SPRING PRODUCTION KICK-OFF

One week before the curtains go up on the Department of Theatre’s first Spring production, Sam Shepard’s A Lie of the Mind, the stage is abuzz with preparations being made.

Racks full of costumes and props line the walls, while performers run through lines and the crew sets the blocking and scenery. After long hours of work, an assembly of cast and crew walk through the theater wing of the Herbert & Nicole Wertheim Performing Arts Center as they reach a point for a break.

The cast has been on a fast-paced production schedule, with only three weeks to prepare rather than the usual six for previous performances. This reduced window of time is due in large part to the Youth Fair takeover that dominates the theater school’s side of Modesto Maidique Campus. Both Main Stage productions have to be done by March, shooting Lie straight into production at the start of 2010.

Professor Wayne Robinson, the play’s director, said he did not want to rush the actor’s character development. He called on junior Lilly Paez, a theater student who was excelling in both her acting and directing classes, to help put the show together.

“We divided our rehearsals. She was able to work with actors while I worked with actors. We were sort of putting the show together – together,” Robinson said of Paez’s contributions.

With plenty of experience as a stage manager, Paez had already established a role as ensemble features all-senior cast

SPRING PRODUCTION KICK-OFF

Dance Marathon kicks off 13th annual event

President addresses faculty at forum

President Mark Rosenberg hosted the first open forum at FIU on Jan. 26, in which faculty, staff and administration were able to attend and ask questions on anything regarding the University and its progress since the beginning of his tenure in 2009.

In an e-mail sent out to all members of the community, Rosenberg invited everyone to the event which took place in the Graham Center Ballrooms. Faculty and students who could not be present were given the opportunity to view the forum live through the Internet, which included those located at the Biscayne Bay Campus and Pines Center.

The questions presented to Rosenberg ranged from how the commute to the Engineering Campus could be made safer for students despite current construction hazards, to how the University’s green initiatives might yield paperless evaluations.

“We are a public university and our mandate is to respond to public needs. Whether it’s being more responsive to questions, finding ways to facilitate enroll-

ment, listening to concerns about PantherSoft; we have an obligation as a public institution to be open
The goal of the fair was to give students the opportunity to actually speak to faculty and students waiting to answer questions they could have. Some tables did not have people occupying them, like the China and Japan tables; instead they had pamphlets along with the faculty member’s contact information in case students were interested. “Studying abroad is a great experience,” said senior international relations major Christian Franco. Franco added that he has never studied abroad but would like to one day, particularly Brazil because he “loves the people, the culture and is fluent in Portuguese.”

Barbara Weitz, director of the Office of Education Abroad program, said this is not a disaster, it is a catastrophe.”

Touching upon a pressing subject for students throughout the beginning of the semester, the president addressed the high costs of class text books. “A semester by semester basis, our students are putting out on average from $500 to $800 for their textbooks,” Rosenberger said. He acknowledged the University bookstore is not offering a textbook rental program that offers around 50 titles to students. The pilot project is expected to expand throughout the years to include more books which the book buy-back program will begin to do as well. President Rosenberg urged the faculty to inform their students of the opportunity since, according to Rosenberg, only 40 percent of the textbooks that students purchase are being sold back to the bookstore.

“We’re in a new era and we’ve got to be very proactive in garnering out-of-the-box resources,” said Albert Dotson, chairman of the Board of Trustees. “Seems rather expensive but I am interested in this, and Pei is a very lucky to have President Rosenberg, who understands that from a global perspective and is now taking us into a new area of a student-centered university that is sensitive to the needs of all South Florida populations.”

Other new initiatives were stated, such as the recent agreement with the Pepsi Bottling Co. “We will be looking for Pepsi to bring in their products at the Bookstore while still maintaining the color coordination of Pepsi as the University’s official beverage provider.”

“When I became president, I promised that we would have a forefront funding offensive and I’m very proud of the fact that we have joined a new agreement with Pepsi that agreement will bring in millions of dollars,” he said. “It symbolizes our need, desire and recognition of the fact that we have to be more entrepreneurial and have to develop win/win partner- ship so that we can have the financial diversification that we need to have the quality university we desire,” Rosen- berg added.

In the deal with Pepsi, he mentioned that both campuses will now have a wider variety of non-carbonated drinks, while still maintaining popular names such as Mountain Dew.

Among the recent announcements, the two new members to the Board of Trustees were revealed: Joseph Carnahan, an FIU alumnus and the chief execu- tive officer of Preferred Care Partners, as well as Michael Adler, chairman and chief executive officer of Adler & Associates, Inc., one of the region’s largest real estate companies.
Luncheon series provides dining experience for all

SABRENA JOHNSON
Staff Writer

Students at the School of Hospitality Management will be displaying their managerial skills and providing outside visitors with an upscale culinary experience.

SHM resumed its luncheon series on Jan. 29. The luncheons will be held by the SHM since the school opened 20 years ago. The purpose of the series is to give the students of the Advanced Food Production Management class an opportunity to get hands-on experience at effectively managing an upscale restaurant,” said Mohammed Qureshi, assistant dean of SHM.

According to Qureshi, the lunches are part of a three-credit course and are a requirement for SHM undergraduate students. They are designed to prepare them for management positions in the food services field.

The 29 students will be divided into teams of five. The management teams will instruct the employees on what foods to prepare and then supervise the preparation and serving of the food to outside guests.

Each week students will alternately manage new space east of the lounge. This lounge is a need. According to Battle, the reason a lounge was not built had been around since last year. Even though the old lounge was revenue-based, it made no money, so it basically went into the new office space because their current office is too small for their operations.

“We’re trying to have a real lounge atmosphere, so we don’t want to have any harsh ‘classroomy’ lights,” Dil said.

Dil said she has spoken to the architect about the noise level in the lounge becoming an issue.

“We’re trying to have a real lounge atmosphere, so we don’t want to have any harsh ‘classroomy’ lights,” Dil said.

Dil said she has spoken to the architect about the noise level in the lounge becoming an issue.

“The old lounge was revenue-based, but it made no money, so it basically went bankrupt; it was supposed to be self-sufficient,” Zapata said.

John Morris, manager of the Teams Ropes Adventure Challenge, an FIU program that teaches students how to work in teams, also remembers those days of being able to have a place to simply relax.

“I remember we had a game room when I was a freshman and it wasn’t a distraction for students; everything worked out fine,” Morris said.

Dil says the idea of having a new lounge built had been around since last year. Even though the plans are now being put into action, Battle says she has “no idea” about how much the new endeavor will cost or the lounge’s operating hours. Zapata could not confirm the lounge’s cost at press time.

Olson insists that it is important for students to engage in leisurely activities.

“This lounge is a need and should be done in about four months. Students can’t study all the time and they shouldn’t have to go to [Modesto Maidique Campus] to hang out,” Olson said.

Students will also be able to bring their own consoles and hook them up to the televisions in the game room, according to Dil.

The Women’s Center and Center for Leadership and Services will claim the new space east of the lounge.

This lounge is a need. Students...shouldn't have to go to [Modesto Maidique Campus] to hang out.

Greg Olson, senior director of the Wolfe Center and Student Affairs says having the lounge is a “big desire of the students.” According to Battle, the reason a lounge wasn’t built sooner is because there was “no space” for one.

“People want a place where they can go to hang out, chat and lounge,” said Olson. “We might ask students to present a Panther ID card for free use of paddles and no scheduling of the rooms will be required.”

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HALF-EMPTY OR HALF-FULL?

LEFT: Gyujin Chae, (right) a senior hospitality management student and Eduardo Mora, (left) a senior and marketing major, sit on wine at the Friends of Wine Club’s wine tasting on Jan. 25

RIGHT: Jennifer Puebla, a junior, hospitality management major, and President of Friends of Wine test the scent of a wine, on Jan. 25, for the club’s wine tasting event.

BOTTOM: Sandyanne Munroe, (center), a junior and Hospitality management helps herself to some food, alongside Carlos Gonzalez, (right) a junior and hospitality management major, and Loraine Tapada, (left) a senior and hospitality management major on Jan. 25.

SGC-BBC

New student lounge may include foosball, pool tables

LAToya BURGESS
Staff Writer

The Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus is planning to convert the former cafeteria on the second floor of the Wolfe Center into a lounge.

The large meeting room west of the former cafeteria will be divided into two parts which fits about 150 students each, according to Tanha Dil, SGC-BBC justice.

“Clubs and organizations will use the [meeting room] space to hold meetings and events. The former cafeteria space will turn into a lounge where students will get the chance to do homework,” Dil said.

Greg Olson, senior director of the Wolfe Center and Student Affairs says having the lounge is a “big desire of the students.” According to Battle, the reason a lounge wasn’t built sooner is because there was “no space” for one.

“The idea is for students to access the lounge as they wish to study, chat and lounge,” said Olson. “We might ask students to present a Panther ID card for free use of paddles and no scheduling of the rooms will be required.”

Bronwen Bares, assistant director of the Women’s Center, said she is excited about the new office space because their current office is too small for their operations.

“We’re very excited, it’s going to be more space for us,” said Bares. “It’s very positive and it’s a great opportunity to expand our programs.”

According to Olson, the design concept for the lounge is still being finalized. Dil says she and Christin “Cici” Battle, SGC-BBC vice president, are pushing for the lounge to include a pool table, foosball table and comfortable moveable furniture like beanbag chairs.

Furthermore, at a Jan. 27 meeting, SGC internships coordinator Kiellia Samuels said she will be conducting surveys to find out what students would like to see in the lounge.

“The students will be preparing dishes they have already learned how to cook in their prerequisite classes. Each team will get a chance to practice and perfect their dish a week prior to serving,” Qureshi said.

The menu will have a different theme each week and will consist of food from Italy, France and other areas.

“Because seating is limited to 65 people, reservations have to be made in advance and are on a first-come, first-serve basis. The menu will be available a week in advance but is subject to change,” Qureshi said.

Seating for the luncheon begins at 11:45 a.m. and the cost is $18. Payments may be made by cash or check and must be made at the time of the reservation. Due to the upscale dining experience, the dress code is business casual.

“We will be providing a high quality experience for a very good price. We will be serving home-made bread with butter, and the meals are made with pure olive oil. Where else will you be able to have an appetizer, choice of entrée, dessert and wine for only $18?” Qureshi said.

To make reservations call Paula Wright at 305-919-4506.

Students will also be able to bring their own consoles and hook them up to the televisions in the game room, according to Dil.

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Smoking ban correct direction for students

NEDA GOMESHI
Staff Writer

On my walks around campus, there is one scene I constantly see play out: students and faculty walking with a cigarette in hand. It is not the sight of a person smoking a cigarette that bothers me. What concerns me, like so many people, are the negative effects smoking and second-hand smoke have on my health.

Recently, FIU approved a measure to become a “smoke-free” campus, creating restrictions on smoking throughout the university. The university is using “social enforcement” to try and break people’s addictions and uphold the new policy. It’s a move in the right direction and one that several schools have also adopted.

According to the Sun Sentinel, several Florida schools such as Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and Nova Southeastern University in Davie have also created restrictions for smoking within their universities.

This choice to smoke is indeed a personal choice. It was a choice made by those who chose to light up, and one that they have to deal with. However, I think that it is unnecessary and unfortunate for innocent bystanders, such as myself, to be negatively harmed by secondhand smoke. Hence, I am fully supporting the new restrictions for health reasons.

Bible verses cross fine line between church and state

KELSEA JONES
Contributing Writer

Biblical inscriptions emblazoned on combat rifle sights used by the U.S. military have incited critics to point out the layers of hypocrisy that not only involves the violation of church and state but common sense.

The combat sights, produced by military contractor Trijicon, allow shooters to create light when aiming at targets in the dark and are currently used in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Essentially, the inscriptions that appear in small, raised lettering at the end of the rifle-scope contain script that alludes to the light of Jesus. The Trijicon Reflex sight is stamped with 2COR4:6, a reference in the New Testament’s Second Letter to the Corinthians wherein Paul says, “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

If this acts as a metaphor for the act that the biblical passage is now being attached to, essentially, the “light” that is shining out of darkness is a light that is one not of “the knowledge of the glory of God”, but one that is making the act of killing more precise.

There is no “light shining” in the shoot-er’s victim’s heart, but, instead, a bullet.

Surely, this is not a kind, godly light that illuminates but a sort of death beam – the last light one might see before total darkness. This seems hardly Christian in its nature.

The whole notion of biblical inscription on machines that are designed not just to assist in killing, but make it almost perfect, seems wholly un-Christian; a religion that says “For all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52) and more importantly, “But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

Though the U.S. military has come under scrutiny for purchasing Trijicon combat rifle sights from because of the biblical inscriptions, the military claims that the scopes do not violate the anti-proselytizing law in place.

Trijicon has been supplying to the military since 1995.

With this topic, it is less about the Trijicon Company for making such hypocritical machines. Rather, the greater question at hand is: why should the United States military be purchasing them?

Trijicon is a private company that picks up contracts to the army. They meet their specifications for design and price and do their jobs.

It is a matter of Capitalism 101 that says as long as there is a demand, business has a right to make and market whatever they want.

So if Trijicon is making combat scopes with verses of Christian Scripture on them, they have every right to sell them to private entities. Blackwater, maybe?

However, individual or private firms don’t have the same obligations toward religion as the state.

Whether the U.S. government should abandon its secular promise by being the chief consumer of these products is another issue.

As a government, the U.S. has the responsibility to hold up the integrity of the United States Constitution – a constitution that makes distinct in its very first amendment the separation of church and state.

Yet taxpayers money is being used to violate one of our core institutions and ideals. The concern with the Trijicon rifle-scopes begs the issue of whether the United States is loyal to the capitalist machine or the U.S. Constitution.

Furthermore, the U.S. military is not just partaking in supporting a blatantly non-secular business, but a Christian business. Though the United States is primarily Christian, (82 percent of Americans are estimated to be Christian), the possibility of having active military using combat scopes with Christian messages inscribed on them is daunting.

President of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, Mikey Weinstein said of the Christian combat scopes, “I don’t have to wonder for a nanosecond how the American public would react if citations from the Koran were being inscribed onto these U.S. armed forces gun sights instead of New Testament citations.”

He also noted that the argument could be made on the part of the Taliban that Americans are Christian crusaders that are invading Muslim countries, with the combat scopes acting as the classic crusader’s shields adorned with a cross.

Though the war in Iraq and Afghanistan is not quite a crusade, the battlefield dynamic is oftentimes a place where men and women hold on to their faith. Because in light of the horrors of war, they’re witnessing, faith is often the only beauty they see. It’s the only thing that they can cling to.

I do not attack those with deep faith. After all, there is no atheist in a foxhole. I attack the violation of the standards they are supposed to be fighting for.

Faith is a deeply personal experience, especially in any combat situation, which is why the U.S. military is myopic in its sole Christian support and further goes on to overstep ethical and constitutional boundaries by explicitly promoting religion in a faction of government.
Hands on Haiti reaches out to students

JANET CAREAGA
Staff Writer

There has been a spotlight on Haiti recently because of the catastrophic earthquake that occurred on Jan. 12.

One organization on campus, Hands On Haiti, is doing its part to make a difference by hosting an event on Jan. 29 called “Positive Vibes.”

The Positive Vibes event will be a forum for students emotionally affected by the earthquake to talk about those memories and what they felt, or to just learn about the beauties of Haiti. Donations for Haiti will also be accepted at the event.

“In the same way that it is relieving to remember about good times with a loved one who passed, we believe that this will lift people’s spirits,” said Marcia Darboze, president of Hands on Haiti.

Unlike many of the other FIU organizations helping Haiti, Hands on Haiti’s mission is to make a difference by traveling there and forming resolutions that will foster lasting progress.

Darboze and Hands on Haiti’s current vice president, Gina Balthazar, both came to FIU as transfer students and were looking for an organization that had an interest in traveling to Haiti.

“There were many community service organizations, but none with a focus on Haiti. There was also the Haitian Student Organization, but their focus was more on unifying the Haitian student body and celebrating the culture,” Darboze said.

Hands on Haiti focuses primarily on health and environmental issues. They are looking to solve the core causes of those problems. For example, they are currently planning on carrying out programs that teach Haitian citizens basic life skills like preventing infectious diseases, CPR and dental hygiene.

The organization is currently planning a trip to Haiti in late summer to volunteer at a clinic in Jacmel, overseen by Service for Peace.

They are also working on becoming a part of the Alternative Breaks program to make Haiti an official site.

Guest lecturer speaks out on animal cruelty

LEONCIO ALVAREZ
Staff Writer

The Wertheim Conservatory became much more than a greenhouse Tuesday night as animal rights activist Gary Yourofsky gave a lecture about veganism and animal slaughtering that may have made some regret their Burger King lunch.

Yourofsky defines vegan as similar to vegetarian, but vegans also refrain from consuming milk, cheese, eggs, honey or any animal product whatsoever. They also don’t wear any animal skins.

For about 25 years, Yourofsky was not vegan. He described wearing leather clothing, like most people, and even fessed up to owning a fur coat at one point. But something that has never changed for him has been his connection with animals.

“Animals are victims, the most oppressed ever,” Yourofsky said. “My goal is simple: All I want to do is reconnect people with animals, awaken some emotions and some feelings and some logic that has been buried and suppressed intentionally by our society.”

Yourofsky believes in that reconnection because he feels we were all once animal rights activists at some point – when we were kids.

“When we were young we used to be in awe of animals. They used to make us laugh, giggle and smile. They made us happy and there was a time when we would do just about anything to make them happy as well,” he said. “If somebody was mean to an animal in front of us we would scream and cry, and that’s because we all understood the difference between right and wrong.”

An extremely graphic video depicting animal cruelty at its peak at different slaughterhouses was then shown. Yourofsky asked the audience to not close their eyes during the video, as he put it, “If it’s not good enough for your eyes, why is it good enough for your stomach?”

According to Yourofsky, humans shouldn’t really be eating animals to the extent that we do. A main point he stressed was how humans are not actually carnivores, we are plant eaters.

“The length of our intestines is seven to 13 times the length of our torso, the same length as all herbivorous animals,” Yourofsky said. “On real meat eaters, it’s only three to six times their torso. They have a short intestinal tract to push through animal proteins – like cholesterol, saturated fats, trans fatty acids – which is why it is impossible for them to digest their arteries.”

At first sight this man seemed a little crazy, but he started to make a lot of sense after a while.

“The No. 1 killer of humans who choose to eat meat, cheese and eggs is heart disease from clogged arteries,” Yourofsky said.

Just in case his words had been able to convince some people to change their eating habits, Yourofsky spoke about some foods available at supermarkets that are accepted by vegans.

“Lightlife has smart bacon made from soy, You fry it like bacon; it looks, smells and tastes just like real bacon. But guess what, not one pig had to suffer and die for this,” Yourofsky said. “Lightlife also has soy chicken and a full line of deli meats. Vegetarian Plus sells citrus and pepper cutlets which are fantastic and Gardenburger has meatloaf, chicken patties and veggie burgers. Nate’s event has marinated meatballs!”

Yourofsky’s personal favorite right now is the artichoke burger by Five Star Foodies.

“If your local grocer doesn’t have these things, then speak up, it’s supply and demand. If they don’t know you want it how are they going to sell it?” Yourofsky said.
**FISTFULS OF TECH**

**eBook reader salvages Apple's disappointing iPad**

Fistfuls of Tech is divided into two sections this week. I wrote a “pre-game” before the Jan. 27 Apple press event and a “post-game,” which was written immediately after.

**PRE-GAME**

Every time an Apple event is on the horizon, I sit and wait with child-like excitement. However, this year Steve Jobs has a lot on the line. Apple’s rumored tablet is all but confirmed and needs to be nothing short of awesome to find a spot in the market.

Let’s face it, a market for a device that rests between an iPhone and a MacBook doesn’t exist, so this thing needs to dispel its own market, something only accomplished by the legendary iPod.

The tablet’s success, if even released, will depend on a myriad of factors. Price, content partnerships and technological feats are just a few of the points that will determine whether this is the next iP (a good thing) or the next Apple TV (a bad thing).

So what are my predictions for this event? A new tablet and new version of the iPhone OS are almost certain. We might also see a possible end of AT&T’s exclusivity agreements over the iPhone, but I am not so sure about that.

People have wanted to get out of AT&T for a while and tap Verizon Wireless’ extensive customer base, which has been contemplating iPhone plans. Anyway, the show is about to start, we’ll see how it goes.

**POST-GAME**

All hail the glorious Apple iPad! Sort of. Steve Jobs finally announced the product that nerds have been clamoring for since the iPhone’s iPod app and the cherry on the sundae of the iPhone’s iPod app and the departure from AT&T.

Apple TV (a bad thing). So what are my predictions for this event?

The pricing of the iPad is competitive, starting at $499, so compared to the Kindle’s $299 price point, it’s not competitive enough.

Sure, the Kindle is by far inferior to the iPad, but for someone who has a laptop and iPhone, it would be a large and slightly questionable purchase.

In the end, the iPad isn’t a massive departure from what we have already seen. As most tech analysts like to say over and over, it doesn’t “shift any paradigms.” It doesn’t multi-task and it doesn’t do anything too crazy. It’s a giant iPhone touch, that’s it.

Will I buy it? Probably. Even though I am a little disappointed with it, I still would like to have an eBook reader and, honestly, this is a far better choice than the Kindle.

Overall, this Apple event was a little underwhelming. I expected to be nothing short of awesome to find a spot in the market.

Fistfuls of Tech is a weekly tech column. Look for it every Friday.

**Date auction to aid Haiti**

**HAITI, page 5**

“This organization is going above and beyond lending a helping hand and actually making a long lasting impact on Haiti,” said Vanessa Coletto, a senior majoring in philosophy.

Their upcoming events include fundraisers and other events where people can donate to fund their mission trip as well as earthquake relief efforts.

On Feb. 26, in collaboration with Sigma Lambda Gamma, they will be hosting a Date Auction where the winners will get to share dinner and a movie.

Hands on Haiti meetings are every other Friday starting Feb. 5 at 5 p.m. in GC 314. For more information, contact Hands on Haiti at handsonhaitiflu@gmail.com.

**Quick Picks**

**MOVIES**

**Extraordinary**

8/10

“V for Vendetta” is a disturbing masterpiece. The film’s story is aboutups and downs through the electromagnetic and international Children’s Crusades. Props to Mr. Depp.

**Foos’ Gold**

7/10

“Foos’ Gold” is not a must-see, but it’s a fun ride through the Amazon’s jungles, and I’m sure about about their journey being genuine and real.

**GAMES**

**Extraordinary Marauders**

5/10

“Extraordinary Marauders” is a must-play, and I’m sure about their journey being genuine and real.

**Music**

**Mass Effect**

Xbox 360

9/10

“Mass Effect” is a fantastic game that rocks a true foundation for interactive storytelling. Stan Jones

**Games Scene**

**RICHARD GRIFFIN**

**SUNDAY, JAN. 31**

**ORCHID FESTIVAL**

South Florida’s Winter Orchid Extravaganza

4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Free lectures, classes, plus 15 growers.

**PRO BOWL**

Sun Life Stadium

1 p.m.

Free tickets, classes, plus 15 growers.

**THE FLYING TRAPEZE SCHOOL**

4 - 6 p.m. and 7 - 9 p.m.

**FOOTBALL FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS**

Exhibit opening.

**FISTFULS OF TECH**

**eBook reader salvages Apple’s disappointing iPad**
FIU looks for redemption after last season's sweep vs. Florida Atlantic

WOMEN'S, page 8

playing so many minutes, but I'm trying to do my best," said Mansare. "I don't want to mess up or make mistakes while I'm in the game but it's not my decision to be in the game or on the bench so I'm just trying to do what the coach tells me to do so that I can help my team." Mansare has averaged 5.0 points and 3.2 rebounds in six games, including one start, which came against Arkansas-Little Rock just trying to do what [the coach] tell me to do so that I can help my team.

The lone start proved to be her best game yet as she tallied nine points and nine rebounds in the 52-44 loss. Mansare has chipped in with 3 points and 2.3 assists per game.

Her most successful game so far was on Jan. 17 against Western Kentucky where she scored 10 points and dished out five assists. Head coach Cindy Russo seems to be impressed by the young players, especially Mansage's ability to contribute quickly.

"I'm really happy with [Milsagh's] development," said Russo. "After missing games at the beginning of the season, for her to adjust so well is great. She plays good defense and she fits in well. She helps out and I couldn't be happier.

Although she's happy with the play of her freshmen duo, Russo continues to be frustrated with the lengthy list of injuries the Golden Panthers have accumulated this season.

"We're pretty beat up and it remains to be our biggest problem this season," said Russo. "We have not played one game this year without having two of our major players injured. It's discouraging and frustrating."

The biggest loss this season for the Golden Panthers has been Rakia Rodgers. The sophomore, who has now missed eight games since spraining the MCL in her left knee, went down as the team's leading scorer, and a time frame for her return is unknown, according to Russo and the team's athletic trainer.

"She adds a dimension to our team that we don't have right now and she's irreplaceable," Russo said.

Mansare agrees that Rodgers' injury has been detrimental to the team.

"When Rakia went out it created a big hole in our team," she said. "She's so energetic on the court which helped us a lot. Rebounding, scoring, and even just making the team hyped, she takes care of everybody."

Meanwhile, Marquita Adley is dealing with knee problems and will most likely not play against the Owls this weekend. The forward, who averages 8.8 points and 9.0 rebounds per game, will be a significant loss for FIU's front court.

"If we had all of our best players healthy and on the court at the same time, I think we would be a lot more successful," she said.

"The good thing about this year is that we're going to get these injured players back next year. [Against FAU] we'll have to handle pressure."

"Having the crowd in the game will kill us," Gary said. "We have to keep them out of the game."

"We have to win," Gary said. "Whoever wins the game will have bragging rights for the rest of the season."

[For fans of basketball] a dimension to our team that we don't have right now and it remains to be our biggest problem this season," said Russo. "We have not played one game this year without having two of our major players injured. It's discouraging and frustrating."

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Meanwhile, Marquita Adley is dealing with knee problems and will most likely not play against the Owls this weekend. The forward, who averages 8.8 points and 9.0 rebounds per game, will be a significant loss for FIU's front court.

Adding to the list of injuries is Asia Wilson and Erin Knight. Wilson, a sophomore, has been dealing with a tweaked ankle and her status for Saturday's game is unknown.

Knight, on the other hand, was granted a medical redshirt after dealing with pain in her back and not playing this entire season as a freshman.

With the injuries lurking, Russo made it a clear point that the team must continue to play hard, especially against Florida Atlantic, a team that beat FIU twice last season.

"If we had all of our best players healthy and on the court at the same time, I think we would be a lot more successful," she said.

"The good thing about this year is that we're going to get these injured players back next year. [Against FAU] we'll have to handle pressure."

"Having the crowd in the game will kill us," Gary said. "We have to keep them out of the game."

"We have to win," Gary said. "Whoever wins the game will have bragging rights for the rest of the season."
Golden Panthers gear up for ITA championship qualifiers

SPENCER MANLEY
Contributing Writer

No matter what happens, someone is going to take home their first loss of the season on Friday as FIU (2-0) will be going up against Southern Methodist University (4-0) in their first match of the ITA Indoor Qualifiers in Gainesville, Fla.

“We are going in against a tough competitor who has obviously done well in their past season,” said FIU coach Melissa Applebaum.

The SMU Mustangs, currently ranked No. 23 in the country, are coming off of a doubleheader in which they defeated Louisiana Tech and Texas State in the same day. SMU has won 20 of their 21 points through four matches.

This weekend will be the qualifier to the ITA Indoor Championships, to be held from Feb. 11-14.

“We are playing indoors so it’s a really different situation,” said Maria José Vallasciani. “You have to adapt.”

The No. 32 Panthers are accustomed to playing on their outdoor courts under the Miami skies, but they will have to adjust to hardwood floors in a gymnasium.

“It’s a little quicker than outside,” said Priscilla Castillo, a senior on the team.

If the Panthers defeat SMU, they will be facing either No. 24 Brigham Young University or No. 8 University of Florida. The Gators would be the highest ranked opponent the Golden Panthers have played since they lost to No. 6 Miami in the NCAA Coral Gables Regional to end last season.

The Golden Panthers defeated Florida Atlantic and Troy at home to start the season, but will not return to FIU until they match up with Boston College on Feb. 3.

“It starts with SMU. This weekend, we have to get past SMU. Then we’ll probably have UF and they’re pretty tough,” Vallasciani explained.

Injuries continue to handicap team late in season

STEPHANIE GABRIEL
Asst. Sports Director

The FIU women’s basketball team has trusted a pair of freshmen to be frequent contributors in their first season as Golden Panthers.

Carmen Miloglav and Finda Mansare were unable to play in the first nine games of the season due to eligibility issues, but they’ve since combined for 358 minutes in 11 games.

The young players will look to contribute largely once again when FIU faces Florida Atlantic on Jan. 30 at 5 p.m. in Boca Raton.

“I’m surprised that I’ve been

FIU VS. FAU WOMEN’S
- Time: 5 p.m.
- When: Saturday, Jan. 30
- Where: Florida Atlantic
- Broadcast: WRGP.org