Students petition to save teacher’s job

Jorge Santa Cruz
Contributing Writer

Always surrounded by a crowd of students, adjunct instructor Abdolf- rahim Javadadah walks to his own beat, conversing endlessly and blur- ring the distinction between professor and student.

Soon, however, his time at FIU may end.

Javadadah, 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,” Paul 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 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 reviewing 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 candi- dates 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 Wash- ington, 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 a child,” Abdy said.

Elisabeth Velez
Contributing Writer

Childhood wimp now teaching martial arts at University

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 Capoiera 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.

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

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.

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.

“Instead of 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.”

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 try 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.

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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 Portu- guese 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 devel- oped 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 neigh- borhoods 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...
Petition has 1,000 signatures collected

Teacher emphasizes respect for fights

He did not return the unfair violation, and saw it to be a great lesson for his students to learn that it’s never a good idea to have respect for fighting. He emphasizes the importance of control in Capoeira and teaches his students to take down their opponents fairly, not with cheap shots.

When you go to the ocean you have a lot of respect because you know the waves can wash you away,” Miller said.

“But, still you enjoy it, you know, within the confines of your safety.”

Elizabeth Veloso, a senior sociology major, produced this story in the JOU 3303 Advanced News Writing course taught by Dr. Fred Blevens.
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 Cris-tolob. “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 most of the 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 Darrinet Perry, Darian Mallary, Jeremiah Harden and Kirkndock Rhodes.

“Each one of us has something else to bring to the table. You have speed, you have power and you have agility,” Perry said. “You can’t just really set your defense up for three running backs.” Wesley Carroll will be the starter once again for the Golden Panthers, but this year he is going to be backed up by Jake Medlick and Blaine Dulton.

“I think as a unit were all doing well with this team,” Carroll said. “We can only control making the other ten better that’s what we always talk about and I feel like we’ve done a good job so far.”

The wide receiving core is head-lined by senior T.Y Hilton, who chose to skip the NFL draft to stay one more year at FIU. Although the team lost its second most vital option from last year in Greg Ellingson, they still have Wayne Times and Jacob Younger to fill the void.

Also look for Willis Wright, who only played six games last season, to have an increased role in the offense.

“We just have to step up and make more plays now,” said Times on losing Ellingson. “We lose a guy but we bring a guy in, so we still put another bullet in the chamber we never stop shooting.”

The 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 offenses used to game plan around Anthony Gaitor, trying to avoid throwing the ball in his direction as much as possible. He was able to shut down some of the Sun Belt’s top wide outs on several different occasions, including Troy’s Jernel Wright and Deondre Francois, the conference’s leading receiver. He was able to get a look at a number of different cornerbacks over the course of the spring and it will get one final glance 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 the rest of the Sun Belt’s best wide receivers.

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 conservative passing game last year, will have 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 linebacker 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 Ochoa taking over the play calling duties.

Linebackers Winston Fraser and Markeith 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.

The rush offense took a major leap forward in 2011 with Darriet Perry and Darian Mallary powering the way. Along with Jeremiah Harden and Cedrick Rhodes in the backfield, this unit should be even better this season.

Depending on the support they get up front from their offensive linemen, they should be able to be effective this weekend and against defenses this upcoming fall.

Softball
Golden Panthers return home with series vs. Troy

MALCOLM SHIELDS Staff Writer

After taking two out of three games on the road last weekend against North Texas, the Golden Panthers will return home on April 2 to square off against last season’s conference tournament runner-up, the Troy Trojans, in a three-game series.

The series will be FIU’s last home series before going on a two-week road trip that will pit them against conference champion Louisiana-Lafayette, Florida from the Sun Belt Conference.

HOME COOKING

The Golden Panthers are 8-4 this year with a .388 batting average and 16 home runs to go along with a .904 slugging percentage.

In batting, Ashlyn Williams is the only player in batting with .396 and .371 averages, respectively.

Hayden Gann lead the team in home runs with three total batters in the two games.

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.

Visit our web site for results from FIU’s doubleheader vs. FGCU on March 30 and more.

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 Jordan Hunt, Corey Tindal and bringing in Richard Leonard.

“I think we’re adjusting very well,” said Jonathan Cyprien. “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,” said Cristobol.

When it comes to the scrimmage on Saturday, both players and coaches are still pumped up and Cristobol has just one message for the fans.

“We need them here, this is their championship team,” said Cristobol.

T.Y. Hilton (above) will provide a big test for defensive backfields.

Golden Panthers return home with series vs. Troy

Troy comes into the weekend 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 Gann 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.

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SPORTS
The Beacon – Friday, April 1, 2011
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, once wrote a fake secret admirer letter to her boyfriend that seemed to come from his co-worker who had an intense crush on him.

“Sadly the prank was never completed because he left work early that day,” said Suarez, “I don’t continue to celebrate it because though I’m just too gullible for it.”

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 go somewhere from there,” she said. “She jumped out and completely scared my other co-worker.”

Kristen Müller, a sophomore mass communications major, sees the day as one of fun because it allows people to break out of their monotonous routines by playing pranks on people.}

“I would celebrate the day if I could think of awesome pranks but sadly I have yet to think of something worthwhile,” says Möller.

“I just act as a bystander instead even though I have never seen any pranks done before either.”

Möller uses April Fool’s Day as a way to joke some fun at her friend, Franklin Paramo, as the day lands on his birthday.

Other students view the holiday as dumb even though they have participated in the past.

Andrea Suarez, a sophomore nursing major, once wrote a fake secret admirer letter to her boyfriend that seemed to come from his co-worker who had an intense crush on him.

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Kristen Müller, a sophomore mass communications major, sees the day as one of fun because it allows people to break out of their monotonous routines by playing pranks on people.

“I think it could be fun,” said Suarez, “but it’s definitely not for everyone.”

Johnny Depp only redeeming quality of Pirates’ franchise

My last memories of the Pirates of the Caribbean franchise are fragmented, to say the least. I hovered in and out of consciousness one rainy May afternoon after being dragged to the theater to watch the third film in the series, Pirates of the Caribbean: At World’s End.

What I do remember was being shocked at the reverence it held towards Captain Jack Sparrow (Johnny Depp). In one scene, he hallucinates about commanding a ship with a crew entirely comprised of copies of him last memories of the first film, however.

“Pirates of the Caribbean: At World’s End” is a disaster: overlong, over-bloated and increasingly incoherent in its plot.

The second film in the series, “Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest,” was an unequivocal disaster: incoherent in its plot.

The embodiment of all three of these features is Johnny Depp. Take for example his entrance. Jack Sparrow, pirate, playboy and all around scoundrel sails into the harbor high atop the mast of his ship, looking like Keith Richards and most likely smelling of body odor. Behind him is a vast expanse of ocean. He sails into port on a listing, rickety
Apple not the only competitor in “post-PC” world

Often 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 redefining 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 so evil that hell itself spat him back out.” And if to emphasize just how evil Captain Barbossa is,

“so evil that hell itself spat him back out.” And if the movie’s medallion hanging around his neck.

Turner (Orlando Bloom) who was discov-

ered drifting at sea when he was a boy with a frightening prospect.

It’s all about this blacksmith named Will Turner (Orlando Bloom) who was discovered drifting at sea when he was a boy with a pirate’s medallion hanging around his neck.

And there’s this girl, see. She, Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightley), is the daughter of the British governor of Port Royal, a British base in the Caribbean, whose blood is thought to lift a curse placed on the entirety of the crew of the Black Pearl.

The crew are undead after unleashing a volcanic curse.

The only character that can command the screen as well as Depp is Geoffrey Rush playing Barbosa, the current captain of the Black Pearl. Rush embraces his role with equal gusto, playing Barbosa as the slimy, old, vicious pirate.

This certainly wasn’t the “adult” sea-faring adventure that hit screens when it was released in 2003. That honor went to the incredibly authentic and ass-numbingly boring Miser and Commander.

The film is tongue-in-cheek. It makes a point to emphasize just how evil Captain Barbossa is, "so evil that hell itself spat him back out." And if you didn’t catch that the first time, it’s repeated to you again literally five seconds later. The film understands that sense of pirate lore and folk tales but pokes fun at them.

This is all fun until you’ve realized that the movie is dangerously overlong. And, holy hell, Knightsly and Bloom have no chemistry whatsoever. All in all, the film is about two swordfights and one naval engagement too long.

Rush for Rush is a weekly column on films. Look for it every Friday. This week’s special edition column reviews SPC’s Friday Night Movie.
Anonymous gossip boards an unhealthy student diversion

KATRINA BRUNO
Contributing Writer

Lately, I feel as if I involucrarily boarded the DeLorean and have been sent back to the golden days of high school, where gossip and mean girls reigned supreme. Its hard not to feel like I am a 16-year-old again every time I hear another rumor being passed around our campus, especially when I learn its stemming from an anonymous website.

In case you haven’t heard, Collegeacb.com has returned. Board, usually referred to as College ACB, is a website where students are free to gossip and rant about fellow classmates and faculty on campus. Like the now-defunct Juicycampus.com, this is a place where everyone is free from cruel and malicious treatment. Other than that, since it is easier to take advantage of someone online, it is much harder to see the damage it can do to another’s self-esteem or reputation.

With the emergence of these sites, the opportunity to gossip about their fellow peers without realizing the significant damage it can do to another’s self-esteem or reputation.

Some topics from the University’s collegeacb.com page bash fame and-name-drop women and men who are perceived to be “slutty,” releases the names of student porn stars and strippers, accuses others of drug addictions, criticizes certain individuals because of their weight, makes racist remarks about African Americans and Hispanics and offers specific fictional or factual stories about our peers.

While I believe there are positive aspects to anonymous forums, especially in college where we are encouraged to think, feel, and express ourselves freely. I believe when the anonymity is abused, it should be possible to strip away the anonymity and reveal who the bully is in an effort to correct the situation or stop any potential harm.

College students spend much of their time communicating online, through Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, instant messaging and email, so it is easy to understand how these websites are able to be shared from person to person so quickly. With the emergence of these sites, students have the opportunity to gossip about their fellow peers without realizing the significance it can do to another’s self-esteem or reputation.

It’s important to take a step out of your shoes and into another time you click “send” and potentially cause harm to another student psychologically or physically. Cyber-bullying is potentially very dangerous. According to statistics reported by ABC News, “nearly 30 percent of students are either bullies or victims, and 160,000 kids stay home from school every day because of bullying.”

There have been many reported cases that show children as young as seven years old are committing suicide. Our University should be a place where no one is afraid to be who he or she is and a place where one is free from cruel and malicious treatment on the web.

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

KELLY MAIJAMBER
Staff Writer

As many know, the Biscayne Bay Campus is much smaller than the Modesto Madonna Campus, and as of late it seems to be being trounced 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 area is defined as right to assemble put in place by the University are very, rare, profound 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 broad than unnecessary.

The rule implemented at BBC specifically limits the locations available to protesters and does not specify that certain content in a protest can 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 swim meets or practices and the cheering that follows from inside the building. It is evident that only protesting is prohibited from such areas because of its disputativeness, 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 bay, it is evident that Marine Science building who the speakers aim to reach would be increasingly harder to communicate with. The rule thus unreasonably 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 of the University and do not cross through the Wolf Center.

Pushing students away from the areas in which there is a potential for controversy intringes 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 mentioned he 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 bystanders 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 be 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 despite 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, even in our Blue and Gold community, as soon as 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 reusable bag. We care for people that are affected by natural disasters, have disabilities, lack economic income, so we donate money. Our humanitarian 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 passerby if they had the chance to intervene. I would like to think that this would not happen in a modern “moral” civilization.

Anonymous gossip boards an unhealthy student diversion

KATRINA BRUNO
Contributing Writer

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Anonymous gossip boards an unhealthy student diversion

KATRINA BRUNO
Contributing Writer

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Student cares for family while hiding his true self

BERTHA ALIS
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 his room. He is at this full-time job, Lage has the control to make every detail flawless, but when he comes home, it is up to his mother 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 mother and his friends.

"After a long day at work, 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 discuss 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.

Lage was observed to be 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.

Isabel, 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 for 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 couldn’t 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 on 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 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.

BERTHA ALIS, a senior journalism major, produced this story in the JOU 3303 Advanced News Writing course taught by Dr. Fred Blevens.

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www.FIUsum.com

HIT THE BAY

BRAZIL

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.

HAITI

Results of presidential election postponed

Haitians will have to wait at least a few more days to learn the preliminary results of their presidential election because of alleged irregularities and fraud uncovered at the vote-counting center.

CUBA

Cuba
carrier to end Cuba trip meeting with dissidents

Former President Jimmy Carter plans to meet with Cuban dissidents following two days of talks with President Raúl Castro and religious leaders in a trip he hopes will boost strained U.S.-Cuba relations.

MEET YOUR CANDIDATES

Pablo Haspel, at-large senator for the Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus and running for Honors College senator (far right), promotes himself and the upcoming elections to students along with Angelena Adams, SCC-BBC elections commissioner (near right) on March 30 in Panther Square.

Student cares for family while hiding his true self

Student cares for family while hiding his true self