Students petition to save teacher’s job

JORGE SANTA CRUZ
Contributing Writer

Always surrounded by a crowd of students, adjunct instructor Abdylrahim Javadzadeh walks to his own beat, conversing endlessly and blurring the distinction between professor and student.

Soon, however, his time at FIU may end.

Javadzadeh, better known as “Professor Abdy,” earned his doctorate in sociology from FIU in 2007, but he’s actually been teaching here 11 years.

During that time, he has asked numerous times to become a full-time professor, a request that has been denied repeatedly.

“You do your Ph.D., thinking about better opportunities. This has not been the case. I’m moving on,” Abdy said, noting that he is weighing two opportunities at other institutions.

But he’s not leaving before an organized group of students gathers 1,000 student signatures on a petition asking FIU to retain him.

“I signed the petition because there are not enough professors with their qualities,” Reul Alonso, a senior sociology major, said. “He gets you to think. He cares about the students.”

Since last September, the petition has flown from student to student, and it will be delivered to the Department of Global & Sociocultural Studies after it reaches one thousand signatures, a precedent not seen before, according to some sociology faculty members.

The document probably will be delivered this week or next.

“He is very available to students before and after class to discuss the issues of the day,” said Amal Aldito, a senior women’s social studies major.

“He teaches critical and analytical thinking within a sociological context.”

The department chair has declined comment on the situation, but, according to some sources, the department is revoking Abdy’s adjunct status.

“Because you have a Ph.D., and you have the knowledge, that does not mean you know how to transfer your knowledge,” Abdy said. “You have to be interested in people. Teaching has to be in your personality.”

FIU’s denial to give full-time status to Abdy is not based on a written rule, but faculty in the sociology program say it is common practice to diversify faculty by giving preference to candidates who hold doctorates from other institutions.

Doing so allows students to learn a wide range of perspectives, instead of one institutional theme, specialty or method.

Born outside of the Iranian capital of Tehran, Abdy was sent to the United State by his father, an arbitrator of the Justice Department, to study high school in a boarding school in Washington, D.C., in 1979.

“My adaptation to the United States was a little traumatic because my father, two years earlier, sent me to England to study English when I was 11 years old,” Abdy said.

From 2000 to about 2004, Miller developed a program at Jackson Memorial High School when a co-worker mentioned wanting to show the teens a Capoeira video.

Since then, Miller has seen Capoeira being performed before at cultural activities, and though it amazed him he didn’t think of it as something he could ever do.

“The same day another teacher gave him the contact information to what he now refers to as his mastery, Master Delei, a Brazilian man trained in the martial art.

“I was just going to take a few classes just for fun, and that was 16 years ago now,” Miller said.

Miller had seen Capoeira being performed before at cultural activities, and though it amazed him he didn’t think of it as something he could ever do.

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“I was just going to take a few classes just for fun, and that was 16 years ago now,” Miller said.

“I was like ‘I want to learn this.’ ”

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A-CRANES FOR HOPE

CRANES FOR HOPE

ELIZABETH VELEZ
Contributing Writer

Scott Miller grew up as a skinny kid who was picked on throughout school.

He now considers himself a geek who can kick butt.

Working as an inner-city school teacher most of his educational career, Miller has found an after ego the past 16 years by mastering and teaching Capoeira, a Brazilian form of martial arts that combines fighting, dancing, music and art.

“I was Professor Alemão (his Capoeira teacher name), which was trying to please my mastery and be like the top Capoeira that he wanted me to be,” he said. “Then, I was a family man, a pretty mild-mannered math teacher type guy.”

Miller holds a Capoeira class at Florida International University two nights a week after teaching math at New World School of the Arts.

He is excited to bring the martial art to FIU so he can help students build their confidence the same way Capoeira built his.

“I love geeks and nerds that come in – little skinny ones with, you know, no muscle – because I see their future,” he said.

Miller also values the talents his female students bring to Capoeira.

Julie Burke, a student of Miller’s whose Capoeira name is Armada, or armed, had a similar respect for her professor.

“It’s inspiring to be around someone who has such a passion for what they do and professor brings that to every class,” she said.

Miller’s passion came at the age of 31, but not much to his surprise.

“In Capoeira we have a saying that you don’t find Capoeira, it finds you,” he said.

He was working at an after-school care program with teenagers at Jackson Memorial High School when a co-worker mentioned wanting to show the teens a Capoeira video.

Capoeira is a dance, fight, martial art and also a culture and Professor Alemão incorporates all of those elements in class.

 Isis Darios
Capoeira’s Student

Miller had seen Capoeira being performed before at cultural activities, and though it amazed him he didn’t think of it as something he could ever do.

The same day another teacher gave him the contact information to what he now refers to as his mastery, Master Delei, a Brazilian man trained in the martial art.

“I was just going to take a few classes just for fun, and that was 16 years ago now and I haven’t stopped yet,” Miller said.

Master Delei is the one who gave Miller his Capoeira name, Alemão, which means German in Portuguese.

He chose Alemão because Miller reminded him of all of the Germans that had migrated to Brazil because of his blue eyes and blond hair.

While building confidence and strength is one of the things he loves about Capoeira, Miller brings more to the martial art than just crazy kicks.

“He really takes his time to teach us, not only the Capoeira movements, but also how to play the instruments, learn Portuguese words and the history of Capoeira,” said Isis Darios, one of Miller’s students.

“Capoeira is a dance, fight, martial art and also a culture and Professor Alemão incorporates all of those elements in class.”

From 2000 to about 2004, Miller developed a program at Jackson Memorial High School where Capoeira was free for the students to learn, but they were required to stay in school, maintain certain grades and could not use Capoeira to get into fights.

“I’ll tell you, that was the hardest thing I ever did,” Miller said, noting that many of his students lived in dangerous neighborhoods and grew up without father figures.

“I sort of became an adoptive father to them,” he said. “They still, you know, call me dad and everything.”

Miller considers this to be one of his greatest accomplishments because most of them made it through life without going
Police seek abused girl on photos

when the camera was dropped off as an anonymous donation. The thrift store volunteers called police to report the images on Dec. 14.

“The child was undressed and drugged. In my opinion, she is in grave danger and has been or is being sexually abused,” Detective Chris Wilkinson said Wednesday.

It appears the girl was around 4 years old when the photos were taken. He said the date stamp on the 2005 Sony Digital Mavica is 2006, but Wilkinson said the pictures might not have been taken at that time. There is a likelihood the photos were taken around 2006, he said.

Along with the graphic photos of the girl being abused, there are photos of what appears to be a day care center and a living area.

Wilkinson said among the photos released by the department is one showing five toddlers – their faces obscured by police – at what appears to be a preschool or kindergarten, wearing the same clothes.

Other photos show an infant changing his diaper and a living area. There is a computer with a tower, a bed with sheets folded on it and boxes stacked above it and white sofa with children above it and white sofa with children above it and white sofa with children above it.

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FOOTBALL

SPRING FINALE

Golden Panthers set for spring game

JACKSON WOLEK
Staff Writer

The annual Blue vs. Gold football game taking place this Saturday will be a sample size preview of what we can expect for this upcoming season at FIU. It will feature what we saw from last year’s team, along with a new playbook, and a slew of incoming players.

It is still not clear how many spots are actually up for grabs, but the spring practices the players have been a part of, as well as the summer workouts, will help determine the starting lineup for this upcoming season.

“I think the summer really makes or breaks guys because you can tell from day one who’s in good shape, and that’s one of the challenges for us in the offseason,” said Coach Cristobal. “You’re not going to win a game with that Friday night speech. You’re going to win the game in the offseason.”

The area where they bring back some of the most experience and depth is at running back. The Golden Panthers bring back all four runners who helped make FIU the second best running attack in the Sun Belt last year. The list includes Darrin Perry, Darian Mallary, Jeremiah Harden and Redrick Rhodes.

“The team does not have time to relax, as they will play host to the Southern Methodist Mustangs on Sunday, who are ranked No. 37 in the nation. The match will be a test to see if the team is prepared for what could be considered the Eagles hottest players (4-6, 6-4, 10-4).”

Quick turnaround

The team does not have time to relax, as they will play host to the Southern Methodist Mustangs on Sunday, who are ranked No. 37 in the nation. The match will be a test to see if the team is prepared for what could be considered the Eagles hottest players (4-6, 6-4, 10-4).

Win streak extended to nine after win over FGCU

BRANDON WISE
Staff Writer

The Golden Panthers, ranked No. 62 in the nation, defeated Florida Gulf Coast University in a 6-1 victory. FIU extended their win streak to nine matches, the longest it has been since the 2009 season, when they had a fourteen-match streak.

“It means were doing something right,” said coach Melissa Applebaum-Dall’au. The team’s streak is nothing to scoff at, having only played one close match over the past two months against UNLV.

The matches got started when the team of Guiltetta Boha and Rita Maisak had to forfeit due to illness. Having to start out already down a game, the Golden Panthers (10-5) stepped up. The duo of Liset Brito and Maria Spenceley continued to dominate, defeating Iris Rendon and Betinia Botha (8-3). Coach Applebaum-Dall’au loves what she is seeing from her seniors.

“Hard work speaks tons about people. When you put the hard work in and you put the hours in, your confidence level just increases,” Applebaum-Dall’au said. “They are at a point now where they work so hard on a day to day basis, I think that confidence level has grown so much that they believe no matter what the situation, they will come out on top. They are paving the way exceptionally well.”

The team of Christine Seredni and Lisa Johnson then clinched the doubles point by defeating Gyanna Mandic and Morgan Bechtel (8-3).

In the singles portion, Brito, who jumped 24 spots to No. 57 in the nation, picked up her ninth consecutive set victory over Bechtel (6-0, 6-1). Despite the jump in the rankings, she still felt a little rusty.

“I have not played in a while,” Brito said. “But today I felt good. The girl didn’t push me that much, so I still was able to do what I wanted to do.”

Maria Spenceley picked up another point for the team when she defeated Mandic (6-2, 9-2) to make it 3-1. She has quietly won nine straight matches, matching Brito, and it is an accomplishment that she is very proud of.

“It’s the first time I have done that in my four years of college,” Spenceley said. “I’m pretty happy that I could end my career like that.”

Lisa Johnson clinched the match for the Golden Panthers with her straight set victory over Betinia Botha (7-6(4), 6-4). Guiltetta Boha then followed her by defeating Bibiana Almeida in straight sets (7-6(4), 6-1).

The most intriguing match of the afternoon was Christine Seredni against Iris Rendon. Seredni had to battle back from being down a set, but was able to pull of the upset over what could be considered the Eagles hottest players (4-6, 6-4, 10-4).

“Quick turnaround”

The team does not have time to relax, as they will play host to the Southern Methodist Mustangs on Sunday, who are ranked No. 37 in the nation. The match will be a test to see if the team is prepared for what is ahead in the Sun Belt Conference tournament and possibly the NCAA tournament.

Coach Applebaum-Dall’au is looking to end the season on a high note with these next two matches.

“It’s a great opportunity for us,” Applebaum-Dall’au said. “They are a ranked team with a lot of depth, but I think we have a great opportunity to come out on top in this one.”

Spenceley also thinks that this will be a good indicator to determine where the team will be heading down the final stretch of the season.

“Depending on how that goes (SMU and UCF matches),” Spenceley said, “We will know where we stand.”

Golden Panthers close out spring practice with their annual Blue vs. Gold game on April 2.
Much of what we see will foreshadow upcoming season

**MATCHUPS, page 3**

remains high as the expectations of this team continue to rise. It is only spring, but fans can get a good idea of where the team really is and how they have progressed over the course of the offseason.

The team returns most of its starters from that roster, 15 to be exact, but lost several key pieces in the process. It will be intriguing to see some matchups on both the offensive and defensive side of the ball on April 2.

**DEFENSIVE BACKS VS. WIDE RECEIVERS**

Opposing offenders used to game plan around Anthony Gaitor, trying to avoid throwing the ball in his direction as much as possible. He was able to make a lot of big plays this weekend as spring practice comes to a close.

This defensive unit will have its hands full on Saturday, dealing with playmakers like T.Y. Hilton and Wayne Times as they try to stop them from making big plays. Don’t be surprised to see Wesley Carroll challenge the defensive backfield and try to find Hilton or Times on a streak.

**WESLEY CARROLL VS. JAKE MEDLOCK**

Carroll will not be the only quarterback warranting attention during the annual spring game. Backup Jake Medlock, currently occupying the No. 2 spot on the depth chart, has been seen by some as the future at the quarterback position.

He has been seeing a lot snaps this spring and watching him under center will be something to look out for. Carroll, who helped lead a competitive passing game last year, will be entering his final season of eligibility after a solid 2010 season. But do not be surprised to see his eventual successor take a considerable number of snaps over the course of the fall.

That is why it will be intriguing to see how Medlock has developed after a season with the team mostly working behind the scenes to improve. We will find out soon enough how much it has paid off.

**LINEBACKERS VS. RUSH OFFENSE**

The linebackers corps lost some intensity over the offseason with the departure of Toronto Smith, who led the unit with 91 tackles. But there should be plenty of talent in waiting that will allow the linebackers to remain a key strength for FIU in 2011.

Frequently during the course of last season, former defensive coordinator Geoff Collins would call on the linebackers to apply an ample amount of pressure on opposing offensive lines and that should be no different this fall with Todd Orlando taking over the play calling duties.

Linebackers Winston Fraser and Marketh Russell will be the leading backers in 2011 and with Kenneth Dillard and others returning, seeing how they respond to a new coordinator and a shift in leadership will be key.

**DEFENSIVE BACKS making adjustments after key losses**

**SPRING, page 3**

needed the most improving was on the defensive side of the ball.

After losing players like Anthony Gaitor and Toronto Smith, FIU came back strong in an offseason headlined by the hiring of defensive coordinator Todd Orlando and the signing of top prospects Jordan Hunt, Corey Tindal and bringing in Richard Leonard.

“I think we’re adjusting very well,” said Jonathan Crympton. “As a whole team we’ve always been a family. So losing them, we understand the process and someone else has got to step up.” The spring game will see many of the same players that were featured on last year’s team, with a couple of new faces which you can expect to see a lot of.

“We’re going to make sure that ball gets spread around a little bit so they can see some of our new playmakers play,” said Cristobal. When it comes to the scrimmage on Saturday, both players and coaches are still pumped up and Cristobal has just one message for the fans. “We need them here, this is their championship team,” Cristobal said.

With a homer and three RBI’s, McClain went 2-for-7 with a two run home run and Rojas went 2-for-7 with a three-run homer.

Jenn Gniadek made one start against the Trojans and went five innings allowing two runs on five hits and striking out seven in the win.

For Troy, there are few players on the team from last season that have much success against the Golden Panthers. Nikki Hollett was 2-for-9 with two RBI against the Golden Panthers while Hayden Gam was 4-for-6 with three RBI in the three-game series at Troy.

In the pitching circle, Ashlyn Williams is the only Trojan on the pitching staff who made an appearance against the Golden Panthers. Williams was the starting pitcher in both games and defeated the Golden Panthers twice with a 3.00 earned run average. She also struck out at total of nineteen total batters in the two games.

**SCOUTING TROY**

Troy comes into the weekend series with a 20-16 overall record and a 1-5 record in Sun Belt Conference play. The Trojans have five hitters in their lineup with a .300 average or better. Nikki Hollett and Hayden Gam lead the team in batting with .396 and .371 averages, respectively.

Hollett’s .904 slugging percentage is one of the best in the Sun Belt Conference and she also has the power to go deep, hitting a team-best 16 home runs to go along with 44 RBI this season.

Gann is second on the team with seven home runs and 27 RBI for the Trojans. The Golden Panthers are hoping to avoid allowing many base runners during this home series.

The Trojans come into the series with a three pitcher rotation led by Ashlyn Williams, who has anchored the pitching staff this season.

Although she has record of 8-10, she has a solid 2.44 ERA and leads the Trojans in strikeouts with 159 while holding opposing batters to a .189 batting average.

Morgan Grove and Hayley Hutchins round out the Trojans pitching staff. Grove and Hutchins have ERAs of 2.84 and 3.68, respectively.
The joke’s on you on April Fool’s

ALFREDO APARICIO
Staff Writer

Everyone is a fool on April First. While not a legal holiday, April Fool’s Day is widely recognized as the day when everyone can be the victim or creator of a prank.

In some countries, such as New Zealand, pranks last until noon and anyone who passes the deadline is called an “April Fool.” In the United States, however, jokes last all day.

The earliest record of April Fool’s Day pranks goes all the way back to 1392 in the Canterbury Tales and the tradition has survived all the way to the present.

Yaima Suarez, a sophomore psychology major recalls a prank a few years back that involved a horrible joke. “Someone told me they had crashed and I got super worried but it all turned out to be a joke,” she said. “It was really lame.”

Suarez herself tries to remember the day every year to avoid being pranked. “I think it could be fun,” said Suarez, “but it’s definitely not for everyone.”

Kristen Möller, a sophomore psychology major recalls a prank a few years back that involved a horrible joke. “Someone told me they had crashed and I got super worried but it all turned out to be a joke,” she said. “It was really lame.”

Suarez remembers the funniest prank she has seen from the days she used to work at Sports Authority. “One of my co-workers hid behind empty shoe boxes and they told another person to get something from there,” she said. “She jumped out and completely scared my other co-worker.”

One of the many activities done on April Fool’s Day around the world, as other countries have developed their own traditions for April Fool’s Day. The Flemish tradition includes children locking teachers out of their schools and parents from their homes and only letting them in if they promise to bring sweets the same day or the next.

In France and French-speaking Canada, the day includes poisson d’avril, which literally means “April’s fish,” and involves attaching a paper fish to the victim’s back without being noticed. Rossmery Galan, a sophomore elementary education major, has seen the power of a good paper prank on April Fool’s Day. “I think the funniest prank I have ever seen was ‘newspapering’ a teacher’s room in high school. A couple of her old students got into her class and covered everything in newspaper even the pencils,” said Galan.

It was hilarious to see her frustration but she enjoyed the fun either way.

Whether the pranks are meek or complex, April Fool’s Day is a day that celebrates making a mockery of others and getting away with it. Simply enjoying the prank is just one of the many activities done on April Fool’s Day around the world, as other countries have developed their own traditions for April Fool’s Day.

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The joke’s on you on April Fool’s
FISTFULS OF TECH!

Apple not the only competitor in “post-PC” world

Often times my column has to do with something Apple-related, usually a decision the company made and how that decision will impact the technology market. But instead of analyzing Apple’s choice to categorize its tablets as “post-PC” devices from Apple’s perspective, let’s do it from the perspective of its competitors.

When Apple Chief Executive Officer Steve Jobs announced the iPad 2, he declared it the device that would usher in the “post-PC” world of computing. With the various desktop-like abilities these devices are capable of, Apple is asking users whether or not they need a PC anymore.

“In this new world, Apple no longer has to compete on specs and features, nor does it want to,” said former Engadget Editor in Chief Joshua Topolsky. “There is no Mac vs. PC here -- only “the future” versus “the past.” It won’t be a debate about displays, memory, or wireless options -- it will be a debate about the quality of the experience. Apple is not just eschewing the spec conversation in favor of a different conversation -- it’s rendering those former conversations useless.”

Apple is not only trying to dominate the tablet market, it is reshaping it to suit its needs. But let’s jump over to the new entries in the market that are going to try their damndest to decimate Apple’s marketing speak; Apple will be facing stiff competition this year.

First we have Hewlett-Packard, who recently acquired Palm. The Palm Touch Pad is physically similar to the iPad, except it is much more powerful. It runs HP’s tweaked version of webOS and the company is launching a full attack against Apple. If anyone can do it, HP can.

What makes the TouchPad and HP’s Pre 3 and Veer smart phones competitive is that they are very much entrenched in the cloud and offer smart ways of communicating with each other. The devices can all connect together simply by tapping your Pre 3 or Veer to your touch pad to transfer information. You can even continue working on projects you started on your TouchPad and vice versa. HP calls the technology Touchstone, which is a spin off of their induction-charging tech, so now HP’s devices not only charge up by contact but also transfer information.

Bigger picture, HP has the best of all the competitors in the mobile space: it has an open operating system which is just closed enough to ensure quality and webOS is a strong and refined operating system offering innovative features. With HP’s push to put webOS on all its desktops, they are really forging not so much a “post-PC” world but a world that includes the PC in a single experience.

Android’s entry in the tablet world, Honeycomb, is promising but still early. You can tell that Google is really refining the user interface and that this might be the sneak peak of how the future of Android will look.

But right now Honeycomb is still closed source and, with the limited amount of devices on the market, it will be hard to tell whether or not this makes an impact this year. Ultimately, the “post-PC” era shouldn’t be about one device. It should be about how users can have a consistent experience no matter what device they are on.

One day I want to be able to surf the Internet, play a game or edit a story on my laptop and be able to seamlessly continue that experience on my phone or tablet.

HP has the right idea in this respect, but whether or not they can conquer Apple and its “post-PC” challenge remains to be seen.

Reel to Reel is a weekly column on films. Look for it every Friday. This week’s special edition column reviews SPC’s Friday Night Movie.
Campus protest zones undermine free speech rights

Anonymous gossip boards an unhealthy student diversion

KELLY MAKAMBI
Staff Writer

As many know, the Biscayne Bay Campus is much smaller than the Modesto Maidique Campus, and as of late it seems to be being treated quite differently because of this fact. On March 10, 2011, The Beacon reported that at BBC, protesting is only allowed in the small, specifically the area limited to the space by the flagpoles in front of the parking lot.

While this area is at the center of the campus, the BBC administration’s right to assemble put in place by the University are very rare, overboard and infringe upon students’ First Amendment rights.

Many argue that on the smaller campus, these limits should be put in place to prevent any disruption from occurring near classrooms, and this has been the reasoning behind the advent of the protesting zones in the first place. However, as The Beacon also noted, an overwhelming amount of universities do not have these restrictions, and protesters are able to demonstrate more freely. Essentially, if the rules put into practice at BBC were justifiable, it seems more universities would have adopted them in order protect class time from those interruptions, too. However, this is not the case, and the restrictions are more breadth than necessary.

The rule implemented at BBC specifically limits the locations available to protesters and does not specify that certain content in a protest that be prohibited, making the rule seemingly content-neutral. However, other types of loud, disruptive speech are allowed on campus during class hours. For example, upon taking classes at the Marine Science building, I have heard swarm meets or practices and the cheering that follows from inside the building. It is also granted that only protesting is prohibited from such areas because of its disruptiveness, but events such as these, just feet away from the building, are permitted, even though they cause the same problems. Activities such as these, and those that can be heard from across the bay that frequently occur, invalidate this reasoning behind the implementation of the rule.

Protesting in a confined area defeats the purpose of such demonstrations. Using the Marine Science building as an example again, if someone wished to protest a practice of research being conducted at the lab, they would likely choose a more specific time when students are working on their lab projects. The Marine Science building who the speakers aim to reach would be increasingly harder to communicate with. The rule thus unreasonable burdens students’ right to communicate their protests in peaceful manner. The speakers, for example, will not reach students who enter the Academic Center Buildings I and II or the Marine Science building from the south side and do not cross through the Wolf Center.

Pushing students away from the areas in which there is a potential for controversy infringes upon students’ First Amendment Rights.

SANAH FAROKE
Contributing Writer

When we are attacked, one thing we should be able to rely on is someone, anyone to intervene. More often than not, spectators do nothing to prevent or stop injustice when they have the full capability to do so. Not every situation involves an onlooker who is able to help, but if there are people laughing at the spectacle rather than helping the victim, then there is a definite problem.

On March 7, 2011, Detroit resident Alesna Valdez was verbally and physically attacked by a man in a gas station for standing too close in line. The Detroit Free Press reported that Alesna mentioned he was gay, so the assailant decided to punch Alesna twice in the face. According to Michigan Live, when Alesna pleaded for the clerk to call the police, he refused. “He didn’t want to deal with the mess,” and witnesses laughed at the brawl.

Situations like these where the innocent are attacked and onlookers refrain from interfering is called the Bystander Effect. Psychology writer Kendra Cherry reports that the greater the numbers of witnesses, the less prone people are to intervene. According to a 2002 study by Dr. Mark Levine, observers are also more likely to take action if they can associate with the victim. The alarming truth is that, by and large, nothing is done by civilians to help another because we are so focused on ourselves and we all know that this is true in one way or another.

Other than that, since it is easier to not take responsibility for our own actions, it is even harder to liable for someone else, thus allow the expectation that another bystander will jump in “the diffusion of responsibility.” Passersby intentionally do not acknowledge the conditions because it is “insignificant.”

The dilemma that constantly occurs is whether or not we intend to do nothing. We either do not care for others because we care too much about ourselves or we are more comfortable following others due to our moral consciousness. Like a domino effect, a bystander happens to help, on a rare occasion, a victim who was injured at a local gas station, metro or even in our Blue and Gold community, as soon one person helps, everyone else decides to come to the rescue. Suddenly, everyone is a Good Samaritan.

We care for the animals that are tortured, so we join PETA. We care for the environment, so we get a hybrid car. We care for people that are affected by natural disasters, have disabilities, lack economic income, so we donate money. Our human endeavor efforts just happen to stop when we find a situation where we can be hands-on, reach out to help someone right in front of our eyes because we just rather not get our hands sticky.

I would hope that someone else’s life is important enough to save. It is incomprehensible that people would remain a passersby if they had the chance to intervene. I would like to think that this would not happen in a modern “moral” civilization.
Student cares for family while hiding his true self

BERTHA AUS
Contributing Writer

As the guest relations coordinator at the Marriott International in Miami Beach, Matthew Lage, 23, lays red rose petals over the bed and floor of Beach, Matthew Lage, 23, lays red petals over the bed and floor of the honeymooner’s suite and reserves the romantic dinner at a fancy restaurant for the couple celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary.

At his full-time job, Lage has the control to make every detail flawless, but when he comes home at night he is forced to care for his disabled mother and sister, all the power vanishes.

Lage is a part-time senior at the University’s School of Hospitality Tourism and Management. What makes it even harder for him is that he lives a double life, hiding his sexuality from his classmates.

“A long time ago, my mother wants all of my attention, and it is exhausting,” Lage said. “If I ignore her, she will come into my room and start to talk about the gossip of the day, what the neighbors did and how many times her ex-boyfriend called her. I can’t ignore her because she needs someone to listen to her and I am all she has.”

Lage lives with sister Elizabeth Lage and mom Isabel Lage in a small house in Hialeah. He has legal control of their finances because of their disabilities.

His mother was declared disabled as a child when doctors noticed she was not developing at a normal rate. At age 35, she has the mental capacity of an average 10-year-old.

Laghe, 58, started having mental health issues after her relationship with Lage’s stepfather ended three years ago.

Depression and anxiety started taking over her mind, and Lage had to make the decision to take his mother to a psychologist where, after a long wait, she was declared disabled as well.

“Those 12 months were the longest of my life,” he said. “My mom shaved her head. She did not want to leave the house, and if she did, she would have constant panic attacks. I was scared for her and for my sister because I couldn’t always be there with them. I couldn’t just drop out of school and quit work. It was hard.”

He has had to deal with what he calls his mom’s “craziness” all of his life. When he realized he was gay during middle school, he found a girlfriend to hide his sexual preference from her.

“My mom couldn’t know I was gay. I was scared of what she would do if she found out, so I hid it from her as long as I could. I had that same girlfriend until I started high school,” Lage said.

His lie worked well until one day he was caught by police in a Wal-Mart parking lot “doing things” with his then-boyfriend. His mother was called and she was heartbroken.

“I thought it was a prank,” Isabel said. “It just could not be my Matthew; he is not gay, I kept telling myself he just can’t be.”

After that day, Lage had no freedom. Isabel thought that if she could keep him home and check his calls, emails and friends, she could change her son.

“I was 18 years old and basically from house arrest, but I found ways around it because I didn’t want to argue with her,” Lage says.

Lage used his best-friend Stephanie as his third wheel whenever he wanted to go out on a date. His mom trusted him and when he was with her, he was allowed to go out.

“His mom would call me every time we went out to make sure I was with him,” Stephanie said. “She would then ask me who was around, and she would remind me how much she trusted me with her baby. I remember there was one day I couldn’t go with Matt on a date to the movies. It was like midnight when I heard knocking at my door; it was him with his mom on the phone begging me to tell her he was with me.”

Lage continued to cover up his real life from his mom because he always felt with time, she would accept him.

Deborah Souvener
Staff Writer

Viciously stripped of their fins, in a process known as finning, many sharks find themselves helplessly sinking to the bottom of the ocean and left for dead to fulfill the demand for shark fin soup.

Scientists surmise approximately 72 million sharks are killed each year due to finning, regardless of size or species. Thereafter fishermen either stab or catch sharks in nets or caught on long lines, endangering extinction.

Sharks are often harvested in mass or caught on long lines, regardless of size or species. Thereafter fishermen either stab or catch the shark in order to dishearten the shark’s fins, which contain the recipes of the shark. The shark is then cut off and the live shark is thrown back into the water. In order to curtail vast shark killings across the nation, the United States and from countries which permit shark finning will be required to keep the bodies, which, apart from fins, are largely inedible and not valuable. Having to hold the body on-board fishermens will have less incentive to fish for sharks or keep them when accidentally caught.

“Shark meat is very dangerous, because it contains a lot of mercury,” said Michael Heithaus, director of the School of Environment, Arts and Society.

Heithaus has done extensive research on the ecological role of large sharks in both Australia and Florida. Using the Western Australia seagrass ecosystem known as Shark Bay for the past 14 years, Heithaus and his colleagues have observed predator-prey interactions with a special focus on Tiger Sharks and how ongoing reductions in their population are likely to impact marine communities.

“We have witnessed some shark populations decline as much as 90 percent along the North American coast. These populations may never recover,” said Heithaus.

The law allows the United States to block seafood imports from countries which permit shark finning thus aiding international shark conservation efforts. For years sharks have been slaughtered for shark liver oil, shark cartilage for pseudo cancer cures, their teeth, jaws, and skin for shark leather shoes and belts; however, despite being banned in the United States since 2000, shark finning has been the most pervasive issue in the conservation of sharks.

The rising demand for shark fin soup - which can be sold for $300 or more a pound - is attributed to China’s burgeoning middle class. Adelia in many Asian cultures, shark fin soup is a symbol of affluence. Costing up to $100 a bowl, the dish is often served at special occasions such as weddings.

However, the shark fin has no flavor at all and is used primarily to add texture to the dish. Although the new law hopes to reduce the number of sharks caught strictly for their fins, little can be done unless similar laws are passed in the international community.

In Hawaii it is illegal to possess or distribute shark fins and countries such as Maldives and Honduras have outlawed shark fishing. However, finning is still legal in Indonesia, the world’s largest shark-catching region.

“The new law is a great step towards improving conservation efforts; however, many sharks swim into international waters. Laws such as this one need to be implemented by international institutions as well as we hope to see a substantial decline in the number of sharks being killed annually,” says Heithaus.

Sharks are top-predators and play a vital role in marine ecosystems; a role they have been playing for over 400 million years. Losing their influence on marine ecosystems they may destroy food chains of the entire marine ecosystem, cause an imbalance in predator-prey interactions as well as affect human fisheries.

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Brazil law boosts grandparents visitation rights

A bill that strengthens grandparents’ right to visit their grandchildren when the parents are divorced took effect Tuesday in Brazil.

The law allows the United States and from countries which permit shark finning thus aiding international shark conservation efforts.

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