Nine-year-old helps homeless, encourages others to help

OMAR GUZMAN
Staff Writer

Flipping through channels on the TV, it is not uncommon to come upon a commercial asking for money to go towards starving children in third world countries. While it may seem that most students disregarded it, Joshua Williams, who was five years old when he first saw it, reacted quite differently.

“I wanted to adopt them all,” said Williams of the Joshua's Heart Foundation.

After explaining to him that it would be impossible, his mother tried to direct his attention towards a cause that he could work with in his own neighborhood. Williams began by feeding one family in his church, but soon expanded his work with in his own neighborhood.

Sierra Montgomery, resident assistant and senior majoring in psychology, organized the event “Living a Dream, Leaving a Legacy,” to educate students on the state of poverty in Miami and encourage them to pursue their dreams.

The late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who pursued his dream in spite of the odds inspired Montgomery. She urges students to follow his example if you really want to work for something, you can do it.”

Montgomery feels as though some students are reluctant to tackle difficult tasks, such as obtaining a Ph.D. and instead settle for a fraction of their original dream. To showcase the value of perseverance, Montgomery commissioned the performances of three students who danced, sang and recited uplifting poetry.

The first speaker, introduced as Pat, performed an original poem. Devin Floyd, a member of AmeriCorps VISTA and volunteer for Miami Coalition for the Homeless, brought two guest speakers to share their stories. (Homelessness) wasn’t a part of their plan, they didn’t expect it to happen.”

The first speaker, introduced as Pat,
**WEIRD NEWS**

Professor charged with peeing on colleague’s door

A California university professor has been charged with peeing on a colleague’s campus office door.

Prosecutors charged Tihomir Petrov, a math professor, with two misdemeanor counts of urinating in a public place. A dispute between Petrov and another math professor was the motive.

Petrov was captured on videotape urinating on the door of another professor’s office. School officials had rigged the camera after discovering puddles of what they thought was urine at the professor’s door.

**University awards first Beatles degree**

A Canadian woman has become the first person in the world to graduate with a Masters degree in Beatles studies.

Former Miss Canada finalist, Mary-Lu Zahalan-Kennedy was the first to accept the MA in Beatles, Popular Music and Society from the university.

The course looks at the studio sound and composition of the Beatles and how Liverpool helped to shape their music.

**Social networking leads to sex faster?**

Nearly four out of five women and three of five men believe texting and other social networking tools cause couples to jump into bed faster. A Pew survey.

"Recruiters know that at FIU they can find the diversity and experience they seek, whether for an entry-level position or a more senior appointment. Where else can you find students and alumni from such different backgrounds, from all over the world? That carries a lot of value," Jairo Ledesma, assistant director in the Career Services Office told News at FIU.

Career Services advises all students to attend some professional development workshops and complete a resume before attending the fair.

According to Setzer, Career Services is also sponsoring another major event—MEGA Career Week. During this week, there is an "intensified schedule of professional development workshops designed to help students and alumni get prepared for the Fairs."

The Engineering center, MMC and BBC campuses will all host selective events for this weeklong experience.

Offering the popular workshops, like Resumé Writing, Interviewing Skills and How to Prepare for Career Fair, Career Services is hoping to accommodate as many students as possible. As preparation for joining the work force, Career Services hopes that these events provide students and alumni better results for the future.

The amount of information and opportunities available at the Career Fair gives employers a chance to spread their name around campus and to provide support for local businesses.

The presentation of a valid Panther ID and professional development workshops are the only requirements for a student or alumni to attend.

As the week progresses, the Career Fair and MEGA Career Week will release more information.

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**MEGA Career Week’ to include resume and interview workshops**

**CATCH THAT SNITCH**

The FIU Quidditch team played against University of Miami on Jan. 30. UM defeated FIU 120-20 in the first match and 90-20 in the second match.

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**Homeless recall brutal ordeals of living life out on Miami streets**

HEART, page 1

described her troubled path to homelessness, which culminated in a brutal encounter with her fiancée that left her stabbed over fourteen times and left to die.

After miraculously surviving the ordeal and completing rehabilitation for her injuries, Pat is happy to share that she now has a place of her own and is planning on going back to school.

Floyd’s second speaker was Damian St. Martin, who is currently living in a shelter. St. Martin told students about his former life with his wife and five children in their Sunny Isles Beach condo. He managed five nightclubs and did quite well for some time. He even did his fair share of mocking the homeless, even considering paying homeless people to fight each other for entertainment.

St. Martin never thought he would one day be homeless, but after his condo was foreclosed and his family split up he found himself turning to a shelter.

After spending the first few nights on the beach he began to lose touch with society, and started living his own reality.

"Have you all seen homeless people talking to themselves?" he asked, "it’s because there isn’t anyone around to listen."

He asked students to try to understand that anyone could be homeless, remarking that many of us were only "one paycheck away."
Jackie Wolek  
Staff Writer

The highly speculated and intriguing life of Alex Legion has been analyzed by many throughout his basketball playing career. Starting from high school at Detroit County Day to now playing at FIU, it has been a long journey to get to where he is today.

Legion started playing basketball in the third grade, but it can be argued that he was born to play the game. “Basketball was always kind of in my blood, my dad went to Amherst and played basketball and my mom went overseas,” said Legion. “It kind of just came easy to me at a young age.”

Legion proved in his sophomore and junior years at Detroit County Day High School that he was an elite player on the basketball circuit. Not only did he make the Associated Press Class B All-State first team in 2005 and 2006, but he also broke records.

In his Class B Regional Final game in 2005, he scored 41 points, setting the single game scoring mark for his school, which was previously held by former NBA star Chris Webber. In 2007, Legion decided to go to high school basketball powerhouse Oak Hill Academy.

“I wanted to go there because I wanted more,” Legion said on transferring. “Michigan basketball was great but I wanted to really prepare myself for this level.”

Playing with the likes of O.J. Mayo and Brandon Jennings, Legion won the national championship along with setting some impressive marks.

He became the top three-point shooter for seniors in the nation, and still holds the schools record for both free throw percentage (85%) and three-point percentage (42%) in a season. By going to Oak Hill and putting up the kind of numbers that he did, Legion was recruited from Division 1 schools all across the nation.

His first choice was originally Michigan University, but relented that decision once the coach that recruited him, Tommy Amaker, was fired.

His second option was Kentucky, but he did not stay there long. After just one semester and six games, he would transfer to Illinois. His mother was sick at the time, and thought it best to go play in the Big Ten where he would be closer to her.

Legion did not play the rest of the season due to NCAA transfer rules, but in May of that same year would travel to Poland for a foreign tour with Athletes in Action Sports Ministry.

“It was my first time going out the country,” Legion admitted. “It was great going over there playing against the top competition in Europe and seeing how you stand out with your peers worldwide. I loved that trip.”

In his first year at Illinois, he got to play the second half of the season and made the most out of the opportunity. He played in 22 games and averaged around 11 minutes of playing time and even led the team in scoring in one game against Michigan State.

Following that season, he made another trip outside of the country, this time to China. 

“I really didn’t enjoy that trip so much, it was a real culture shock for me,” said Legion. “But in the end it was a great experience. I mean not everybody gets to say they went to China.”

To everyone’s surprise, he would only play in the fall semester for the Fighting Illini before announcing his decision to come to FIU. He didn’t get approached by Coach Isaiah Thomas, but rather he approached him.

The history between the Legion and the former Hall-of-Fame player goes back all the way to his high school days, where he played alongside Joe Dumar’s son.

Legion asked Dumar what he thought about a potential decision to go to FIU and he told him it was the right move to do.

“It was a basketball move and I wanted to have the opportunity to play for a guy like Isiah Thomas and see if he could teach me a few things and uplift my career,” Legion said.

The road to FIU for Alex Legion above has been paved with many steps along the way. This time, Legion would be forced to sit out his spring and fall semesters before being able to play again. He finally got back on the court again Dec. 18 against Sam Houston State and has played what he would call the best basketball of his college career here at FIU. He is now averaging 13 points and five rebounds per contest for the Golden Panthers. The transition from the Big Ten Conference to the Sun Belt was considered by many to be a

LEGION, page 4

Reaching class could be best in program history

Sporting an immediate impact

Rico Albarracin  
Asst. Sports Director

Freshman Jerica Coley was named the Sun Belt Conference woman’s basketball Player of the Week for the second time this season, the league announced on Monday, Jan 31.

Coley became the first freshman from the conference to receive a conference accolade since the school joined the SBC in 1998, currently sitting at the bottom of the East division of the SBC along with FAU and FIU.

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LEGION, page 4

Reaching class could be best in program history

FOOTBALL

IGOR MELLO  
Asst. Sports Director

With the National Signing Day looming today, there’s a strong possibility that head coach Mario Cristobal could add one more recruit to FIU. Although nothing is official until these verbal commitments sign on the dotted line, Cristobal has a chance of snagging up to 25 recruits for this year’s signing day and possibly cracking the top 50 recruiting classes of the year.

Giovanni Francois

Cristobal may have snatched up another three-star recruit, this time from Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Giovanni Francois has verbally committed to FIU over this past weekend, choosing the Cristobal’s team over the University of Temple. The 6-2, 235-pound defensive end was the 46th ranked defensive end in the nation. He’ll have a chance to compliment a unit that was ranked first overall in scoring defense and overall defense in the conference.

Cedric Walker

The Sun Belt Conference’s best running attack may be getting some more help for the 2011 season. Cedric Walker, out of Gulfview Prep in Miami, could possibly suit up in blue and gold. The 5-8, 175-pound tailback dashed for 135 yards in the Dade vs. Broward high school all-star game, earning MVP honors last month.

Despite the MVP performance as a running back, Walker may not even see the playing field on offense. According to most websites, the three-star recruit is listed as a cornerback and could aid Cristobal’s defense after losing Anthony Gaitor to graduation.

NORTHEASTERN TALENTS

Cristobal is close to landing three prospects out of the same Miami school where Gaitor, among others, attended – Northwestern high school. FIU currently has four players (besides Gaitor, who will graduate) from Northwestern and are looking to add three more. Cristobal is close to landing the wide receiving duo of Domani Rhymes and Clinton Taylor.
Golden Panthers to face off against Troy on the road

WOMEN’S, page 3

McNair, who leads Troy in both scoring (13.7 ppg) and rebounding (8.5 rpg), and is a top 10 player in the SBC in both categories, ninth and fourth respectively. Joining McNair is DeAngela Sword, who averages 13.5 points a game.

There is not much scoring after McNair and Sword, as the Trojans are the worst offensive scoring team in the Sun Belt, averaging 56.1 ppg. Another factor towards the Trojans shortcomings is that they are also the worst in assist-turnover ratio at -6 while giving up the ball 22 times a game.

For the Golden Panthers to continue their streak, look for them to play a similar style of defense that will force the Trojans to take bad shots and force turnovers. While on offense, the Panthers will continue to build an inside presence with Elisa Carey, who is recovering from her knee injury with every game she plays. Jerica Coley will lead the offense, with Finda Mansare looking to build off her 14-point performance against Middle Tennessee. One weak point for the Panthers is the lack of depth, as coach Cindy Russo continues to use a seven player rotation in games. With Rakia Rodgers out of the lineup while dealing with an ankle injury, Russo continues to play her players with no rest.

FOOTBALL, page 3

FIU beginning to draw players from top schools

Rhymes is a lanky, but big 6-4, 205-pound receiver, who did see some time at tight end for the Bulls. Rhymes was the sixth best receiver statistically in Miami-Dade county, hauling 42 receptions for 745 yards and eight touchdowns. Rhymes has already promised that in two years from now, FIU will be in the Top 25 poll.Taylor statistically produced more than his teammate. The little 5-8, 160-pound speedster led the county in receiving yards with 972 and was a reception shy of leading the county in receptions, with 68. Taylor ended his senior campaign with six touchdowns for Northwestern.

Cristolba may have also landed Lyndon Edwards, who played defensive end for the Bulls. Edwards, listed at 6-1, 190 pounds, may see time at the outside linebacker position. Edwards, a two-star recruit, looks to follow the deep tradition of Northwestern linebackers that have had success in college. All three are familiar to FIU, having played for the Bulls at FIU Stadium a few times during their high school career.

COREY TINDAL

Another hometown product may sign to play for the Golden Panthers in 2011. This time another 3-star prospect, according to Rivals.com. Corey Tindal, the 52nd ranked defensive end in the nation, verbally agreed to join Cristobal’s crew. Tindal, who came out of Boyd Anderson high school is listed at 5-10, 174 pounds.

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WOMEN’S, page 3

Legion left Illinois to play for Isiah Thomas

LEGION, page 3

Legion left Illinois to play for Isiah Thomas.

The speculated and analyzing of Alex Legion’s decisions might always follow him throughout his career, but in the end there is no denying that he is a great basketball talent that can do some amazing things when he’s on the court.
1. Committee members get emotional as they reveal their grand total to participants. In its thirteenth year, Dance Marathon at FIU raised $187,108.30 for children in need. 2. (From left to right): Joe Sevillano, Alfredo Roig and Katrina Pratts as they watch a dance performance. 3. Matthew Wittyngham, James Gamito and Martha Maria Lopez dance for a cause. 4. Vanessa Castro, a member of Alpha Omicron Pi, battles it out on the court. 4. Shannon Walsh was the Miracle child sponsored by Alpha Xi Delta. 5. Students dance as part of the 24-hour marathon to raise funds for the Children’s Miracle Network.
Professor receives Fanning Medal

ADRIAN ESPINOSA
Staff Writer

A professor since 2008, Michael Gillespie has been making his name on campus as an accredited scholar of Irish studies. He has written two volumes in the Norton Critical Editions (a publisher of college books) and 66 articles and book chapters in the field of English and Irish studies.

Professor Gillespie began his interest in Irish studies while attending graduate school at the University of Wisconsin and working on his dissertation based on the Irish writer, James Joyce. After receiving his Ph.D, he began to work at Marquette University, a private school run by Jesuits, where he became acquainted with a Jesuit by the name of Robert Boyle. Boyle was a well-known James Joyce critic and he encouraged Gillespie to continue his work on James Joyce and in Irish Studies.

Michael Gillespie’s story at the University began with his wife and the school’s interest in her work at Marquette University. She had built the writing program there into a significant and well-known program through her position as the writing center director. She would only take the job if Professor Gillespie was also hired and at the time the University was not able to oblige.

The school contacted Gillespie again while he was in Italy and they informed him that they would hire him both. So he and his wife came down to South Florida for an interview to make sure, as Gillespie puts it, “that I didn’t chew with my mouth open.”

Michael Gillespie has been teaching at the University ever since. Gillespie said he was delighted with the entire staff in the English department and that both he and his wife enjoy living in their new, diverse Miami setting.

Recently, Gillespie was awarded the Fanning Medal which is given out for outstanding achievement in Irish Studies. The award honors those who are literary critics and historians engaged in Irish studies and Gillespie was the first American to win the award.

The medal, a lot like a lifetime achievement award, was awarded to Gillespie for his work as a literary critic, the work he has done with the American Conference for Irish Studies and his promotion of Irish studies in the States.

Dr. Gillespie is also working on a book for the University Press of Florida on James Joyce and the experiences he had while in exile in Zurich and the writer’s passion for Ireland. The book will be a part of a James Joyce collection the printing house is putting together.

The idea came to him when last February, Professor Asher Milbauer asked him if he wanted to take part in The Exile Studies Certificate Program. “The program works to provide a human face to the inhuman act of expatriation,” said Milbauer. Also working closely with the ESICP is the Center for Humanities in an Urban Environment that Dr. Gillespie is building up.

“The humanities center is going to be an important asset of FIU because of the way it engages members of the south Florida community so that people have a sense that FIU is not just adjoined to Miami, but FIU is part of Miami,” said Gillespie.

Last November Dr. Gillespie was in Ireland for the Cork Film Festival in Cork City, Ireland where he was asked to curate a series called “Green Shoots.” The series focused on six Irish directors whose movies “I talked about the six films they showed… and what I tried to do was talk about way very different films all come back to the issue of family and how family or the absence of family really shapes and sometimes undermines the lives of the characters,” said Gillespie. After his lecture, the discussion ensued was surprising because not everyone had taken into account such a perspective, but with time they all saw how that point of view was pertinent.

**SPEAKER:**

Professor Gillespie leads his lecture on Arcadia during a modern British drama class.

**Where:**

The Forum at the LeClerc

**When:**

Monday, January 31, 2011 at 4 pm

**How Much:** Free

**Contact:**

Asher Milbauer

**Admission:**

Free, however membership to the Forum is required.

**Description:**

Professor Gillespie leads his lecture on Arcadia during a modern British drama class.

**In Focus:**

Professor Gillespie leads his lecture on Arcadia during a modern British drama class.

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I am nostalgic for a bygone era. Do not mean that I miss the 1960s and the great music that came out of it, or the 1950s and the fact that the American dream was much easier to achieve with a lower cost of living and debt. I am specifically nostalgic for the era that spans from the late 1940s to the late 1980s and early 1990s. I miss the Cold War. Do not get me wrong, as an American, I love a good war, especially the hot ones that we win. However, the threat of a nuclear incident is more present now than ever and chances are it will not come from any nation state. There are currently eight nuclear weapon states: United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan and Israel. Although Israel has never officially confirmed that it has a nuclear stockpile, it is universally believed that it does possess nuclear weapons.

“In a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of nuclear attack has gone up,” said President Barack Obama in Prague during a speech in April 2009. During the Cold War, we knew who had the nuclear weapons, and we knew that there was a semblance of a plan should the unthinkable happen. Personally, I love all those duck-and-cover videos from the 1950s. Rather than stockpiling arms for the next war, both the U.S. and Russia agreed to phase out stocks of each other’s arsenal. In order to create a more nuclear weapon-free world, in April 2010 the U.S. ratified the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the bilateral nuclear arms reduction treaty between the U.S. and Russia that further reduces the number of warheads by 1,500 on each side. Unfortunately, our current state of nuclear affairs is far more convoluted than in the past. While there are a few countries that have confirmed their stockpiles, there are rogue nation states who are either pursuing them. (I’m looking at you North Korea) or are in denial about the fact that they are pursuing them. (I’m looking at you Iran.) However, the biggest threat to our safety does not come from rogue nations who refuse to play nice. It comes from radical terrorists acquiring materials to create either a dirty bomb, a bomb that has radioactive material but is not a nuclear weapon or from the detonation of a thermoelectric device. While the threat of nuclear war is still real, the threat of a nuclear incident involving a dirty bomb is more likely. According to Graham Allison, a former special advisor to the Secretary of Defense during the Reagan administration, it is more than likely that a terrorist will detonate a nuclear bomb in the U.S. by 2014. A decade of war fighting has taught us many lessons about dealing with terrorist organizations. Mainly, we have learned that they are difficult to track, even more difficult to quell and often splinter into other sub-cells and organizations. Combating the threat of nuclear war is challenging enough when we are cognizant of who our enemies are. As we enter the new decade and face the threat of nuclear proliferation to rogue states and terrorist groups, we have to consider that the Cold War really was not that bad, and at least some of us could see Russia from our backyard.

The Politic is a new political op-ed column. Look for it every other Wednesday.

The Beacon – 7

Nuclear program in Iran not a threat

GIOVANNI GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

Although Iran’s nuclear competence is driving near the situation is probably not as dangerous as it looks, as most countries use nuclear technology for non-aggressive applications. After obtaining the ability to produce and use nuclear weapons itself, North Korea is now assisting Libya in developing its own nuclear programs. North Korea has been trading information and technology with Iran that has jump-started the nation’s nuclear progress. Iran has agreed to pay North Korea $150 million for the use of testing facilities to begin testing nuclear weapons. Most countries with nuclear abilities have them to be taken seriously and are aware of a country that fires a missile on them first. The United States, being the only country to use an atomic weapon in war, is the only exception. Most other countries use their nuclear weapons as a deterrent rather than an offensive option. It seems that North Korea is helping Iran into the global negotiations arena, as any country with nuclear capabilities must be dealt with using treaties and trade negotiations. With North Korea on Iran’s side, the two countries can use their alliance to increase bargaining power with other world superpowers such as the U.S., the United Kingdom, Russia, and China. It is unfortunate that other countries have to resort to building weapons of mass destruction to be heard in the global negotiations arena, but as long as they are treated fairly in trade and commerce, there is no reason to actually launch a nuclear warhead.

Iran is also using its nuclear weapons program as insurance, decreasing the likelihood of attacks from violent neighbors such as Israel. Just the possibility of nuclear retaliation is enough to make other countries think twice before resorting to aggression.

Unfortunately, a recent missile design in use by Iran has a range of 1,240 miles, which covers all of the U.S.’s military bases in the Middle East and the whole country of Israel. If fired, one of these missiles could begin a nuclear war as Israel is believed to have nuclear weapons and would surely retaliate.

It is very likely that Iran has no intention of building any nuclear weapons or creating a joint attack with North Korea on the U.S. and its allies. Doing so would probably start a large-scale nuclear confrontation between many countries. Iran is simply using dangerous weapons technology to edge into the “inner circle” of first-world countries. With instructions on how to develop and make use of nuclear weapons now being traded, it is likely that more countries will become capable of nuclear activity.

Although a situation like that can easily spell disaster, it is becoming more important than ever for countries to look for diplomatic solutions and to be more open to trade to avoid a global-scale nuclear disaster.

Nuclear program in Iran not a threat

THE POLITIC

Cold War an era of peace in comparison to climate of today

JASMYN ELLIOTT
Opinion Editor

I am nostalgic for the era that spans from the late 1940s to the late 1980s and early 1990s. I miss the Cold War. Do not get me wrong, as an American, I love a good war, especially the hot ones that we win. However, the threat of a nuclear incident is more present now than ever and chances are it will not come from any nation state. There are currently eight nuclear weapon states: United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan and Israel. Although Israel has never officially confirmed that it has a nuclear stockpile, it is universally believed that it does possess nuclear weapons.

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Sexual content in media in need of censorship

HEWDIN ELAISSI
Contributing Writer

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the rates of sexual activity have climbed steadily for over two decades. About 20 percent more males and females are having sex today by the age of 18 than they were in the early 1980s. Researches have made the link to mass media as the cause for this sexual revolution. Sex increasingly creeps up into everyday life and the sexual revolution reached its sweaty climax. The only rational plan of action seems to be not to watch television, read no magazines and stop listening to mainstream music. However, since this will prove to be impossible, it is not too ludicrous an idea to suggest a little censorship that is much needed in today’s society. Television, ads, film and now video games have become popular forums for provocative images and obscene material. Children, who learn most of what they know about sex from the media, are not being properly educated as year after year video game characters wear less and less. The Kaiser Family Foundation asserts that when it comes to sexual health questions, the majority of teens get their information from television. According to the National Eating Disorders Association, one out of four television commercials sends some kind of attractive nonsense message. They also attest that children now report that 38 percent of the female characters in video games are scantily clad, 23 percent wear bikinis or cleavage, and 15 percent showing their rears, leaving many teens asking, “How can I compare?” Provocative images of half-naked women are prevalent in advertising and media. The famous expression “sex sells” proves to be as true as women become sexual objects when their bodies and their sexuality are linked to products that are being bought and sold. Analyses of broadcast media content indicate that teenage viewers see 143 incidents of sexual behavior on a network television at prime time each week, whereas we knew who had the nuclear weapons and would surely retaliate.

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Edward Mosuruk
Egyptian novelist, journalist

“Clearly, the scent of Tunisia’s ‘jasmine revolution’ has quickly reached Egypt.”

Masaaouda El-Filali
Egyptian novelist, journalist

Send us your letters

The opinions presented within this page do not represent the views of The Beacon Editorial Board. These are separate editorial positions reflecting different perspectives of contributing editors and members of the student community.
Cuban dissident detained, freed, detained again

**Paul Haven**
Associated Press

A well-known Cuban dissident was in and out of police custody repeatedly Friday in a cat-and-mouse game with authorities, who told him they will lock him up anytime he tries to gather in public with other government opponents.

Meanwhile, the widow of a jailed activist began a hunger strike demanding her husband’s immediate release, the latest turn in Cuba’s unending standoff with its small but boisterous opposition.

Guillermo Farinas was first detained Wednesday afternoon in the central city of Santa Clara, only to be released that evening. Authorities picked him up again the next day, holding him until Friday morning. By the afternoon, he was back in police custody after he and several others defied the warning about gathering in public. Farinas was freed yet again Friday evening, then taken to the hospital complaining of chest pain, according to Elizardo Sanchez, a leading human rights activist.

Their objective is to neutralize dissident activity, Sanchez said of the authorities’ decision to repeatedly arrest Farinas. He said Farinas’ condition did not appear to be serious, though he was in a lot of pain.

Farinas and the other dissidents had sought to place a wreath at a monument to Cuban independence leader Jose Marti on the 158th anniversary of his birthday.

"About 20 of them went out to place the wreath," Farinas’ mother, Alicia Hernandez, told The Associated Press. "They only had two blocks when they took them away."

Earlier Friday, Farinas told the AP he would ignore the warning. "They told us they wouldn’t let us assemble in groups of more than three people," Farinas said. "If they want to detain me, that’s their problem."

Farinas, 49, gained fame while staging a 134-day hunger strike last year. He has largely stayed out of the spotlight since December, when he received the European Parliament’s annual human rights prize.

Cuban authorities refused to grant him permission to travel to Strasbourg, France, to pick up the award, a decision he said at the time was "irrational testimony to the fact that unfortunately nothing has changed" in Cuba regarding human rights.

Opposition figures are frequently detained by authorities, often to be released within hours or a few days, but the repeated arrests of Farinas were unusual.

Also Friday, the wife of imprisoned dissident Diosdado Gonzalez announced the start of a hunger strike demanding his release.

Alejandra Garcia, one of the founding members of the “Ladies in White” opposition group, said in a phone interview from her home in Matanzas that she would only drink water until her husband is out of prison.

Cuba promised to free all 52 remaining opposition figures from a 2003 crackdown on dissent, following a July deal with the Roman Catholic Church. Just 11 remain behind bars, including Gonzalez.

Church officials are optimistic the government will soon make good on its promise, but there has been little word on the men’s fate since the passing of a November deadline by which all were supposed to be out.

The last 11 dissidents have refused to accept exile in Spain, as most of the others did, the apparent reason for the delay.

The government considers Farinas — and the island’s other dissidents — to be common criminals paid for by Washington. Authorities frequently note that some of his legal troubles include an assault on a co-worker and other violent behavior. Farinas says all the charges are linked to his activism.

U.S. missionary killed in drug no-man’s land

**Katherine Corcoran**
Associated Press

American missionaries Sam and Nancy Davis were crossing a drug-cartel battleground in northern Mexico when gunmen opened fire on their truck and mortally wounded Nancy.

The couple drove up to an illegal roadblock on a stretch of highway just south of the border city of Reynosa, when Sam Davis decided not to stop, gunmen opened fire and hit Nancy Davis, 59, in the head. Sam frantically drove his bleeding wife to help, crossing the international bridge into Texas, where she later died.

Tamaulipas will investigate the assault on the couple and the discharge of the firearms, said state Attorney General spokesman Ruben Dario de la Garza.

"They have only gone two blocks," said police commander looking into Hartley’s death. "They loved Mexico," Cepeda said of the missionary couple. "I think, sadly, that caused their death."

Associated Press Writers Linda Stewart Ball and Paul J. Weber in Texas and Mark Walsh in Monterrey, Mexico, contributed to this report.