be a power pitcher coming out of the pen, featuring a fastball that Wittels calls his best pitch, as well as a cutter, curveball and a changeup.

“He could be a guy that comes in and strikes out two out of three in an inning,” Thomas said.

MAJOR HOME COMING

There was a familiar face at FIU Stadium on Monday, but he wasn’t wearing his familiar FIU uniform.

Tom Ebert, a 19th round selection for the New York-Penn League, Wittels’ Luray Wranglers were down big to the New Market Wranglers, 8-3 in the sixth inning.

Ebert, who makes his offseason home near campus while his wife finishes her degree at FIU, has been using FIU’s facilities to stay in shape in the offseason.

“I live down here now, so I was coming in in the fall and working out in the morning with them at 5 a.m., trying to get done in the morning,” Ebert said.

After leading FIU starters in ERA last season, was on hand to work out and rebound 10 times.

Wittels missed the season’s over the game is what has really improved for myself.”

It’s a great feeling,” explained Carey. “We’re going to block it or double team. Either we’re going inside that we’re going to have great defense. Either we’re going to block or double team you,” explained Carey. “We’re not weak inside so they have to find other options.”

Adley, however, made it clear that changing the front court’s identity has not been an easy task. The two friends have helped each other out a lot to become the dominant tandem they are today.

“Elisa has helped me lose a lot of weight so that I can run and do what I need to do,” said Adley. “We played basketball everyday for about four hours after workout here. She also ate the same food that I ate. The food was gross but she did it.”

Carey agrees that Adley, along with the rest of her teammates, have pushed each other to become better.

“I think we worked really hard over the summer, collectively,” she said. “We forced each other to work hard and perform at a higher level. Everybody came back better. I feel like my confidence has gotten better and that makes me play better. That makes me want the ball even more. Just wanting it and taking over the game is what has really improved for myself.”

Adley missed seven games earlier this season, but has played in eight consecutive since then. Most recently she has been moving up on FIU’s all-time blocks list, as she passed Jasmine Jenkins for the No. 7 spot on Jan. 17. With 92 to her name now, Adley needs the best pitch, as well as a cutter, curveball and a changeup.

“By all means,” Garrett Wittels is going to get lots of playing time in the field.”

Most recently Carey had success against Arkansas-Little Rock on Jan. 23. She scored a career-high 22 points and added eight rebounds while also going a career-high 10-of-11 from the free-throw line.

Adley’s most recent success came against Arkansas State on Jan. 20. She grabbed a career-high 13 rebounds, dished out a career-high seven assists, and blocked three shots in the 65-61 win.

The playmaker, who has a wide frame but says she’s only about 5-foot-9, expressed the rush she gets whenswatting a shot. “It’s empowering and I get hyped,” she giggled. “I try to jump as high as I can every time I jump but people I play are taller so they’re usually blocking me but when I get the chance to do it back to them it’s great.”

Carey, who stands at 6-foot-2, seems to enjoy the feeling as well. “It’s a great feeling,” expressed Carey. “It’s like you’re saying, ‘This is my house. Are you serious? Don’t come in here with that, if you don’t come strong then don’t come in here at all.’”

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FRONT COURT TAKEOVER

Duo making presence felt after injury riddled start

STEPHANIE GABRIEL
Asst. Sports Director

After dealing with injuries early in the season, Elisa Carey and Marquita Adley have worked together to produce an improved front court for the FIU women’s basketball team.

Elisa Carey [left] and Marquita Adley [right] have been able to bolster the Golden Panthers’ interior defense, as they rank among the conference’s leaders in blocks and rebounds, as well as contributing more than 20 points a game between them.

Although the Golden Panthers (8-13, 3-7 SBC) have just eight wins so far this season, the Golden Panthers lead the conference with nine three-star recruits, according to rivals.com.

Football looking to reload with some last-minute additions

With signing day looming, FIU still in mix for many

With a net that can be cast all throughout the state of Florida, there have been plenty of fish in the deep sea of football talent the state possesses for FIU.

Despite competition from six other Football Bowl Subdivision schools in the state who are in the process of acquiring good classes of their own, there is enough talent left over for FIU to complete arguably its best class ever.

User could hear a pin drop in Boca Raton, the home of rival Florida Atlantic, who won two bowls in the last decade before floundering in 2009.

The Owls have just 11 registered commitments, but only four are even ranked by rivals.com.

If FIU closes strong before the Feb. 3 national signing day, it could claim the best recruiting class in the conference for the first time ever.

Here is a look at impact recruits on the fence who are considering FIU:

OFFENSE

Hillsborough High quarterback Tarean Austin visited FIU a few weeks ago and told rivals.com that it “was pretty good.” The three-star prospect would join Fletcher High’s Jake Medlock in the class, but wouldn’t be a huge loss to get him.

Austin would be a nice pickup, however, considering that SBC rival Western Kentucky is after him and will get a visit from the dual threat athlete this weekend.

Miami Springs wide receiver Willis Wright visited FIU last week and his high school coach, Alex Pacheco, said FIU is “right there.”

Pacheco said that Wright is down to FIU and West Virginia, and will announce on signing day.

DEFENSE

Pierce Community College defensive tackle David Mahoney visited FIU earlier this month.

The three-star defender would help bolster the Golden Panthers’ run defense, but is also considering Washington State and New Mexico State.

Northwestern two-way end Khalid Marshall lists offers from Louisiana State and FIU, and is still considering the Golden Panthers.

However, the three-star prospect may be deterred by the fact that FIU is bringing in a slew of defensive backs.