Heat partners with University

MELISSA ACERES
Staff Writer

With the pro basketball season in full session, students at FIU will be tuning up the heat sooner and closer to campus than they think.

In support of the first FIU Take-Over Night with the Miami Heat, the FIU Foundation is hosting a pep rally at both the Modesto Maidique Campus on Feb. 17 and Biscayne Bay Campus on Feb. 24, from 12 - 2 p.m. on both days.

Students will be able to purchase discounted tickets for the game March 14 against the Philadelphia 76ers.

“We’re just trying to get the students to go out there and see that this is a great opportunity to get together, to show just how dedicated you are to the school,” said development assistant of University Advancement, Marla Baldomero.

Through the purchase of each ticket, a portion of the funds will be used to support the First Generation Scholarship Fund. They will also receive free give-aways at the Graham Center Pit while getting a chance to meet the Heat Dancers and their mascot, Burnie.

“This event [Take-Over Night] Heat, page 3

NEWLYWEDS

Lecture series spotlights exiles, literature

ALEXANDRA CAMEJO
Contributing Writer

FIU’s newest certificate program in exile studies is aiming to tackle stimulating questions surrounding the exile community, with its ongoing Exile and Literature Lecture Series.

All throughout the Spring semester, a series of lectures, headed by the Exiles Studies Certificate Program, will educate students on the struggle and journeys faced by exiles.

As a new component of FIU’s global learning initiative, this four-part series focuses on a global experience — transplantation, or relocation to a new culture, a new world.

These lectures can provide a unique opportunity for those personally attached to the exile community to learn about the lives of other immigrants but particularly to learn more about their own journey.

At least this is the hope of Asher Milbauer, director of the ESCP and main proponent of the lectures.

Having immigrated to the United States from the former Soviet Union, Milbauer was fascinated by the idea of living in a city and working at a university built and run by exiles.

His fascination propelled him to recently head start the ESCP.

“The history of humanity is the history of exile. In order to understand the world today we need to understand the world of a stranger,” Milbauer said.

By focusing on what it means to be an exile — experiencing loss of home and identity, this interdisciplinary program is the starting point for what is hoped to be a nationally recognized center of exile study.

“There really is no other program focused on the issue,” said James Sutton, the chair of the FIU English department.

“But we all live on this planet and are linked by different experiences and understandings. This program is an opportunity for students to really understand what it means to be a stranger in a strange land.”

The Age of Exile

Panel on Exile and the Academy

The Student Government at Modesto Maidique Campus senate approved two elections committee members and amendments to the elections code in their Feb. 15 meeting.

Monique Rodriguez and Alessia Torres were both confirmed at the beginning of the meeting, joining Miriam Blasco and Elections Commissioner Christy Flores on the newly appointed committee.

Rodriguez outlined the committee’s goal to bring 3,100 students to the polls this election by focusing on marketing the event through flyers, T-shirts, slogans and the use of a Facebook group.

Rodriguez added that the committee plans on utilizing the newly installed televisions downstairs to market the elections as well.

Torres, a freshman, addressed the senate’s questions regarding the board’s preparedness for possible problems that would arise, mirroring last year’s elections problems.

She responded by saying that the committee had “planned on different solutions for different [possible] occa-

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SGA, page 1

Elections committee aims to bring 3,100 to the polls

The committee had "planned on different solutions for different (possible) occasions," but she did not go into detail.

Rodriguez was confirmed through an attendance vote made up of 20 yay and five nay votes and Torres was confirmed unanimously through acclamation.

The SGC-MMC senate also deliberated on and passed a reform on SGC-MMC elections code, named the "Student Democracy Act of 2010."

Among the changes passed include the correction of grammar and syntax errors, the incorporation of the elections code into the SGC-MMC statutes, and the provisioning of a vice-elections commissioner to replace an outgoing elections commissioner.

The bill would also add two new members to the elections committee, raising the number of members from three to five.

SGC-MMC President Anthony Rionda told the senate later in the meeting that he would work with Flores to nominate two additional elections committee members for senate approval by Feb. 17.

According to the newly changed elections code, a vice-commissioner will fill a possible vacancy in the elections commissioner position until one can be elected and confirmed by the senate.

The senate's deliberations regarding the bill for the revised elections code also included the power of the judiciary to review the elections board.

According to the bill, no later than two months previous to the day of elections, the judiciary must review the elections committee "to ensure that he or she is living up to the responsibilities."

Rionda interjected during deliberations, saying that this measure was "for posterity's sake" as the deadline for judicial review of this year's elections committee has passed by approximately two weeks.

The senate also discussed a clause in the elections code, which would prevent someone who was previously impeached from a student government office to run.

"Five people shouldn't determine who can run," said Senator at Large Yuniel Molina.

The specific amendment ultimately went to vote and was not removed from the elections code.

The bill was passed by attendance vote, 23 yay and two nay votes.

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Series aims to educate, motivate attendees

ESCP, page 1

FIU.

As a module for the certificate program, FIU is currently hosting a four-part lecture series that will be given by some authors focused on the implications of being an exile.

Carol Rittner, from the Catholic order of the Religious Sisters of Mercy, gave the first of the four lectures, "Exile, Holocaust and Genocide," on Jan. 25.

She spoke to the more than 200 attendees and mainly focused on the effects of the most recent genocides in Rwanda and Yugoslavia.

Rittner discussed the unfortunate engine that has driven so many into exile – not just physical dislocation but emotional as well.

Although this lecture series is meant to educate, it is the hope of both Milbauer and Stinton that it will also inspire those interested in exile studies and literature with exile history to pursue the ESCP.

"The ESCP has already attracted strong interest across the campus and, in the years to come, I have no doubt it will develop a national and international reputation reflecting the exceptional rigor of the program and the outstanding quality of its faculty and students," said Michael Gillespie, the speaker at the "Exile and Creativity: James Joyce and the Problem of Exile" lecture on Feb. 15.

His lecture centered around the contradicting yet realistic feelings of nostalgia and animosity that conflicts an exile.

Gillespie focused on the evaluation of the works of James Joyce.

"Discuss how an awareness of these two attitudes enhances one's understanding of specific stories and of the collection as a whole," Gillespie said.

The upcoming lecture, "The Age of Exile," given by esteemed FIU Cuban-American professor Gustavo Perez Firmat will discuss the life and journey of an intellectual Cuban exile in America.

The final lecture, "Panel on Exile and the Academy," will involve a panel of nationally renowned scholars on the subject of exile, and chaired by Milbauer himself.

While many speakers are still confirming, Martin Tucker from Long Island University, Uva de Aragon from FIU – a noted novelist and social director of the Cuban Research Institute, and Guy Stern, a retired professor, will join Milbauer in questioning the lack of generosity from the democratic U.S. toward intellectual immigrants.

By providing an insight into the journey of an educated exile, Milbauer wants this entire series to explore why an exile's dislocation from home results in creativity and intellectualism.

The ESCP along with the Exile and Literature Lecture Series hopes to provide a program that not only educates but sparks interest in the minds of FIU students.

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Taiwan Discovered:

In Place and Time

On Friday, February 19, 2010 discover the world of Taiwanese contemporary artists. Taiwan’s artists are exploring different approaches and developing their own unique styles through a wide variety of media.

Be sure to join us for the opening reception on February 19 at 6 p.m.

The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum

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Free and open to the public. Donations are appreciated.
Two University law students were selected to represent five victims in a civil lawsuit against Chuckie Taylor, the former Liberian dictator.

Following the 2008 criminal court case, the College of Law Carlos A. Covino, and the University’s Washington College of Law, which is known as the American Anti-Terrorism Unit, according to the press release.

The civil trial seeking monetary damages for the victims lasted five days in total, beginning Dec. 15. The student lawyers were Michelle Gonzalez and Elia Covino.

In the criminal case against him, he was found guilty of severe human rights abuses against innocent individuals and was sentenced to 97 years in prison, Gonzalez stated.

“The victims have finally had their day in court in this case. It also is amazing that our student lawyers were able to defeat in civil court someone who was once so feared,” Elder said.

Gonzalez and Covino explained how important it was to them to give their clients what they deserved.

“They had taken a human rights law class through American University’s Washington College of Law in the summer of 2008 during which my professor had alerted me to the fact that the case was being tried in October of that year,” Covino said.

Eight students had participated in this specific civil trial concerning Taylor. Covino and Gonzalez were picked based on their strong interest and familiarity with the case.

In the end, Covino and Gonzalez were able to defeat Taylor in this civil matter. They won $22 million in damages for their clients.

Assistant Clinical Professor Troy Elder explained how proud he was of his students at the conclusion of the case.

“The victims have finally had their day in court in this case. It also is amazing that our student lawyers were able to defeat in civil court someone who was once so feared,” Elder said.

Gonzalez and Covino explained how important it was to them to give their clients what they deserved.

“This is that the students, faculty and administration had wanted, which is that the students, faculty and administration are really getting involved.”

Established in 1969, the FIU Foundation is a nonprofit corporation with 40 members, currently serving under Executive Director Robert Conrad, that is responsible for receiving and administering private gifts to the University for its scientific, educational and charitable advancement.

Through their oversight of the funds, the Foundation allocates a number of the donations toward scholarships for incoming students.

Many foundation members serve on the advisory boards of the colleges that they graduated from, since many of them are FIU alumni.

The connection between the Foundation and the schools the colleges’ needs to be recognized at an administrative level and the members to stay in touch with new programs that would need attention.

On top of everything, they have roles as University ambassadors; sharing the University’s needs as well as hearing the needs of the community.

“You really have been able to accomplish what you wanted, which is that the students, faculty and administration are really getting involved.”

Students get a chance to meet Miami Heat dancers at pep rally

Miami Beach man was sent to the hospital with a broken neck and back after taking part in a dispute over a tomato.

According to the Sun-Sentinel, Robert Lerner, 44, was on his way to Redland for a photo shoot with his 10-year-old daughter just after 9 a.m. on Jan. 28 when he pulled over in a groove between Southwest 172nd and 177th avenues in order to pick out a tomato. Just then, a middle-aged white man, standing 5-foot-9 with light-colored, salt-and-pepper hair, pulled up in their car and asked them to leave.

The driver of the car, who was described as white and having a white beard, pulled out a knife and threatened the two.

Lerner pulled over in a grove between Southwest 172nd and 177th avenues in order to pick out a tomato.

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MELODY REGALADO
Staff Writer

During a Valentine’s Day-themed celebration, a new Mr. and Ms. Bay Vista were crowned on Feb. 12 in the Bay Vista Housing lounge at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

Bay Vista Hall residents submitted their nominees for the title. However, the pageant had been rescheduled from Feb. 9 to Feb. 12 due to the Bay Vista Housing Forum hall on the original date.

As a result, some of the candidates who were nominated dropped out because they were no longer available to compete.

Angelique Pino, a junior and education major, and Christian Poole, a junior in hospitality management, were named the winners by default.

“I’m honored that so many people think so highly of me,” said Pino of winning. “I would like to represent all the history geeks and this campus in a higher manner.”

This annual event is sponsored by the Residence Hall Association, which allows elected student residents to play an active role in the activities and issues that affect their particular halls. The pageant highlights students that best represent not only their residence halls, but also the campus as a whole.

“Each of the housing council hosts a Mr. and Ms. Housing Pageant at their respective housing units, in which male and female residents from each hall compete for the title within their halls. Contestants are required to have a minimum 2.5 GPA and cannot be members of the Council Executive Board or serve as resident assistants.

The pageants typically include each contestant introducing themselves, showcasing a talent, answering questions, and modeling their casual and formal wear.

Students from housing on both campuses will go on to compete against each other for the title of Mr. and Ms. Housing on Feb. 18.

Posle, however, is unable to compete in the upcoming because of previous engagements. Antonio Hopkins, a freshman environmental engineering major, will serve as his backup and could not be reached for comment.

“It’s a good opportunity for students to interact with each other and get both campuses closer together,” Salas said.

MELODY REGALADO/The Beacon

<cite>Angeline Pino struts her stuff as she happily accepts the title of Ms. Bay Vista on Feb. 12.</cite>

Proxy voting prohibited by constitution, state

MAUREEN NINO
Asst. News Director

After reviewing the procedures outlined in the Student Government Association constitution, the Biscayne Bay Campus Student Government senate was denied the ability to anonymously vote during their Feb. 15 meeting.

Nickolay Chikishev, SGC-BBC senator and speaker of the senate, announced the need for anonymous voting during the Feb. 9 senate meeting.

“In my consumer behavior class I watched a video about the Asch effect. I think we may have encountered that problem here a couple of times,” he said.

The Asch effect was demonstrated in a 1951 experiment conducted by Solomon Asch in which those being observed felt the need to agree with a group on the size of a line, even though they knew the majority was incorrect.

According to Chikishev, people feel pressured into voting a specific way on any given issue despite their personal stance and conform to the majority vote about 30 percent of the time, even if the data is completely wrong.

SGC-BBC Arts and Science Senator Gregory Jean-Baptiste, agrees and feels that the senate has encountered this problem while deliberating on heavy issues.

“I don’t want to give any names but I remember seeing one person who in the beginning of a decision would passionately say ‘no’ and then when everybody voted, their hands were raised for the ‘yes’ vote. It’s weird because the person was the one voting ‘no’ and made a big fuss about it.”

However, Zahra Arbabi Aki, SGC-BBC lower division senator, believes senators should stand strongly by their votes.

“I agree, but we are senators, which means we are the voice of students so we should be able to speak our voice strongly and stand for what we believe,” she said.

Chikishev himself admits to feeling pressured at times, but suggests anonymous or proxy voting could be helpful during important deliberations.

“On important and controversial voting I think we should use anonymous voting. Meaning we can discuss it and give your opinion but at the end give an anonymous vote. Only the chairperson will see it,” he said.

According to Rafael Zapata, SGC-BBC advisor, this kind of voting is not allowed and would conflict with the Florida Sunshine Law, found in the Florida Statutes.

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“It is stated in the sunshine state law that we need to be transparent,” he said.

Chikishev, however, argues that anonymous voting would only eliminate pressure from other council members, but that final votes would still be announced.

“We will not be able to continue with the procedure since it violates the SGA constitution, according to Tanha Dil, SGC-BBC justice.

In Article IV, Legislative Branch, Section 9 it states that voting in secret ballot is prohibited, unless stated otherwise in the statutes.

“As of right now it can’t be done,” Dil said.

JOIN OUR STAFF!

The BEACON is always looking for talented and reliable individuals to join the staff. If you have an interest in writing, photography or even grammar, don’t be shy.

Stop by one of our offices located in GC 210 and WUC 124.
You always have to deal with losing players. It is a reality of the college game, as much as four hour long practices and exams on game day. It’s just something you have to deal with.

But rarely does a team lose as much as FIU did from one year to the next. Looking at the numbers, the team lost:

• 56% of the team’s home runs.
• 32% of their runs scored.
• 42% of their runs batted in.
• 77 innings of a 3.74 ERA.

And not to mention maybe the single best hitter in the history of the program and one of the top hitters in all of college baseball last season.

The common thread when anyone has discussed the 2010 FIU baseball team has been how do you make up for the losses of Tyler Townsend, Ryan Mollica, Steven Stropp, one third of your starters in the field, plus super utility outfielder Greg Waddell, who led the team in hitting, and Tom Ebert, arguably the team’s top starter last year.

It is natural to look to their replacements on the field to make up the deficit. Guys like Raiko Alfonso, taking over everyday duties at second in Mollica’s absence, are going to be looked to for production, and they’ll be expected to produce right away.

But when you look at this team, it isn’t one or two players who will be able to replace the production of guys like Mollica and Townsend.

For this team to be successful, production will have to come from the aggregate.

The entire lineup will have to take a step forward if they are going to be able to fulfill the expectations placed on them following last season’s 4th place finish in the conference.

Head coach Turtle Thomas has proven himself to be maybe the best hiring of Athletic Director Pete Garcia’s tenure, and it is because he has taken a once proud program that had fallen on hard times, and pushed it to the brink of returning to it’s former glory. His strength as a recruiter is his biggest weapon, and the depth of this team is a testament to his ability to construct a roster.

While last season’s team had just two seniors on the roster, this year’s team has six, led by second year JUCO transfers Scott Rembisz and Tim Jobe.

Rembisz, last season’s number one starter, is expected to be one of the top pitchers in the conference all year, after he faded a bit down the stretch last year.

Jobe, a first team preseason all conference choice at first base, is expected to pick up some of the slack from Townsend’s departure. His .562 slugging percentage was second only to Townsend on last year’s club amongst hitters with at least 100 ABs, and as a senior he is expected to produce at an even higher level.

However, the Golden Panthers will need to see an improvement across the board in order to live up to and surpass the high expectations for this year.

Thomas has built a deep, strong team that, while maybe lacking some of the big productions guys from last season, should be more balanced than last year’s, a flaw which caught up to the team in the conference tournament when they were let down by a lack of timely hits and a pitching staff that hit the wall.

For this season to be a success, the Golden Panthers will need that deep, experienced roster to make a true run in the conference tournament that puts them on the cusp of surpassing perennial powerhouse Western Kentucky and Middle Tennessee.

If they can do that, they won’t miss anyone from last year’s team.
JOEL DELGADO
Asst. Sports Director

When it comes to baseball, not everything goes according to plan.
Lineup changes from year to year are simply a part of the game, a fact that coaches have to deal with and find a way to make the proper adjustments.

But the adjustments Coach Turtle Thomas has had to make this past offseason have been substantial, and when fans come out on Feb. 19 for the season opener they will notice a few big pieces from last season’s breakout season missing.

With a number of key contributors on the 2009 roster not returning to the field this spring, FIU has had to find both outside and inside its ranks to try and fill the substantial gaps left behind.

With offensive power hitter Tyler Townsend bypassing his senior season to go to the majors along with starting pitcher Tom Ebert, part of the graduation of second baseman Ryan Motilla and catcher Bryan Stropp, the Golden Panthers have a lot of cracks to fill.

But the squad is confident that they have the right pieces in place to field a competitive team throughout the spring. Coaches across the conference believe FIU is a team to watch out for. Despite the offensive losses, the Panthers were voted to finish third in the SBC Preseason Coaches’ Poll.

“We are trying to get better each year that goes by,” said Thomas, who enjoyed last third season as FIU head coach. “It’s not going to sit there and say we need to finish first in the conference at this or that.”

HOLES IN THE OFFENSE

One of the players that will look to fill these gaps is outfielder Tim Jobe, who belted 10 home runs and 40 runs batted in and 15 doubles. But Thomas says that it is going to take a collective effort by the team, rather than improved play by any one individual player, to replace the immediate contributors to deliver this season.

“I don’t know if anybody can replace a Tyler Townsend,” said Thomas. “I think the whole team has to step up and improve, put a few more offensive statistics across the board, and everybody takes a little bit of the loss of those players. The whole team has to do it.”

PROJECTED LINE UP

1. Junior Arrigo, SS
2. Pablo Bermudez, LF
3. Mike Martinez, RF
4. Tim Jobe, DH
5. Rudy Flores, 1B
6. Rasko Allerson, 2B
7. Jeremy Patton, 3B
8. Sean Rolly, C
9. Lomer Goy, CF

PROJECTED ROTATION

1. Scott Rambiez, RHP
2. R.J. Fondex, LHP
3. Corey Polizzano, LHP
4. Mike Martinez, RF
5. Tim Jobe, DH
6. Rudy Flores, 1B
7. Jeremy Patton, 3B
8. Sean Rolly, C
9. Lomer Goy, CF

Asst. Sports Director

In addition to losing Ebert, the Panthers lost highly regarded pitcher Miguel Mejia, who also decided to make the jump to the next level after signing a free agent deal with the Detroit Tigers. Mejia was expected to bolster the starting rotation, but now that responsibility falls on sophomore R.J. Fondex.

Fondex will have to step up in a role that Ebert thrived in, throwing 77 innings at a 3.74 ERA last season.

“Tom Ebert is a good man, and he did a good job for us last year,” said Thomas. “And you wish you have us with us still.”

Fondex spent most of his time coming out of the bullpen last season as a freshman, but made seven starts in 2009, mostly during weekend matchups. Overall, the left-hander compiled a 4.72 record with a 4.06 ERA, good for third on the team for those who pitched a minimum of two games. His seven victories were a team-high and will join senior pitchers Scott Rambiez and Corey Polizzano.

“We have some experience on that pitching staff,” said Thomas. “It’s one of the biggest strengths on our team.”

DEVELOPING DEFENSE

In addition to pitching, the defense has been emphasized as an area that needs improvement if the Panthers are expected to move deeper into the postseason. The FIU defense was a team-high 10 errors and had a .956 fielding percentage, which put the Panthers near the bottom of the conference in defense.

“Defensively, we struggled a bit last season,” said Thomas. “We’ve been working really hard on that aspect of the game and that’ll make a big impact. As long as we’re sound [on defense] and however we do on the mound will hopefully determine our outcome.”

It has been a long offseason for many of these players and they are looking forward to facing that first pitch, folding their game uniform ball and throwing that first strike.

“Honestly, really think they’re quite ready, but I know the players are ready to play,” said Thomas. “They’re tired of training, they’re tired of practicing; they’re ready to see another team in the other dugout with different colored uniforms on. They’re ready to play.”
Shortstop Arrojo leads the Golden Panthers his way

JONATHAN RAMOS
Sports Director

Entering his senior season, FIU shortstop Junior Arrojo doesn’t have to do so much to earn the respect of his fans, coaches and peers. That is especially true with the senior’s teammates.

“There is no doubt. When our players voted for team captains, Junior Arrojo and Cory Poliziano, it was a unanimous pick,” FIU coach Turtle Thomas said. “That shows the respect that’s there.”

Along with Poliziano, a fellow senior, Arrojo will be a centerpiece of the Golden Panthers puzzle in 2010.

It wasn’t long ago, however, that Arrojo was a struggling underclassman who seemed overwhelmed at the Division I level. Arrojo, who assumed a role as a starter since his freshman season, had been batting average that hovered below .250 in his first two seasons. Arrojo hit zero home runs during the stretch, and made 39 errors en route to a sub par fielding percentage.

But when Arrojo found his footing as a lefthander last season, the Golden Panthers offense took off. Arrojo enjoyed career highs in almost every category last season while infusing athleticism into an FIU team that went 34-23, a 14-game improvement. For the former Miami Southridge standout, it wasn’t a matter of drastically improving his skills. It was about a mental makeup checkup.

“My first two years I put too much pressure on myself,” he said. “I tell the young guys, ‘Don’t put too much pressure on yourself. Just have fun.’”

Arrojo’s mindset began to change one afternoon during a practice in 2008 when Arrojo, mired in a slump, had an extensive talk with Thomas.

“All in my head”

“He talked to me in the cages,” Arrojo said. “He told me it was all in my head and that I had to believe in me to be a great player.”

Thomas might want to have these talks with Arrojo more often. Arrojo hit .316 with a .427 on base percentage in 2009. The budding infielder batted with confidence as his team improved.

“The thing that held him back from being that guy was the mental confidence,” Thomas said. “He might have not even known that he fit in at this level. I tried to explain to him that he has the tools to be a great shortstop at this level.”

Thomas also helped Arrojo’s development by turning him loose on the bases.

After a solid summer in which Arrojo displayed his ability to run, Thomas gave him the green light to steal bases. The result was a career best 23 steals, good for second in the Sun Belt conference.

SWAG SLIDE

Coming into this season, Arrojo is looking to pass on his confidence to his teammates.

“For a team on the cup of success, being picked to finish third in the conference, simply competing isn’t enough, even in February scoring.”

“Every pitcher sometimes throws it over the plate on 0-2, and doesn’t mean to,” he said. “It happens. But as I sometimes tell them, I can go out and get someone driving a bus out there to try.”

Thomas believes his pitchers should be able to execute at this point.

“They are college baseball players on a Division I team, they’ve got to be able to locate their stuff and get the job done,” said Thomas. “Because everybody’s trying.”

Golden Panthers look to lock down pen

For FIU head baseball coach Turtle Thomas, bullpen success is all about depth. For the first two seasons of his tenure, the Golden Panthers have had something of a bare cupboard when it came to relief pitching, and it became a problem spot when it came to closing games out.

But now, Thomas believes he has the depth to compete at the highest level.

“I think that we have more capable pitchers in our bullpen than we’ve ever had in two years that I’ve been here,” said Thomas. “I think we have four or five good arms that can go out there and potentially shut the other team down.”

GETTING DEEPER

Senior Eric Berkowitz returns as the most successful returning member of the FIU bullpen. And he posted more than a hit per inning in 41.2 innings last season. Clearly an improvement is in order.

“I’ve worked on staying mentally focused on not trying too hard,” said Berkowitz. “Last year I tried too hard and suffered from it.”

For FIU head coach Turtle Thomas, building pitching depth has been the biggest challenge since he assumed the team’s coaching job in 2006.

“When Garcia is not available. Berkowitz’s demeanor on the mound is perhaps what suits him best to the closer’s role, which requires pitching in those higher leverage situations with the game on the line.

“He’s pretty damn good. It might not know when he’ll pitch, or he might go a few days without pitching, being mentally focused and prepared are key.”

“Pitching coach Sean Allen really emphasized visualizing each pitch before you throw,” said Garcia. “For Thomas, however, hard work and preparation aren’t enough if the results aren’t up to par.”

One thing in particular that Thomas emphasized is not giving up hits when the pitcher is up 0-2 in the count.

“I worked on not giving up 0-2 hits,” said Berkowitz. “Turtle’s not a fan of that.”

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BEACON FILE PHOTO
Florida program aims to decrease juvenile inmates

Nigel Thomas was what authorities call a “status offender” as a teen, the oldest of five children in a Tampa family struggling to make ends meet. He hadn’t committed a crime, but he was showing signs he might be headed that way. He’d skip school, hang out with the wrong crowd, and disobey his parents. He hadn’t, though, run away from home or been tossed out of it — other typical status offenses.

Thomas, now 20, said his attitude began turning around after only three or four days in a program that made Florida a national leader in early intervention.

“It was a pretty good wake up call,” said Thomas, now a college student and YMCA staffer. “I’ve never been arrested, never had a ticket.

“The Children in Need of Services/Families in Need of Services, or CINS/FINS, program has drawn national accolades. By including counseling, parental involvement and, when necessary, shelter, it’s designed to keep families together and prevent troubled children from becoming criminals, saving taxpayers millions.

About 85 percent of those who spend time at a CINS/FINS shelter — typically two weeks — do not commit a crime within six months of being released, according to the state. Other features are that Florida’s program is nationwide, provides a cooling off period at the shelters and offers immediate crisis response. “In some states it can take weeks for status offenders to get attention and by then a family crisis can escalate”, said Annie Salsich, youth justice director for the Vera Institute of Justice in New York City, which has studied the program.

About 95 percent of children in the program are voluntary participants — that’s the Families in Need of Services portion of the program — often after being referred by schools or police. The rest come through court orders — the Children in Need of Services part — for more difficult cases such as Tami Harrison’s 17-year-old son.

When he was participating in the program, “they were very, very, very good at keeping him out of trouble,” Harrison said.

Eventually, though, he was arrested for stealing his grandmother’s car on a dare, Harrison said. Ultimately, though, a judge put him on probation for a year at a ranch for troubled youth founded by the Florida Sheriffs Association. Harrison said she’s already seen a lot of changes in her son after just two months. If he successfully completes his probation he’ll have a clean record.

She credits CINS/FINS with helping him get that deal.

“Without that, he’d have ended up on the street somewhere,” Harrison said. “I have absolutely no doubt about that.”

TALK TO ME

University President Mark B. Rosenberg addresses the audience during the BBC Town Hall Meeting held on Feb. 9 in the Mary Ann Wolfe Theater.

Florida program aims to decrease juvenile inmates

BILL KACZOR
Associated Press Writer

Students and faculty staff can now get the information they need in order to stay healthy right here at the bay.

The Biscayne Bay Campus Health and Wellness Center now offers a Fitness Assessment Program open to students, faculty and staff.

“The goal of the program is to offer the FIU community a method of measuring their fitness levels in order to develop a personal fitness plan that will improve overall health and wellness,” said Dona Walcott, assistant director of University Health Services.

“We are hoping to increase awareness of healthy lifestyles,” said Wellness Assistant Andres Bermeo.

According to Walcott, the assessment is done by way of a body-scanning machine called Trifit by Polar.

“It is used to assess an individual’s fitness level by measuring weight, height, body mass index, body composition, flexibility, bicep strength and cardiovascular strength,” she said.

“The service is free for students and $40 for faculty and staff, and takes approximately 30 minutes.”

The assessments are available on Thursdays and Fridays by appointment.

After receiving the results, those that undergo the assessment may receive a suggested meal plan and exercise regimen at the Fitness Center according to their results.

According to Walcott, the assessment program is not a completely new concept.

“The BBC Wellness Center offered Trifit assessments in previous years, but the program was temporarily discontinued until it could be redeveloped,” she said.

According to Bermeo, this time the fitness assessment program will be a permanent part of the Wellness Center.

“It is here to stay,” Bermeo said.

The competitors in the weight loss challenge are also using the fitness assessment program to keep tabs on their advancement.

“We track their progress in terms of weight loss and body fat percentage,” Bermeo said.

According to Walcott, the program has “gained overwhelming attention” since it started in October 2009. Bermeo, who performs the assessments, agrees.

“It’s catching on big time,” Bermeo said.

According to Walcott, the fitness assessment program is meant to be an ongoing process.

“Follow-up is provided to help individuals gauge their progress and learn to maintain healthy habits in the areas of nutrition and exercise,” she said.

Bermeo has seen this concept put into action firsthand.

“Students are coming in all the time, asking questions about how they can improve [their health].”

The ultimate goal of the program, according to Walcott, is the overall improvement of health among the University.

“It is hoped that FIU students, faculty and staff, as a community, will be encouraged to adopt proper health maintenance habits,” she said.

To schedule an appointment, call The BBC Wellness Center at (305) 919-5620, ext. 4.
Marijuana restrictions getting lots of laughs

CHRISTOPHER ROMAGUERA Contributing Writer

In late January, New Jersey became the 14th state to legalize marijuana for medicinal purposes. The decision by the New Jersey legislature catapulted the seemingly endless debate back into the public spotlight. The polarizing views remain the same between right and left; conservatives screaming at the top of their lungs, while liberals are telling them to chill out.

Background checks still require the amounts of the drug that can be prescribed over a month are still uncertain. However, in New Jersey plans to keep marijuana use in check, and maybe more importantly, quell the fears of conservatives.

Yet still, the upsurge of conservatives can be heard at all ends of a progressive movement, and medicinal marijuana is no different. Assembly member John Rooney, goes on saying, “There are other drugs. There are many ways to relieve pain.” This logical fallacy is hilarious. We all know that Xanax and all those lovely drugs have no side effects and come from blewvax; you know, besides increasing dependency and raising suicide rates of those who use it.

In 2002, the U.S. Government Accountability Office listed just a few diseases that can be treated with marijuana: Alzheimer’s, Crohn’s disease and glaucoma. Marijuana can relieve headaches and arthritis pains without the adverse effects of most prescription drugs. So, why are we still debating this issue?

It seems to be a state’s right to choose a decision on this issue. In sure conservative groups would agree to this as well.

The Fraternal Order of Police claimed that the clinics can distribute the drug may become targets of robbery by those who wish to rob them, and we would rather not deal with that idea.

I think these arguments are mostly posturing, and if they mostly hold true, we would rather not deal with them.

The real issue is that these conservatives are afraid that with each state that passes a law allowing medicinal mari-juana use, that we as a nation are getting closer to decrimi-nalizing, or completely legalizing marijuana.

Let me give a little word of wisdom to an un-mined college student, “They’re right. And the world will carry on.”

Marijuana compares favorably to any anti-depres-sant that’s being given away like candy on Halloween, or the legalized depressant, alcohol. While I may not agree with the spike in fast food sales, that’s about the worst thing marijuana is going to cause.

This is a plan that isn’t being utilized properly, medically, industrially, and taxing marijuana may not be a bad source of income, considering the not so small amounts of people who are said to smoke, despite being illegal, and very bad for you. In the end, during the Great Depression, one of the few laws repealed was the prohibition of alcohol.

Well times are rough once again, for the government and for its people. Paying a little more to our government so I can enjoy a nice take out on the beach sounds like a good compromise to me.

SQA has right to debate K-12 reform in Florida

DEAN WILLIAMS Staff Writer

No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 is a clear display of how federal laws can reform and improve the educational system. At the core of the law is the theory that standards-based educational reform would result in standards achievement.

Increasing accountability, gauging student achievement through standardized testing, and the establishment of Academic Yearly Progress, NCLB are often viewed by many as shifting the responsibility of achievement from students to teachers and institutions themselves.

In southern Florida, in particular, many students adopt English as a second language and often come from educational systems that are comparatively different from that of the American model. This undoubtedly has relevance to the State University System.

Much research has been conducted and proves that the key in achieving success at the University level rests in how a student is prepared throughout K-12 education.

Increased elementary and secondary school preparation make the transition to higher education seamless.

A referendum on improving K-12 education came before the Student Government Council at Modesto Maidique Campus senate twice. In the first instance, the language of the referendum was questioned, as it seemed as to place all the responsibility of educating students on teachers.

In the second presentation of the refer-endum, the wording was changed so that one factor in a child’s educational achieve-ment was the quality of his teachers.

During the debate, the student sena-tors also discussed and agreed that parent involvement and student participation weighed heavily on a student’s academic success.

Some may see SQA’s involvement in this as futile. Why should the student government interject in an issue where they may not be able to heavily influence the outcome?

To the contrary, student involvement in this process is necessary. Laws like NCLB directly affect students; how we are taught and how our success is gauged.

Student involvement in the process is integral because of the perceived benefits of an education while the shortcomings of the educational system provide lawmakers with a practical look at the system, balancing the theoretical aspects of how the system should work.

More importantly, students will be held to these standards. Regardless of whether teachers or institutions provide the resources for students to achieve academic success, the student bears equal responsibility and has much to gain from academic achievement.

Some of the student senators voiced concerns over the seemingly increased emphasis placed on educational profes-sionals to ensure a student’s academic success, and this a valid argument.

As previously mentioned, teachers, insti-tutes and the student each bear an equal responsibility in ensuring the student’s success.

Managing a student’s education is by no means a task that one law or referendum will solve. It will take a collective effort in order to achieve this end.

Knowing this, it is therefore imperative that student government comes to a conclu-sion on this referendum that will give state lawmakers a practical viewpoint to imple-ment and reform K-12 education.

War is not a solution despite recent lecturer’s beliefs

NEDA GHOMESHI Staff Writer

During a recent Tuesday Times Round-table, Dr. Marifel Perez-Stable lectured in an attempt to define the justice behind our war on terrorism. She began the lecture by summarizing the answer is straight and simple: concerning our nation’s current involve-ment in two wars. I don’t think war is just. I think that often, in an attempt to solve a problem, governments engage in wars. Within his speech, President Obama explained that “some will kill, and some will be killed.” War undeniably results in the death of innocent people, which in most any civilized society is considered murder. I don’t have to convince anyone that the act of murder is unjustifiable under any circum-stance. I feel the same about war.

Marin Dobladlo, a senior history major and a former marine, shared his experience in Afghanistan with the audience.

“Many times, we [foreign marines] could not tell the difference between Al-Qaeda, Taliban fighters and ordinary citizens,” he said.

This lack of distinction causes many civil-ians to be caught in the middle resulting in unnecessary casualties. This is unjustifiable.

Within the lecture, Dr. Perez-Stable stated, “We compromise ourselves when we don’t live up to our ideals.” I fully agree. Engaging in a war is a compromise. A nation is compromising civic values, money and importantly lives when engaging in a war.

The question she posed was: “How can we conduct this [war] without compromis-ing our [United States] principles?” The answer is straightforward and simple: we can’t. The minute a nation engages in a war, it compromises its prin-ciples of humanity and civility.

Within his novel, As We Go Marching, John T. Flynn explains that the “virtues of humility, love, charity, personal freedom, the strong prohibitions against violence, murder, stealing, lying, cruelty – all these are washed away by war.”

I consider war to be brutal and ugly; it is a violent reaction to disagreements.

Alexander Berkman, the author of What Is Communist Anarchism?, said, “War means blind obedience, unthinking stupidity, brutish callousness, wanton destruction, and irresponsible murder.”
Film juxtaposes innocence, violence

**STEWART R. MESA**
**Staff Writer**

Winner of the Palm d’Or at last year’s Cannes Film Festival and the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film, *The White Ribbon* is Austrian writer-director Michael Heneke’s (Caché, *Funny Games*) latest film in which a number of unexplained “accidents” befall a pre-World War I German village; accidents that are actually malevolent acts of violence.

The film is set in a German village where half of the inhabitants work for a baron (Ulrich Tukur) and the local Protestant pastor (Burghart Klaussner) maintains a strong influence. When the local doctor (Rainer Bock) is severely injured, it sparks a chain reaction of random acts of violence and accidents including the kidnapping and punishment bestowed on the children of the baron and a local midwife (Susanne Lothter).

As everyone in the village is questioning who is causing this kind of mayhem, the local schoolteacher (Christian Friedel) begins to suspect that his pupils might have something to do with what has been happening in the village.

The punishment that the pastor bestows on his children for their disobedience is signified by making them wear a white ribbon – a symbol of pure innocence.

The pastor goes so far as to tie his son’s hands to the bedpost because of the boy’s tendency to please himself. Michael Heneke manages to create an array of unforgettable characters that sometimes come across as borderline evil, creating a menacing and dark tone throughout the film. The actions of characters such as the pastor and the doctor become catalysts to strange and bizarre events that occur in the German village.

For example, one girl acts out violently against a mentally challenged boy because of her father’s harsh punishments on her. Another child is sexually abused by a relative.

Meanwhile, the children are taught to believe that God is watching at all times and is some of the questions posed in the film’s climax are never fully answered by the time the credits roll. While the final shot provides some kind of answer, it is never fully explained why the strange accidents and acts of violence occurred in the first place.

Opening Feb. 12, *The White Ribbon* is already considered the frontrunner for the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in March.

The Beacon does not accept free goods or services in exchange for positive reviews.
Festival offers something for the multifaceted visitor

ADRIANA RODRIGUEZ
Staff Writer

Art fans would be hard-pressed to not find something to love at the Coconut Grove Arts Festival.

The Festival, which takes place every year over President’s Day weekend, showcases artists from all over the world, each one bringing something different to the mix. Sculptures, paintings, photography, glass work and jewelry were all on display. All of it was for sale at the festival with some art being relatively affordable – others not so much.

The main entrance on McFarlane Road is right across CocoWalk. This is where the bulk of the action was.

Street artists were plentiful off the sidewalks from around the country to show off their skills.

Rod Tryon used chalk to create 3-D illusions on the asphalt. It was cool to watch him at work while he wiggled around on the floor trying to get into the perfect position to draw, wearing an oversized cap. It kind of looked as if he was prepping for an intense hopscotch mural.

Mike Behr is a photographer who focuses his works on bright scenery. His favorite subjects were the old and bright homes of Italy and Greece: the little white houses of Santorini pop against the bright blue ocean backgrounds. The lighting in Behr’s photography captured Greece beautifully.

Italy was a popular muse for artists at the festival. There were dozens of artists who had a similar idea to Behr’s and took full advantage of the boot-shaped country.

Kemper Art’s booth was really fun. They showed off a quieter kind of art, a far cry from the sculpture, glass art and standard art you’re accustomed to seeing at an arts festival or museum. Kemper Art is a studio based in Oklahoma City. Their artwork looks a lot like what a kid would do if he brought his Etch-A-Sketch to Cirque du Soleil. Frames of distorted sketched animals and people lined the booth. There was an interesting use of colors, mixing darks and brights.

Amid all the professional art work at the festival, art lovers could walk away with some fine art work from newcomers nurturing their crafts at New World School of the Arts.

This is the No. 1 spot to visit at the festival. Students are given a small and large canvas and the freedom to do what-ever they want with it at the beginning of the year. The product of that freedom is then sold at the festival. Half of the proceeds...