

Low student turnout marks first M-W-F forum

BEN F. BADGER JR.
Staff Writer

About 25 students and staff members attended the first of an undetermined number of forums that allowed FIU students to express their concerns about the Monday-Wednesday-Friday class schedule and its affects on parking, tuition, food venues and campus events

One of the Jan. 18 forum's main speakers was Interim Provost Ronald Berkman, who answered multiple questions throughout the

one-hour event.

"With the new three-day class schedule, there will be 455 more class meeting opportunities a week," Berkman said. "\$491,000 has also been put aside for improving classes as well."

When compared to other universities, FIU has one of the lowest class utilization rates – roughly at 40 percent, according to Berkman

According to past research, the switch to the new system will optimize class usage and put FIU class scheduling into the mainstream.

FIU is one of the few universities in Florida and the country that hasn't conformed to the three-day class schedule.

However, with new bills being passed in the Florida legislature, if FIU doesn't change to the new schedule, the University wouldn't be eligible for construction funding from the state, according to Berkman. Corinne Webb, the vice president of Enrollment Services, said that with the new schedule students would be able to sign up for classes an entire semester in advance.

"Students will only be charged for the current semester," Webb said. "FIU does not have the authority to disperse financial aid in advance."

Tuition prices will also not be affected by the switch, according to Berkman.

During the meeting, Fridays were described as slow days on campus.

Alfonso "Alfie" Leon, president of the Student Government Council at University Park, said food venues close early and events are not scheduled on Fridays due to the low

number of students on campus.

According to Leon, the new schedule switch will give more opportunities to clubs on Fridays.

Parking was also a hot topic during the class schedule forum.

"Parking is an issue and the University is dealing with it," said Vice President of Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education Rosa Jones. "Two parking garages are being planned."

Though two new garages are

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MEAL DEAL



CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

MEAL OR NO MEAL?: Fresh Food Company starts the Spring 2007 semester with a new meal plan called the Flex 5, in an attempt to feed the needs of students, faculty and staff members who don't usually eat at the university.

Cafeteria offers new meal plan

KELLY POVEROMO
Contributing Writer

With a swipe of their Panther ID card, commuter students and faculty will be able to receive up to a 50 percent discount at the Fresh Food Company with the new Flex 5 meal plan.

Effective as of this Spring semester, the Flex 5 meal plan offers commuter students five meals per week at the University Park cafeteria.

Although commuter students have always had the choice of purchasing a meal plan, the Flex 5 sells for \$718.33 per semester with an additional 100 Panther Bucks. The formerly cheapest meal plan, the 100 Block, costs \$1,125.95 per semester for 100 meals and 500 Panther Bucks.

Panther Bucks can be used to purchase items at other on-campus eateries.

As with all other meal plans, the Flex 5 does not offer roll over meals — whatever

is not used does not transfer into the following semester.

According to Ximena Cordero, marketing manager of Panther Dining Services, the idea for the Flex 5 came about after many commuter students requested a cheaper meal plan.

Cordero used focus groups during the development of the Flex 5, paying close attention to students' lifestyles. These focus groups were advertised to students via e-mail as a way for students to help Dining Services provide satisfactory programs. This study, conducted during the beginning of the school year, questioned five groups of 10 to 12 students on what their wants were regarding meal plans.

"[Before the Flex 5], meal plans were more catered to housing students, but now, we can include more students and fit other needs," said Cordero.

"It sounds like a good idea," said freshman and commuter, Maria Pena. "The other plans are too expensive. [The Flex 5] is appropriate for students who are not here five days a

week."

Pena, who is not currently signed with a meal plan, believes other options should be made available as well.

"I think they should make other plans where students can choose how many meals a week they want, especially if they are not even sure how much they are going to eat," Pena said.

Senior Alex Torres expressed his missed chance in participating in such a good deal.

"I wish this would have been created earlier so I would have had the chance to purchase it," Torres said. "[The meal plan] would make a lot of students' days easier. Students wouldn't have to leave campus and re-park just to get lunch across the street."

Students interested in purchasing the new meal plan may do so in the Panther Dining Services office located next to the Fresh Food Company in the Graham Center.

Students seek jobs at Career Fair

MARIA CONCHA
Contributing Writer

For students, working in a high-tech computer lab with Bill Gates or designing an airport in China may be a dream, but it takes more than just dreaming to achieve success. Career Services hopes to help students achieve these dreams by hosting its Spring 2007 Career Fair at University Park next week.

This year's Career Fair will be held Jan. 29 for technical majors and Jan. 30 for non-technical majors.

Employers there will not only be recruiting for full-time, part-time and internship positions but will also give students the opportunity to network, learn more about specific companies and find out about job opportunities and new trends in their field.

During the fair's technical majors day, employers will be recruiting for fields such as biomedical engineering, civil and environmental engineering. Employers for all other majors and fields will be present during the second day of the fair.

Some of the companies and organizations that will be present include BankUnited, Burger King, the FBI and the CIA, among others. All companies will be interviewing and answering questions for students who are seeking future employment.

However, in today's competitive environment, just showing up to the Career Fair will not guarantee that dream job. Because of this, Career Services is hosting Mega Career Week before the fair.

Mega Career Fair will be running through Jan. 27, and as part of it, Career Services as well as some of the employers who will attend the fair, will be providing a series of career-related workshops and information sessions.

"All services are to help students from choosing their majors to resume critiques, practice interviews, internships, full-time employment and alumni services," said Lauren Hubacheck, special events coordinator for Career Services.

As part of the week of events, Career Services will also be having resume critiques on a walk-in basis.

"We offer many resources to help students get [where they want], such as prepare them to find that dream job," said Daniela Ciffoni,

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THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • JANUARY 22

- SOC Club Fair:** 12 p.m. – 2 p.m. (Ongoing until Thursday)
- Panther Rage General Meeting:** 4 p.m., GC 140
- Greek Wide Scholarship Event:** 7 p.m., GC Ballrooms

TUESDAY • JANUARY 23

- SPC General Meeting:** 3:30 p.m., GC 140
- ‘Wild Succulent Women’ – The Barbie War – Creating a Positive Body Image:** 9 p.m., Everglades Hall Lounge
- SPC Two Band Tuesdays:** 12 p.m., Gracie’s Grill
- SPC Karaoke Night:** 7 p.m., Gracie’s Grill

WEDNESDAY • JANUARY 24

- Rec. Center Fitness Fair:** 11 a.m., FIU Recreation Center
- Graduate Students Association General Meeting:** 1 p.m., GC 140
- Student Government Association General Meeting:** 4 p.m., GC 150
- Intramural Soccer Entry Deadline**

THURSDAY • JANUARY 25

- GSA Gradskeller:** 6 p.m., Gracie’s Grill

FRIDAY • JANUARY 26

- ENGAGE Leadership Workshop:** 11 a.m., GC 305
- SPC Film – “The Prestige”:** 7 p.m., & 10 p.m., GC 140

SATURDAY • JANUARY 27

- Honors Council Community Service Project**
- Compiled by Reuben Pereira*

CORRECTIONS

In the issue dated Jan. 18, 2007, the second page photograph titled FunFor a Cause should have been credited to Fernando Garcia.

The Beacon will gladly change any errors. Call our UP office at 305-348-2709 or BBC at 305-919-4722.

SGC-UP Notes

Jan. 17 Call to order 4 p.m., adjournment 4:51 p.m.

President’s Report (Alfonso “Alfie” Leon):

- Diplomatic internship available. One-on-one with Washington insiders.
- FIU Day March 7 for administrators and March 8 for students. SGA will take 35 to 40 students to Tallahassee. If interested, contact Phillip in the GC 211.
- Faculty Senate meeting yesterday. Dr. David Lee recently printed an abstract on how UCF beats FIU. Photocopies will be available in the SGA office.

Comptroller’s Report (Nancy Cadavid):

- Timeline for budget process. Must apply for hearings in A&S office by Jan 31.

Speaker of the House’s Report (Rocio Perez):

- Jan. 23 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Recruitment festival for all Business organizations in front of the Ryder Business building. Hollywood theme.
- Resignation: Housing Representative Diane Acevedo
- SGA Cares campaign is now launched. Posters are up in strategic locations.

Homecoming (Alex Ravelo):

- Applications are due Feb 2. Interviews will take place next week.

Student Organizations Council (Francys Crevier):

- Fox news is doing the Best Sports show ever at the Doubletree hotel. The will give \$10 per person, Must RSVP. More information at SGA or SAA offices.

New Business (aye-nay-abstain):

- Council Bill B07-01: To change meeting’s starting time to 3:30 p.m. (8-0-1).

Announcements:

- Meeting with Felecia Townsend. Coke drinks cost \$1.25 due to increase in prices of corn syrup and aluminum has increase.
- Sometimes the tennis courts are full because non-FIU students use them.
- Many Law School events Feb. 8-10. See flyer for more details. Morning of Feb. 10 will be giving tours to thousands of people. Please RSVP.

- Compiled by Angelina Troff

IT’S OFFICIAL



EDDIE ZENG/THE BEACON

LAKEVIEW OPENING: From left to right: Joseph Mattachione, director of residential life; Kevin Donahue, Lakeview architect and designer; Rosa Jones, vice president of student affairs; and Wassenaar, executive director of student affair operations; along with others, cut the ribbon that officially inaugurates Lakeview Hall Jan. 19.

Recruiters look for students at fair

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career consultant in Career Services and professor of the Career Development and Leadership class.

Dana DellaCamera, career consultant for Career Services, recommended some key points to students who plan to attend the fair, such as taking at least 25 copies of their resumes with them, having a positive attitude, and having note cards with the

companies they are interested in working for.

She also pointed out the importance of being well-prepared when talking to a company representative, suggesting to have a “30 elevator pitch” prepared.

“This is basically a short commercial about yourself so that the employer knows who you are and what you are looking for very quickly,” DellaCamera said.

According to DellaCamera, the elevator pitch should include the student’s name, class level, major, the type of position he or she is looking for, as well as any experience he or she may already have in the field.

“It is best to write this out before hand so that you are prepared the day of the event. You can offer a handshake when you first approach a recruiter, but make sure it is firm but not crushing. Do not get offended if a recruiter does not want to shake your hand. They sometimes choose not to due to sickness,” DellaCamera said.

Hubacheck also suggests not saying anything negative about a past employer, nor complaining or sounding desperate.

“It’s also better to research ahead of time to know which companies are going to be there and the positions they are looking for,” Hubacheck said.

“Employers analyze you from the moment you approach them, everything from posture, eye contact, handshake, tone of voice and the content of your presentation,” said Matthew Lohr,

CAREER FAIR WORKSHOPS	
<p>Monday Jan. 22 Resume writing workshop 11 a.m. - 12 noon WUC 255</p> <p>Interviewing skills 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. GC 241A</p>	<p>Advance interviewing 12 noon - 1 p.m. GC 241A</p> <p>Prepare for career fair 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. GC 241A</p>
<p>Tuesday Jan. 23 Job search strategies for international students 11 a.m. GC 316</p> <p>Cover letter writing 12 noon - 1 p.m. WUC 255</p> <p>Negotiating skills 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. GC 241A</p>	<p>Thursday Jan. 25 & Friday Jan. 26 Walk-in resume critiques 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. GC 230</p> <p>Saturday Jan. 27 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Resume writing GC 241A</p> <p>11 a.m. - 12 noon Interviewing skills GC 241A</p>
<p>Wednesday Jan. 24 Where the jobs are 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. GC 241A</p>	<p>More workshop info at: http://www.fiu.edu/~career/workshops/</p>

director of development with McIntyre and Associates in the Northwestern Mutual Financial Network, in an interviewing skills workshop, Jan. 18.

His company will recruiting during the fair.

Also, before attending the fair, it is important to consider what to wear. In order to make a professional appearance, Career Services representatives agree on recommending students to dress in business attire.

“For men, that means wear a suit, if you have one, with a shirt and tie ... For women, wear a suit. Business casual would be a skirt or pants and a button down shirt,” Hubacheck said.

Although leaving open the option of wearing either

business or business casual, Hubacheck is specific about one thing:

“Please, do not come to the career fair like you are going to the beach, even if you are just going to look around to see who is there,” Hubacheck said.

According to Hubacheck, those who go inappropriately dressed are not going to be allowed entrance to the event.

The fair will take place in the Graham Center Ballrooms from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Career Services is also organizing a career fair at the Biscayne Bay Campus for Feb. 28.

The Career Services is located in UP at GC 230 and in BBC at the Wolfe University Center, room 255.

Lecturers discuss Cuba's post-Castro future

JOSH LEPREE
Contributing Writer

With the recent stir caused by Fidel Castro's emergency intestinal surgery last July, there has been widespread speculation about Cuba's immediate future. The Cuban Research Institute at University Park stands at the forefront of addressing the issues at hand.

The CRI has two presentations planned for this week that will shed light on many of the questions that have been on the minds of the public since Fidel Castro transferred power to his brother, Raul Castro.

The first of the presentations is entitled "Between Fidel and Raul: What's Next for Cuba?" and will be held Jan. 23 at 12:30 p.m. in the Graham Center, room 243.

It will be presented by FIU Professor Marifeli Perez-Stable, who serves as the vice president for Democratic Governance at the Inter-American Dialogue in Washington, D.C.

Perez-Stable also chaired the FIU Latin American and Caribbean Center's Task Force on Memory, Truth, and Justice, which in 2003 issued the Cuban Reconciliation, a report intended to address many of the issues that will be of importance in Cuba's imminent transition.

She also pens a column on Latin American topics for *The Miami Herald*, and also contributes to newspapers in Spain, Argentina, and Mexico.

In an effort to further expose FIU students to what may happen in a post-Castro Cuba, the CRI will also host a second presentation entitled "Corruption in Cuba: Castro and Beyond," Jan. 24 at 7:30 p.m. in GC 243. This lecture will be based on a recent book titled *Corrupcion en Cuba*, co-authored by Sergio Diaz-Briquets and Jorge Perez-Lopez. The presentation will be in Spanish.

As Diaz-Briquets describes, "The book... examines Cuba's corruption experience, both from historical and contemporary

perspectives, and tries to anticipate how corruption could evolve under various transition scenarios. It also discusses measurements a post-Castro Cuba must implement if wide scale corruption is to be averted ... and the foundations laid for a prosperous, stable and democratic nation."

Both of the authors have served as presidents of the Board of Directors for the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy.

They have also collaborated on many previous occasions on academic papers and books, addressing a wide array of topics concerning Cuba.

The authors will lecture on their view of the institutionalized system of corruption that Castro's government has fostered over the span of decades.

"The consequences of [corruption] were so dire that many analysts have concluded that had corruption been controlled the transitions would have been far smoother with far less adverse political and economic consequences," Diaz-Briquets said describing the conditions following the collapse of the United Soviet Socialist Republics.

Diaz-Briquets currently works in Washington, D.C. as president of NTS Consulting LTD.

Perez-Lopez is currently the executive director of the Fair Labor Association, after having spent more than 30 years within the U.S. government.

He spent 18 years as the director of the Office of International Economic Affairs, where he helped to negotiate labor components of several free trade agreements, including the North American Free Trade Agreement and agreements with Chile, Singapore and Australia.

The CRI is the nation's leading institute for research and academic programs on Cuban and Cuban-American issues.

The institute draws on the expertise of more than 40 faculty members, which constitute the largest nucleus of faculty experts on Cuba and the Cuban-American community

of any university in the United States. The CRI, which specializes in Cuban diaspora studies, benefits from the fact that there are more than 700,000 Cubans in Miami.

FIU holds the largest population of under-

graduate students of Cuban origin, according to the CRI website <http://lacc.fiu.edu/>.

For more information about these and future CRI presentations, call 305-348-1991.

Schedule may have benefits



FERNANDO GARCIA/THE BEACON

FIVE DAYS A WEEK: Senior Carlos Oleachea (right) asks a question at the SGA 3-Day Schedule Forum Jan. 18. Rosa Jones, vice president of student affairs; Corinne Webb, vice president of enrolment services; and Interim Provost Ronald Berkman, (back-left) answer students' concerns. About 25 students attended the forum, which questions whether students really care about the changes.

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in the planning stages, Berkman suggested that the new schedule will not affect parking. With the new schedule, classes will now only be 50 minutes long and Berkman considers that a good thing for academics.

"You'll be so bored during the day that you'll be motivated to go to the library and study," Berkman said.

While the forum did not attract as many attend-

ees as its coordinators would have liked, Jones feels the outcome was a good one.

"I thought it was a lot of good dialogue," Jones said. "I wish there had been more students."

SGC-UP Academic Affairs Chair Melissa Sabatier attributed the low turnout to the location of the forum.

She said it was supposed to be held in the GC Pit where many more students would have been exposed to the forum, but the venue was booked and had to be re-located to the GC Ball-

rooms.

Despite the low turnout, students like Simone Worsdale, were able to get most of the answers they were looking for.

"Before I came here, I was totally against the new schedule," said Worsdale, a freshman. "After it was over, I was convinced it was a good idea. The new schedule will make FIU a better school."

The new three-day class schedule change is set to take place Fall 2007.

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Mourners honor dean's memory

JESSICA SOLIS
Staff Writer

Before he died, Anthony "Tony" Marshall, dean emeritus of the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, told his long-time friend and colleague Rocco Angelo that he wanted his memorial to be a light-hearted affair.

"He said if I didn't keep [the memorial] light, he'd haunt me the rest of my life," Angelo, associate dean of the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, said.

After a battle with brain cancer, Tony Marshall died Dec. 7 in Orlando, Fla.

Over 200 people gathered Jan. 17 at Biscayne Bay Campus' Sheraton Auditorium to remember his witty sense of humor, trademark bow tie and unwavering optimism.

Alumni and former colleagues alike flew in from places such as the Bahamas and California, to pay their respects, as well as recall the good times.

Angelo, who was the master of ceremonies at the memorial, first met Marshall in New York City in 1969 where Marshall was working as a lawyer and Angelo as a consultant in the hospitality industry.

In 1972, during FIU's inaugural year, Marshall joined the University's staff, becoming the founding assistant dean of the school.

A decade later, Marshall became the school's dean and helped it become one of



YALIMAR PANEL/THE BEACON

FOND FAREWELL: Friend and colleague Dean Joseph West watches a video honoring the late Dean Anthony "Tony" Marshall's career.

the top 10 hospitality programs in the country.

Angelo said he and Marshall were opposites but enjoyed their differences.

"He knew my strengths and weaknesses; I knew his strengths and weaknesses. I was the worrier, he was the optimist," Angelo said. "We balanced each other out."

It was Marshall's positive outlook on life that helped him succeed in the industry and in the classroom, according to Angelo.

"Tony always saw the proverbial glass half full. In fact, he was such an optimist, it overflowed all the time. He never saw the downside," Angelo said.

Class of 1985 alumna Zuleika Mok who traveled all the way from her home in Hong Kong to attend the memorial remembered Mar-

shall often grabbed his class' attention by pulling mice out of drinks and making dollar bills disappear.

"I always wanted to move to the front row to enjoy the one-hour lecture," Mok said.

"Every class was a performance, wasn't it?" Angelo asked the large crowd. The room erupted in cheers.

Marshall was known throughout the school for his motto, *Res Ispa Loquitur*, Latin for "the thing speaks for itself."

It was Marshall's signature philosophy on common sense and quick wit that inspired former students like Charlie Savarese, class of 1979, to be successful.

"It has really helped me in my career. Things turned out extremely well as a result," Savarese said, who now

owns his own business in Port Charlotte, Fla.

At the end of the hour-long memorial, a video was shown on Marshall's career and his participation at hospitality seminars.

Some of the most memorable scenes included Marshall relaxing the audience by dressing up as a cowboy or a police officer to demonstrate important points of the hospitality industry to students.

Joseph J. West, current dean of the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, and Marc Itzkoff, class of 1992, saw Marshall as a man "clearly distinguished from all the rest."

"Six weeks before he passed he was playing tennis. He wasn't going to let a damn thing get him down," West said.

Faulty lights leave students in the dark

JOSE MAYA
Staff Writer

As problems with lighting increase around Biscayne Bay Campus, issues brought to light since last semester have still not been addressed.

According to Bill Foster, director of parking and transportation, there are currently 20 parking lot lights around BBC that are not working due to their bulbs not being replaced.

There are also two lights that require more than electrical maintenance, with only poles left where the lights once stood due to hurricane damage from previous years. One is in the parking lot, the other around the information station near the campus entrance.

"When we have critical situations, such as the one we had this week when the parking lot lights went out, it is usually related to problems

with power," Foster said.

There are five lights in the Academic II parking lot that are either constantly flickering or going out due to power outages.

"Too many people were using electricity on campus at one time causing the contractor to go down. I fixed several lights but we must wait for the bucket truck to fix the rest," Foster said.

Though Foster said that his department is currently working on a deal to rent a bucket truck to allow them to work from an elevated point on the lights, a company has not been confirmed yet.

Nonetheless, he assured, "[The lights] should be done by the end of the month."

BBC Student Government Council Vice President Pamela St. Fleur brought up the lighting issue during a parking and transportation student forum at the end of last year.

The event featured Foster and Lazaro Rodriguez, coordinator for the department of parking and transportation, and sponsored by SGC.

At that forum, Foster mentioned at the meeting that a Safety Walk would be held in the Spring semester, as well as call facilities maintenance and have the lights fixed.

When contacted by *The Beacon* Jan. 18, Comptroller and Finance Chair Zachary Trautenberg said he was unaware that the problem was still ongoing, especially since he usually leaves BBC before 8 p.m.

"I haven't heard [St. Fleur] say anything about it since that day, so I don't know if this is a new matter or if it's the same problem that hasn't been dealt with," Trautenberg said.

St. Fleur was unavailable for comment.

Foster and Rodriguez were both unavailable for comment

after their Jan. 16 interview with *The Beacon*, though both said they were also unaware of the situation.

Trautenberg said Foster, Rodriguez and Fernandez are working together with facilities management to fix the lights, but they do not know when the lights will be fixed.

Students such as junior Yanetza Camacho and senior Tamara Adrien both said they are uneasy and fear for their well being when they have to walk through the AC II parking lot at night.

"We need more lights. It's unsafe," Adrien said.

As junior Lovely Magny commented about the lack of lighting in the parking lot adjacent to the Academic II building on the evening of Jan. 17, one of the pole lights flickered away.

"It's definitely too dark. Hey, one of the lights just turned off," Magny said.

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • JANUARY 22

IVFC Bible Study: 3 p.m., WUC 245

TUESDAY • JANUARY 23

SOC-BBC Lead/ENGAGE Workshop: 12 p.m., WUC 157

IVFC "Know Why You Believe" Group Discussion: 12:30 p.m., WUC 159

SPC General Meeting: 4 p.m. WUC 159

WEDNESDAY • JANUARY 24

WUC Time Capsule Social Function: 10 a.m., WUC Panther Square

Panther Power Meeting: 1 p.m., WUC 157

CCC Impact Movement Lunch: 2 p.m., WUC 245

SGA General Meeting: 3:30 p.m., WUC 155

African New World Studies - Vincent Mantsoe Lecture: 6 p.m., WUC Ballroom B

THURSDAY • JANUARY 25

SOC Special Election: 12 p.m., WUC 159

SJMC Club Rush: 3:30 p.m., WUC Panther Square

CSA - Catholic Mass and Fellowship: 5 p.m., WUC 245

FRIDAY • JANUARY 26

Filmoteka Film Festival Series: 7 p.m., WUC Ballroom A

SUNDAY • JANUARY 28

Jose Marti Breakfast Scholarship: 8 a.m. - 2 p.m., WUC Ballroom B

- Compiled by Reuben Pereira

SGC-BBC Notes

Jan. 17 Call to Order: 3:35 p.m., Adjournment: 4:51 p.m.

President's Report (Camilo Silva)

- "In the Zone," intramural tournament begins Jan. 31. Encouraged students to participate. The tournament will take place through the semester.

- High Achievers: looking for a new theme. "Recognizing our Shining Stars" conflicted with a Student Life event.

Comptroller (Zachary Trautenberg)

- Need to reschedule SGA retreat. Original date, Feb. 9, overlaps with Relay for Life. New choices are Feb. 16 or Feb. 17. Informal vote: 10 in favor of Feb. 17, five in favor of Jan. 16.

Cabinet Reports

- Intern Coordinator (Yseland Pierre): "Saga Days," an event scheduled to recruit prospective graduate students will take place March 26. Volunteer fair will take place Feb. 7 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- Director of Technology (Wes Wells): Upgrading computer lab in WUC 200. The room will be upgraded with "top of the line equipment including dual monitors...the goal is to make you [students] do what you do better."

New Business

- Representative At-Large (Gabriel Labrador): Asked SGC for opinions regarding donating funds to the Science Club to cover the cost of entertainment for the Jose Marti Breakfast, Jan. 27. No official decision was reached.

- Compiled by Ana Davis

OPINION

C. Joel Marino Editor in Chief • Christopher Necuze Production Manager • Christopher Cabral Opinion Editor

Education system in Iraq under terrorist attack

JUAN C. ESTRADA
Contributing Writer

We are living in a politically charged atmosphere. One cannot watch the news or listen to the radio without hearing about the latest killing in Iraq, nuclear weapons in Iran and general turmoil in the Middle East.

Some might say that as college students, there is nothing we can do. They say that as young people, our opinion is irrelevant.

In a democracy however, it is the duty of the people to give voice to their concerns and try to make a difference, no matter their age or level of education.

I mean, just look at Howard Dean and his grass roots movement — it was largely made up of college students.

Dean's movement was able to raise a coalition through common ideals and intense motivation. While the movement fell short of electoral success, it changed the debate in

Washington and was in many ways the catalyst for the dramatic shift of opinion against the war over the years.

President Bush said in his address to the nation on Jan. 11 that there will be an escalation in the number of troops in Iraq — 20,000 more.

With this in mind, it is important to note what the effects of the war have been on the civilian population we are attempting to pacify.

When one actually examines these effects, it becomes clear that an increase in boots on the ground in Iraq will make little difference to the allegedly stated goal: 'to bring democracy to the Middle East'.

On Nov. 14, 2006, CNN reported that more than 70 Iraqi educators were kidnapped from the Education Ministry in Baghdad.

The perpetrators were presumed to be part of sectarian militias, among them Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army, wearing

what looked like police uniforms and operating in clock-synchrony.

Education Minister Abed Dhiyab al-Ajili attempted to suspend classes in public universities as a result and petitioned Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki "to protect the teachers of the nation." Against the wishes of al-Ajili, Iraq's besieged universities remained open.

A day later, Iraq's Education Minister submitted his resignation underscoring "the government's inability to protect teachers."

The education crisis in Iraq is much broader than the consequences of one incident. On Jan 2nd, NPR reported that more than 1,000 professors have fled the country since the beginning of the war with just as many being killed.

Abdul Majid Saddoun, an exiled professor living in Syria, has opened a university in the neighboring country.

The faculty is comprised of some of the best

exiled Iraqi educators — chased out by threats and violence.

So what are we to conclude? It is evident that sectarian leaders are suppressing higher education and their advocates; some say it is because their customs contradict Islamic law.

I think this suppression is a great hindrance to the achievement of our stated goal to bring democracy to the Middle East.

Keeping Iraqis from attaining a decent education will only perpetuate the ignorance that is spreading throughout the Middle East.

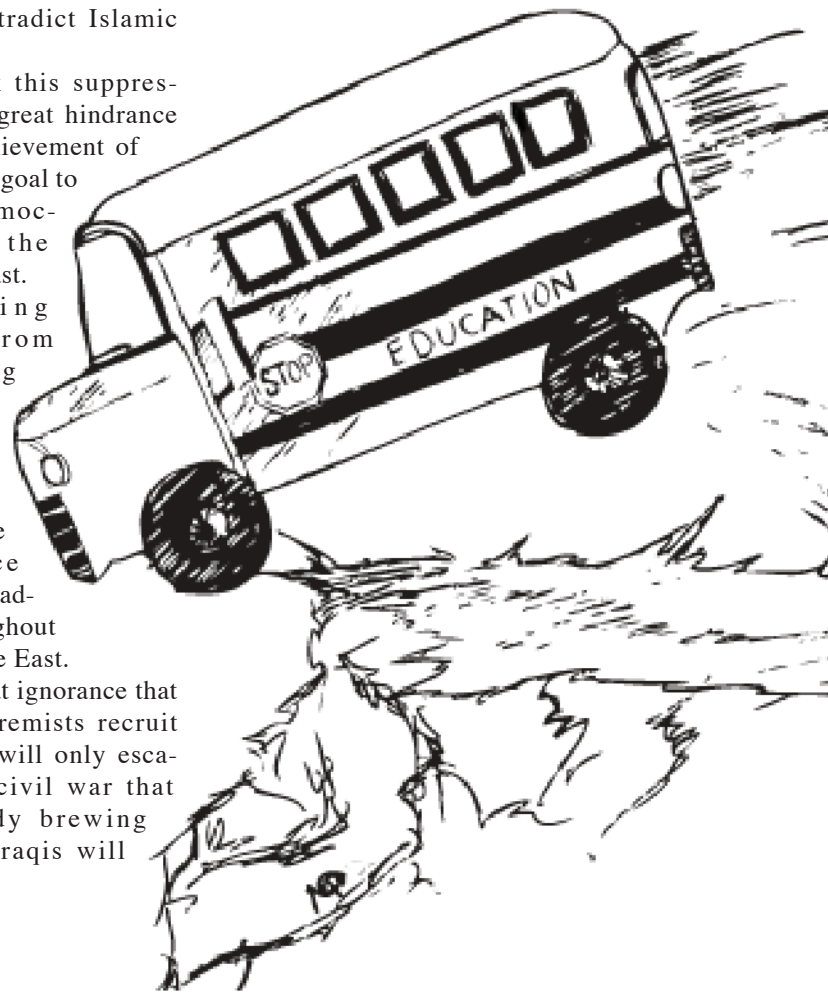
It is that ignorance that helps extremists recruit youth, it will only escalate the civil war that is already brewing in Iraq. Iraqis will

become more divided and the sectarian violence that already permeates every aspect of Iraqi life will only magnify.

Thus, we must advocate not just electoral democracy, but also the

other components that make a free society — this includes education, freedom of expression, etc.

With this in mind, we may change the course of this conflict and improve our prospects for success.



College can change beliefs

CELINE PELOFI
Contributing Writer

Every person has their own religion or set of beliefs and ideas. Whether influenced by their upbringing, by their own studies or way of thinking, the question is, what happens to those beliefs in college?

From my own personal experience, and from talking with some of my closest friends, I have found that "college" in itself can have various impacts on a person's religion or beliefs. Your parental influences or cultural background can have a major impact on how your views mature in college.

I grew up in two extremely religious homes. On one side were my father and stepmother who are Messianic Jews.

As a child, I had to read certain passages of the Bible every week and sometimes spent hours doing so.

I could never be told enough what I was supposed to do to please God and have a successful religious life following Him.

There was always something that I was doing wrong and I felt it to be more of a burden instead of a belief.

On the other hand, my mother and stepfather are devout Christians. They were and still are the "You have to go to church every Sunday, or else..." type of fol-

lowers. I was told so many times, "You cannot do that because you are a Christian," or "You have to do this because you are a Christian," and it was more of a list of do's and don't's to me than it was a "personal relationship with God," or a choice of views.

Then came college. I was on my own, and for the first time in my life I could make my own decisions. I could think, do, feel and believe whatever I pleased.

For the first time in my short life, I started to question why I believed what I did and put my parents' views aside.

I found that my own beliefs were similar to that of my parents; however, I did view many things differently, and became much more open minded to various arguments that I knew my "parental units" would immediately shut down. Through all of that I came to the conclusion that when you are brought up in a strict religious environment then go to college, you are more likely to separate from that way of life.

You may not necessarily abandon the religion completely, but begin to think for yourself and find out what it is that you truly believe, beyond what you were trained to think and accept as true.

Now on the other side of the spectrum are the people who were brought up with little or no

religious backgrounds at all.

In one of my classes I met a girl who was raised in a Muslim home that was not very religious.

When she came to college she began to inquire about her background and the religion of her heritage. She slowly began to immerse herself in those beliefs and found herself becoming fervently devout. She found her views in college, which is ultimately what everyone does.

I never thought that my views would change. I went to a Christian middle and high school, therefore I really grew up in a small bubble where everyone shared the same views.

Going to college opened my eyes to the world and its diversity.

Because of it, I have learned to respect and accept people no matter what their beliefs and opinions are, when I was taught that others were wrong. I have been able to question my previous beliefs and realize that I don't see things exactly the same way that I used too.

College is a time to take into consideration what you were taught and to find out what you really think and truly believe, not because you were told to believe it but because you choose to. So perhaps the question you should ask yourself is: What do you believe?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

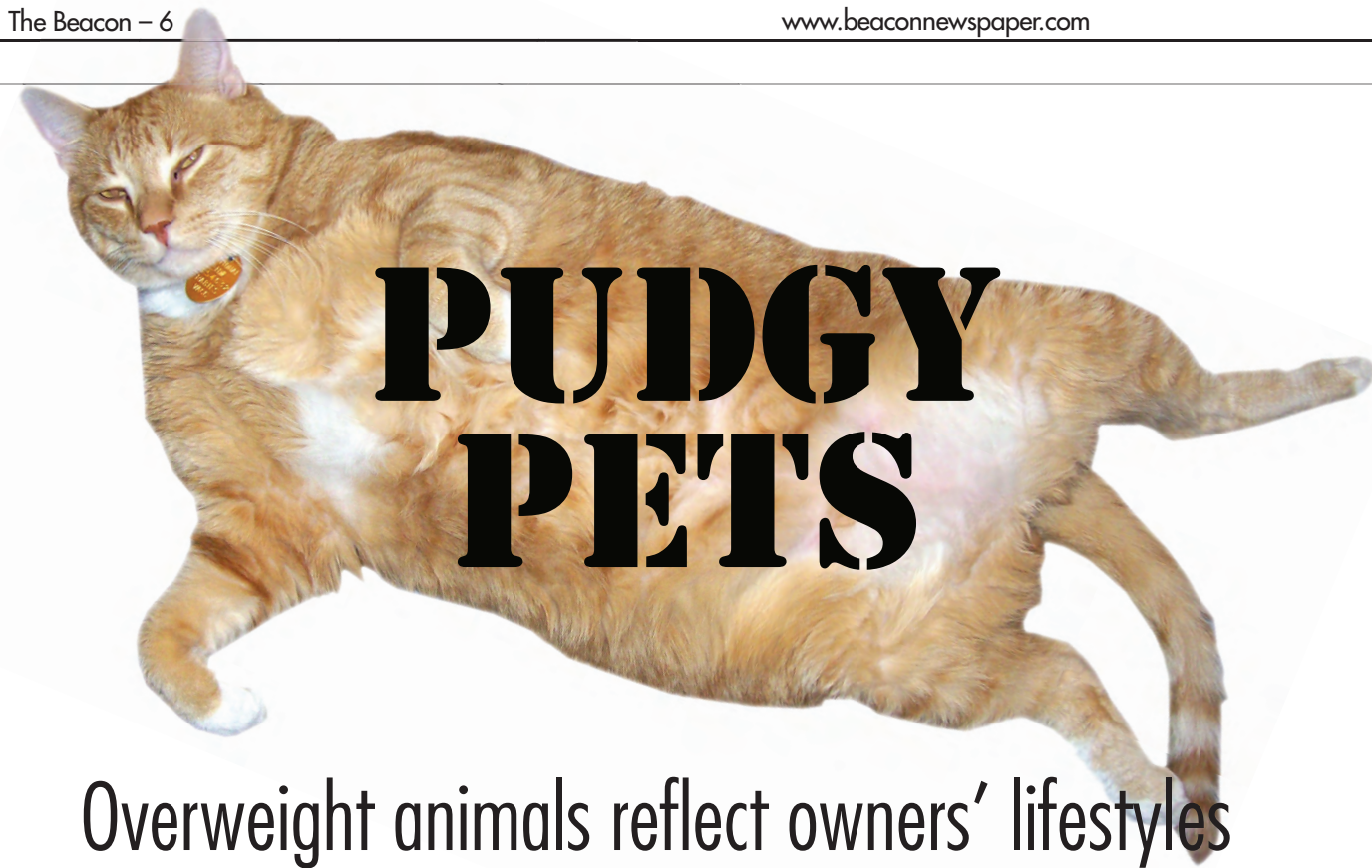
Have your religious beliefs changed as a result of your experiences in college?

- Yes – Now I have a greater appreciation for my faith.
- Yes – Thanks to college, I have converted to another religion: Athiesm
- No – Nothing can change my religious beliefs.
- Huh? What religious beliefs?
- Yes – Now I worship the Golden Panther

Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor must be dropped off in GC 210 at University Park, WUC 124 at the Biscayne Bay Campus or sent to beaconopinion@yahoo.com. Letters must include the writer's full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. *The Beacon* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words.



Overweight animals reflect owners' lifestyles

CHARLIE GRAU
Sports Editor

Humans aren't the only species looking to cut back on their eating habits as a New Year's resolution.

Dr. Darko Mladenobic, a veterinarian for the past 18 years who currently treats animals at the Animal Wellness Clinic of Tamarac, has seen this gluttonous trend grow over time. He said that around 60 percent of the dogs he sees are obese, while 75 to 80 percent of cats that come into his office suffer from obesity.

"I noticed that cats that are indoors and outdoors are much leaner and healthier than the cats that are strictly indoors because of the lifestyle they live," Mladenobic said. "They have a free choice of food that [they] can eat anytime they want, so we are creating perfect couch potatoes in the animal world."

Mladenobic went on to explain that most of the dog food today has too much carbohydrates in them

and that dogs and cats aren't designed to take in an abundance of carbohydrates.

Pet owners like sophomore Michel Medina have seen the effects that a lack of exercise and poor nutrition can have on an animal.

"Whenever I see [my friend Ulise's] cat, I just think to myself, 'Damn, that cat's fat,'" Medina said.

Medina and Panky, his 5-year-old Dalmatian, run and jog together for 20 minutes a few times a week to avoid similar fat thoughts being expressed about their appearance.

Just like their owners, some pets may turn to exercise in order to attract the opposite sex.

Junior Iraines Rivera sometimes chases her 12-year-old Shiatsu Benji around the neighborhood after Benji escapes from their home.

"Sometimes he opens the door and he just escapes," Rivera said. "We usually walk him but sometimes, especially if another dog is in heat, we open the door and he just gets out and then we have to go searching for him."

Maintaining a pet's health may sound easy, but with the hectic schedules people can have, maintaining one's own health may prove to be burdensome.

Junior Alessondra Archabal and her boyfriend, Alby Radulic, blame pet obesity on owners' lack of commitment to their pets' health. On the weekends, Archabal and Radulic like to take their 2-year-old pitbull Peanut and 1-year-old Pekingese dog Alex to the park to play Frisbee and catch.

"They take them for granted and don't take time out for their pets," Archabal said. "[Owners] are probably lazy and they don't take the time to take them on walks and play with them."

PETS, page 7



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BEN F. BADGER JR./THE BEACON

You say you want a revolution?



HOW TO...

a humor column

Alicia Bustamante

It seems increasingly peculiar each day to me how people can watch others suffer and do nothing about it. Now I'm no bleeding-heart liberal; I'm often quoted as saying "hippie ideals are a product of a culture too drugged up to know better." However, with the recent death and near deaths of prominent dictators Saddam Hussein and hometown-hero Fidel Castro (or Fidelito, as he's known on the street), it's apparent the need for organization is now.

I've come to the conclusion that it's not that oppressed people don't have the will or the strength to overcome, it's just they don't have a wicked MacGyver idea to pull them through. That's why I've done the world a freakin' service and made a guide on how to get rid of such vermin. Living with my mom for 20-something years has to count for something.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

This key idea has been touched upon by battle experts such as Sun Tzu to militant rap-metal bands. Translated, it means you better be aware of the situation or you'll end up like those creatures from *Signs*. Silly aliens.

If you're willing to take the risk of taking out a heavily armed and guarded dictator, I assure you if you're caught there won't be any sitcom-esque air vent you can escape through. And Bob Saget definitely won't be there to smooth things out and make you shake hands.

Besides knowing your consequences, knowing a little about your target is good, too. Why hasn't anyone used the fact that Castro is allergic to shellfish? Squirt some clam juice into a Cohiba and that guy's head'll explode. No one remembers the failed '62 Clam Chowder Potluck Dinner between Kennedy and Castro? I'm pretty

OVERTHROW, page 8

Students speculate on death of Castro, communism

LEONCIO ALVAREZ
Staff Writer

Some have called him the Devil himself. Others have said he is the Hitler of our generation. You've been hearing his name since you were a baby and many can't wait for him to pass.

"My family has been waiting for Fidel [Castro] to die for like two months now," said junior Roxanna De Los Rios. "My [grandmother] says she wants to move back to Cuba as soon as Fidel is dead. I keep telling her it's a bad idea but she won't listen. She's set on it."

Most of the older folk who lived in Cuba in the past share similar feelings to

those of De Los Rios' grandmother, but the future of Cuba is not set in stone.

"My whole family is Cuban so of course I would love to visit it one day, but I don't think it would be a good idea to go any time soon," said freshman Cristina Andrade. "Once Fidel dies, the people of Cuba are going to go into panic mode."

Some believe that not only will Cuba go into 'panic mode', but Miami will probably encounter a lot of commotion as well.

"I'm pretty sure Miami will look a lot like it did when the Marlins won the World Series," said De Los Rios. "I'm sure there will be a lot of people on the streets and a lot of traffic and noise

everywhere."

Just because Castro is supposedly close to death does not necessarily mean that communism will be on its way out of Cuba any time soon. Castro plans on leaving his power to his brother Raul Castro, who is almost 30 years younger, meaning the Castro regime may be far from over.

According to an article by Miguel Faria on *Newsmax.com*, Raul Castro is known for his hatred toward the United States and would prefer a free-enterprise socialist government, similar to that of China's.

"I've heard from a lot of people that the main thing that has helped Fidel keep

control for so long is his charisma, and charisma is something that Raul apparently lacks," Andrade said.

Even though Castro's regime seems to be coming to a close, there are still sources that say his health is improving. According to *The Miami Herald*, Castro's doctor said on Wednesday that he is showing "some progressive improvement."

"It really upsets me that some people say he's doing fine while others say he's never been worse," said junior Mario Velez. "All we can do is wait for news that he is dead."

It is rumored that the U.S. might have

CASTRO, page 8

REVIEWS (YOU CAN USE)

MOVIE *Letters from Iwo Jima*

REUBEN PEREIRA
Senior Staff Writer

Letters from Iwo Jima, Clint Eastwood's second film about the battle on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima (a companion piece to last year's *Flags of our Fathers*) is arguably one of the director's finest works. While *Flags* dealt with the story behind the iconic photograph taken on the Japanese island and its use as military propaganda, *Letters* explores the battle from the Japanese perspective and is mostly spoken in Japanese.

Perhaps one of the bloodiest battles of World War II with more than 6,800 American troops losing their lives and more than 20,000 injured out of the 100,000 troops fighting, the Japanese had it much worse – only 1,080 of their 20,000 troops survived the battle.

The film's story begins in 1945, a few months before the battle, where Japanese soldiers dig trenches on the beaches of Iwo Jima, most of them fearing that their efforts may be futile and that they may be digging their own graves. Through the letters they write to their families, we get to see who these men were and their thoughts before and after the war.

Kazunari Ninomiya, a popular Japanese pop star, gives the film's best performance as the mesmerizing Saigo, a baker, who only wants the war to end so he can return to his wife and baby. Most of the film's best scenes are spent with him as his character tries to make sense of his existence. As his tour of duty begins, he is mistreated and pushed around for his ineptitude, but his intelligence and luck play a hand in the battle.

Ken Watanabe, whose American credits include *Memoirs of a Geisha* and *The Last Samurai*, plays General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, the newly appointed general whose tactics are frowned upon by many at first. However, his techniques end up making the battle one of the



COURTESY PHOTO

bloodiest in American history, frustrating the American forces until the very end. As the general, Watanabe exudes a calm, confident aura – something that is rare to see in portrayals of army officers.

Eastwood, however, does not sympathize with the devil as some may think by showing the Japanese as the good guys and the Americans as the bad guys. He does reveal the Japanese's tyranny and brutality, which shows us that the Japanese GIs were victims of the imperialist government as much as their adversaries. To them, suicide in battle was mandatory and honor-

able in the face of defeat – something that many of us would see as pointless and a waste of manpower.

With almost all of its color diluted, *Letters* feels like a vintage World War II document, the way Eastwood wanted it to be seen. Along with *Flags*, *Letters* gives us a rounded and thoughtful look at the Battle of Iwo Jima, making us understand that whatever side you're on, the people who fight the battles are one and the same – regular people fighting for the ideals and beliefs of a few elite. The final message is clear – war is hell, no matter what side you're fighting on.

GAME *WarioWare: Smooth Moves*

REINIER HERNANDEZ
Staff Writer

"It's-a-Wii! Wario!" This bizarre greeting is what awaits players when they first load *WarioWare: Smooth Moves* into their Nintendo Wiis, and it's only one of many humorous and often satirical moments to come. *Smooth Moves* is the first entry for the WarioWare series on the Nintendo Wii and continues the tradition of fast paced mini-games, vibrant colors, oddball characters and the slightly twisted humor that the series has become known for.

As in previous Wario games, the action comes in the form of simple mini-games, lasting anywhere from 10 seconds to a minute or more in length. This is a blessing for those who normally lose interest in video games quickly or for those who like games but often can't spare more than a few minutes a day to play. Thankfully, there are literally hundreds of games packed into *Smooth Moves* so that the repetition of previous games is kept to a minimum.

The key difference between *Smooth Moves* and previous Wario games is the use of the Nintendo Wii remote. All of the mini-games make use of the remote in various ways: there are over a dozen different "forms" or stances to hold the Wii remote throughout the games, ranging from hold-

ing it like a television remote, to holding it up to your nose like an elephant's trunk or holding it atop your head in what is known as the "Mohawk" form.

Each stance brings a different kind of game play, and the game advocates playing in an open area: space becomes crucial when playing games that require more motion than a typical video game, such as jumping to play a game of jump rope, or twisting your hips to play with a hula hoop.

WarioWare has a fantastic multiplayer mode that allows up to 12 players at once, all sharing one remote. Players quickly pass the remote to the next person in line, which can become a game in itself, as there is only a brief pause in which to pass the remote. However, the multiplayer mode must be unlocked by completing the single player mode, a stipulation most likely implemented to allow the player to learn the various game modes before plunging into multiplayer.

One of the best selling points of the game is its sense of humor. There will be mini-games where you'll often wind up scratching your head in contemplation of what you just played, such as shaving a man's mustache, picking a nose or using a cheese grater on a cell phone. Several of the mini-games in WarioWare are spoofs



COURTESY PHOTO

or recreations of popular Nintendo games, such as *Super Mario Bros.* or *Legend of Zelda*. This ability to self-parody is an appreciated breath of fresh air amongst the various dark and violent games that saturate the video game market.

And so if you're looking for a frantic multi-player experience for your Wii once you've exhausted *Wii Sports* or need a game to keep you entertained in short bursts due to ADD, pick up *WarioWare: Smooth Moves*.

Prescription diet pill not a cure-all for fat cats, dogs

PETS, page 6

According to Mladenobic, pets frequently reflect their owner's lifestyle.

"They're like a mirror of their owner," Mladenobic said. "If the

owner is not fit and overweight, it is very likely that their pet is going to probably be 95 percent of the time out of shape, unless the animal is really young."

A recent Food and Drug Administration study showed that 30 percent of U.S. dogs are

overweight and 5 percent are obese.

The FDA also recently approved the first prescription drug to combat obesity in canines. Stentrol, a drug produced by the Pfizer pharmaceutical company, aims to reduce

the appetite of dogs and their ability to absorb fat.

Just like humans, Dr. Mladenobic believes that it will take more than a pill to get pets into better shape.

"The secret to staying fit is eat less, exercise more and that

same applies to an animal," Mladenobic said. "Most of these people never let their dogs and cats outside, so of course it's going to lead to some problems. I just can not see that one medicine would do to get rid of the problem."

LIVELY LUAU



YALI PANELL/THE BEACON

LET'S DANCE: Graduate student Jan Jaworski (center) dances at a Polynesian luau at the Biscayne Bay Campus' Wolfe University Center. Students were invited to shake their hips on stage with hula dancers.

Guide to overcoming oppression, lethargy

OVERTHROW, page 6

sure that's what started the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Some consider it pertinent to know your enemy's emotional weaknesses as well. Castro loves calico cats. It's a fact. The legend goes that he nursed one back to health after it saved his life in a knife fight. After that, they were best friends. When it died, commerce shut down for four days. Really, revolutionaries need to be more observant of these things.

POWER IN NUMBERS

In considering the great conspiracies and plots of our time, there seems to be one mastermind, a couple of henchmen and another who automatically dies for the plot to be completed. This system is ridiculous. Wouldn't it be much more effective to just have lots of people who automatically die? Statistically, chances are better with more brainwashed people on a mission to kill. Especially if they don't know everyone else is on the same mission. I mean, it worked in Iraq, right?

AND NOW TO RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

The only way to win against "the machine" is to look like – well, the machine. I have a lot of friends who are rebel-without-a-cause minded and apocalypse-now bodied. It's like they're inspired by El Chef versus El Che, if you know what I mean. Ideally, a routine integrating cardio and toning is the best combo for the revolutionary on the go.

Also, one has to be ready to engage in melee combat in case technology fails. You could know how to make plastic explosives until next Tuesday but if someone punches you in the face you can't respond with "Ow, that really wasn't cool, man!"

Sometimes I like to go to the local nursing home and just start pummeling the elderly, just to see if I could take on Fidel in his current state. Let's just say I won – just not the manslaughter suits. Good Luck

Dictator's possible demise catalyst for change



COURTESY PHOTO

CASTRO, page 6

military intervention once Castro dies, but if those are the plans, then it should have occurred already, Velez believes.

Castro transferred power over to his brother in late July and no major changes or problems have occurred, yet.

"It's not news that Cuba is a communist country. If the U.S. really wanted to see a change in Cuba, they would have gone in there a long time ago," Velez said.

When asked whether or not the U.S. should intervene with Raul Castro's control, Velez said the U.S. should stay put and mind its

own business.

"We're not stupid. We have too many problems to deal with. Why would we go into Cuba when we haven't cleaned up our own mess in the Middle East?" Velez said.

The U.S. seems prepared for any situation in Cuba, though. Even the Coast Guard is said to be ready to handle a flood of refugees once the dictator dies.

"The truth is that no one knows what will happen except for Raul," said sophomore Sebastian Thomas. "Cuba is about to undergo a major change, and all we can do is wait for it. Of course it would be great to see Cuba prosper back into the great place it once was, but only time can tell what the future has in store."



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MEN'S SUN BELT BASKETBALL STANDING

WESTERN DIVISION

TEAM	CONF	OVERALL	HOME	AWAY
Louisiana-Monroe	5-2	11-8	8-0	1-8
New Orleans	5-3	9-10	5-3	4-5
Arkansa State	5-3	10-10	7-1	3-7
North Texas	3-3	12-5	7-1	5-4
UALR	4-5	9-11	5-3	3-8
Louisiana-Lafayette	2-7	4-15	4-6	0-9
Denver	1-6	2-15	2-5	0-10

EASTERN DIVISION

TEAM	CONF	OVERALL	HOME	AWAY
Western Kentucky	6-2	14-6	7-2	6-3
South Alabama	6-2	12-7	7-2	3-5
Middle Tennessee	4-4	8-10	4-4	4-3
Florida Atlantic	4-3	8-9	5-2	3-7
Troy	3-5	8-10	4-3	1-7
FIU	2-5	7-10	5-3	2-7

*All records up to date as of Jan. 16

NEXT FOR MEN'S BASKETBALL

MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
					@ LMU 3:30	
MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
			@ NOU 8:00		ASU 7:30	

WOMEN'S SUN BELT BASKETBALL STANDING

WESTERN DIVISION

TEAM	CONF	OVERALL	HOME	AWAY
Middle Tennesse	8-0	16-3	10-2	6-1
Western Kentucky	5-2	11-5	5-2	5-2
FIU	4-4	10-8	7-5	2-3
South Alabama	3-5	9-9	5-3	2-6
Troy	3-5	10-8	4-4	3-3
FAU	0-8	4-16	3-5	0-9

EASTERN DIVISION

TEAM	CONF	OVERALL	HOME	AWAY
Arkansas State	7-2	13-6	9-1	3-5
Louisiana-Lafayette	7-2	15-5	6-1	6-4
Denver	5-3	10-7	6-0	3-5
UALR	5-4	12-7	9-1	3-6
Louisiana-Monroe	3-4	13-5	6-2	6-3
North Texas	1-5	4-12	2-2	2-10
New Orleans	1-7	7-13	5-6	1-6

*All records up to date as of Jan. 16

NEXT FOR WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
					@ LMU 1:00	
MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
			@ NOU 2:30		ASU 5:30	

Golden Panthers defense and shooting extend streak to two

BASKETBALL, page 12

After exchanging turn-overs, the Golden Panthers came out of a time out with 28 seconds remaining in regulation.

The Mean Green defended point guard Michael James well, and shut Villegas down in the corner, but Galindo was able to step back and bury what turned out to be the game winner in front of Watson.

The Mean Green had one more chance to steal the victory with just 1.2 seconds left, but Villegas picked off an in-bound pass by Bell to secure the Golden Panther win.

"We were trying to switch everything. I saw Galindo getting pushed out under the rim so I moved up and was able to get the ball. We keep practicing

and we have confidence in ourselves, that's all it is," Villegas said.

Essola finished the game with 12 points and eight rebounds. Villegas added 11 points and five boards.

Watson led NTU with 18 points. Wooden added 14 points and seven rebounds. Davis finished with 10 points -- seven points under his season.

The Golden Panthers shot 50 percent from beyond the arc and 41.5 percent from the floor for the game.

After dropping five straight, the Golden Panthers have now won two games in a row -- both in thrilling fashion.

They will look to keep up their winning ways as they head on the road to face Louisiana-Monroe Jan. 20 and New Orleans Jan. 25.



JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON

SHOT: Freshman guard Mike James converted a fade away shot while being defended by a North Texas defender.

O'Neal to miss two more games

TIM REYNOLDS
AP Sports Writer

The Shaquille O'Neal comeback watch will continue for at least a few more days.

O'Neal, who's recovering from surgery to repair torn left knee cartilage, will miss at least two more games before returning to the Miami Heat lineup, interim coach Ron Rothstein said.

He missed Miami's home game Thursday night against Indiana and will not play when the Heat visits Philadelphia on Friday. The earliest he could come back is Sunday, when the Heat hosts Dallas in a rematch of last year's NBA finals, which Miami won in six games.

"Shaq is working out, feeling good, getting better day to day," Rothstein said after the Heat's shootaround Thursday morning. "That's it. Case closed."

Thursday's game was the

32nd O'Neal has missed since the Nov. 19 surgery.

He took part in a full-contact, five-on-five workout Wednesday for the first time since the operation and said a decision on playing against the Pacers hinged on how his knee responded from that test.

Rothstein said O'Neal did not have a setback and was able to take part in the shootaround, but stressed the team is continuing to exercise caution. O'Neal will continue working out on a daily basis.

"Each individual knows when they're ready," Rothstein said. "He wants to play. You think he wants to do all those court drills? It's much easier playing. But he's not ready to play yet, in any sense. Confidence in the leg, conditioning, wind. ... You've got to remember, he's 7-foot-1, 330 pounds. He's a different individual."

O'Neal was not available for comment Thursday.

When he returns, the Heat should have their full complement of regular-rotation players available for the first time since winning the NBA championship on June 20.

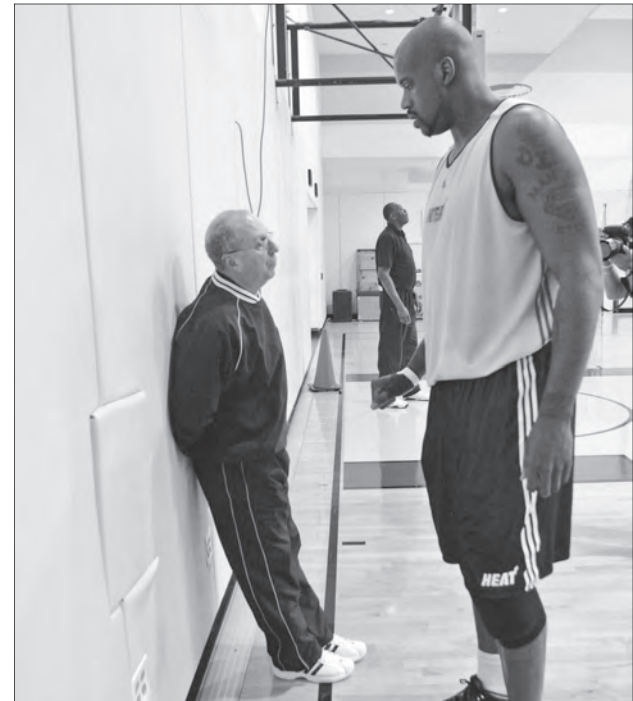
O'Neal has played in only four games, none of those with point guard Jason Williams, who missed the

season's first seven games and five others since while continuing to recover from offseason knee surgery. Finals MVP Dwyane Wade also has missed six games with injuries.

"We understand as athletes that certain injuries to certain players take longer," Wade said. "This is a knee injury to someone who weighs 300-some pounds. We know it's going to take a little longer.

We just want to make sure he comes back full strength. No matter how many games it takes, we know he's going to be there with us when we have to make our run."

After beating Indiana on Thursday, the Heat are 18-20, four games behind Washington in the Southeast Division standings and five games back of Cleveland for the top mark in the Eastern Conference.



LYNNE SLADKY/AP PHOTO

GIANT RECOVERY: Shaquille O'Neal (right) speaks with Miami Heat interim head coach Ron Rothstein (left). O'Neal is recovering from knee surgery.

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Cristobal fills coaching positions with colleagues

CHARLIE GRAU
Sports Editor

Head football coach Mario Cristobal said recruiting was the key ingredient for success in division I college football. Besides luring 18 year old high school football players to FIU, Cristobal has been gingerly putting together his staff as well.

Cristobal cleaned house as soon as he arrived to FIU, only retaining linebackers coach Vernon Hargreaves and offensive graduate assistant David Tabor from the Don Strock's staff.

Defensive assistant Bernard Clark was Cristobal's first hire. Clark was part of the University of Miami's 1987 and 1989 national championship teams.

This is his second stint at FIU after serving as the Golden Panthers' defensive coordinator from 2004-2005 season before leaving the program to be the University of South Florida's defensive line coach.

"I may end up coaching d-line or may end up coaching linebackers, we're not exactly sure yet," Clark said. "It

depends on how defensive coordinator [Phil Galiano] wants to maneuver the defense."

Cristobal's next two hires came from his former team, UM. Former UM graduate assistant Mike Cassano was hired as running backs coach and recruiting coordinator, and Jeff Papovich was hired to coach special teams.

Cassano worked mainly with the running backs while coaching at UM, and helped develop running back Javarris James become one of the most productive freshman running backs in UM's history.

"We want to be known as an extremely



CLARK



COLEY



LAFFERE



GALIANO

aggressive team. A team that gets after [other teams], a team that lays it on the line and plays together," Clark said. "Guys that are going play hard. The worst thing a team can say about you is that 'you guys are soft.' That's the last thing you want a team saying about you. I want to make sure people know that we're tough and we come to play every game."

All of the coaches Cristobal is hiring have some type of recruiting ties to South Florida, like offensive coordinator James Coley, who won the 2002 Florida 6A State Championship while serving as the head coach at Norland High School.

Coley then served as an offensive assistant and quality control coach for the Miami Dolphins.

Cristobal said the offense will be exciting under Coley.

"You have to implement a couple of systems that are going to take advantage of those athletes. It's going to cater to what you can bring to the program. There's not going to be any limits or handcuffs on either side of the ball," Cristobal said.

On the defensive side of the ball, Phil Galiano will inherit one of the top defenses in the country.

Galiano served as an assistant coach at Rutgers and guided the Scarlet Knights defense to dominance as the unit was ranked fifth in the country last year with 3.15 sacks and 7.92 tackles for a loss per game.

The latest addition to the staff is offensive line coach Greg Laffere, who comes from division I-AA football program Illinois State.

Laffere will be responsible for reviving a rushing offense that struggled much of last season.

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Jekabsone leads women's team to victory over North Texas

MAGALLY ESTRELLA
Contributing Writer

At the sound of the buzzer, it was apparent that FIU wanted to win this game. The usually mild mannered Senior center Lasma Jekabsone fired up her team before tip-off.

The Golden Panthers improved to 10-8, (4-4 Sun Belt Conference) snapping their four game losing streak. North Texas 4-12, (1-5 Sun Belt Conference) fell 67-55 in a game dominated by FIU Jan. 18 at Pharmed Arena.

FIU shot 45.5% from the floor and limited North Texas to a measly 36.7% shooting. The Golden Panthers also had the edge on free throw attempts. FIU shot 83.3% from the line while North Texas only shot 60%. FIU also out-rebounded North Texas 41-29.

Jekabsone led the game with 23 points and added four steals; Jekabsone was perfect from the line, going 4 for 4. Sophomore guard LaQuetta Ferguson scored 19 points and knocked down nine boards, she was one assist shy of tying her career high eight assists.

This women's basketball team was the complete opposite of the team that had lost four in a row. This time FIU led by as many as 19 points, didn't fall behind by more than two points and owned the court. "It feels good to win again, we didn't let [North Texas] do what they usually do, we didn't let them score as easily and that's why we won, they are a tough team, they are really athletic and they have a strong post presence but our post did an excellent job taking away their inside game," Ferguson said.

FIU played with intensity and passion, two things that had been missing since their last win on Jan 4. Jekabsone was determined to elevate her productivity along with her team.

"We had two team meetings and we decided we were going to have a fresh start and start from the beginning and just play good and play together [as a team], this game we hustled more, rebounded more and knocked down our shots, as a senior, I thought to myself that there are only 11 games left, I needed to step up," Lasma Jekabsone said.

In the opening two minutes of the game, North Texas enjoyed their biggest lead of the game, two, for 23 seconds. Then came the Golden Panthers looking to slash North Texas' lead. In minute four, of the first half, FIU took the lead, and kept it for the remainder of the game.

It was a close match, the first 15 minutes of the game, it seemed like North Texas wasn't going down without a fight.

With four minutes until halftime, and two back to back three pointers by Jekabsone and Ferguson, that sent FIU on an 8-2 run, which stole any momentum North Texas had as they trailed 35-

24 going into the second.

The Golden Panthers devoured North Texas in the second half. In minute four, Jekabsone scored off an assist from Ferguson, and was fouled earning her trip to the free throw line. This started an 8-0 run for the Golden Panthers and gave FIU their largest lead of the game, 19.

"This was a must win for

us, to boost the girls confidence," assistant coach Desma Thomas said. We played with a little more energy and as a team."

The win over North Texas only wet the Golden Panthers appetite as they look to build on their success on the road against Louisiana-Monroe Jan. 20 and New Orleans Jan. 25.



VICTORY:

Sophomore guard LaQuetta Ferguson runs the offense as she finished with 19 points, nine rebounds and a team-high seven assists.

JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON

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LETTING IT RAIN

Galindo's last second shot wins game for men

RENALDO SMITH
Staff Writer

When Alex Galindo swished a 3-pointer at the buzzer to send the Golden Panthers into half-time intermission with a one point lead and momentum, fans at Pharmed Arena were left buzzing.

Little did they know, Galindo, who made good on 6-of-10 attempts from beyond the arc, had another late 3-pointer in store -- a straight-away bomb with just 15 seconds left that propelled the Golden Panthers (8-10, 3-5 Sun Belt Conference) to a thrilling 67-66 win over the North Texas Mean Green (12-6, 3-4 SBC) Jan. 18 at Pharmed Arena.

The 6-foot 7-inch sophomore continued to shoulder the bulk of the offensive load for the Golden Panthers as he matched his season-high 24 points and topped it off with six rebounds on an 8-for-16 shooting night from the field.

After the game, a near speechless Galindo credited his team's defensive intensity and hustle.

"It's crazy, man, and I can't explain how I feel right now. I am just happy that my team was able to get the win. That's the most important thing," Galindo said. "I think without defense, we wouldn't even win three games in the conference. We just got to keep playing hard and keep playing defense and hopefully we win more games."

Soaking in the win, coach Sergio Rouco talked about Galindo's on-court leadership and his team's shooting.

"This kid has made a lot of big shots for us this year and he has made a lot of big shots wherever he has played so he wants the ball in his hands at the end of the game," he said. "The guys are finding their groove and they are just beginning to understand what we want from them. I just want my guys to play hard."



JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON

MR. BIG SHOT: Sophomore forward Alex Galindo admires his game-winning 3-pointer with 15 seconds left. He finished by matching a season-high 24 points and 6 rebounds.

In their first game after a seven-day break, the Mean Green came out of the gates looking every bit like a squad that

was well rested. Riding the hot hand of forward Calvin Watson, the Mean Green opened the game on a 12-5 run and had the

Golden Panthers on their heels early on.

However, that back pedaling was quickly halted as Galindo buried two early long balls to keep the Golden Panthers in contention.

Unfortunately, with the exception of Galindo, no Golden Panther player had their shot going early on and The Mean Green quickly took advantage on the offensive end. Instant offense of the bench from sixth man Michael Sturns, coupled with good shooting from leading scorer Kendrick Davis, allowed NTU to open up their biggest lead of the game at 26-18.

Sensing the game slipping away, freshman point guard Erick Nsangou began to break down the defense with his penetration.

The Cameroon native, who was coming off a 10 rebound, eight assists performance in the previous game against Denver, hit two crucial buckets in the lane to tame the Mean Green's offensive run.

Freshman center Cedric Essola, who was also coming off his best game of the season against Denver, also made good on consecutive lay-ups inside, while Galindo and senior guard Johwen Villegas took turns burying 3-pointers to give the Golden Panthers a slim 38-37 lead at halftime.

With momentum on their side, 3-pointers continued to rain for FIU, who opened the second half with an 11-4 run to garner its biggest lead of the game at 49-41.

But, thanks to the penetration of point guard Ben Bell, and the emergence of center Keith Wooden in the paint, the Mean Green were able to get back into the game.

Wooden began to attack the basket in the paint and hit the go-ahead bucket with just under two minutes remaining to put his team up 66-64.

BASKETBALL, page 9

Golden Panthers' misfortunes can be blessings in disguise



Commentary

Charlie Grau
Sports Editor

With only eight players on the team, two players out with injuries, another leaving to team to transfer to another school and their starting point guard ruled academically ineligible to play, it would make sense for the men's basketball to be stuck in the cellar of Sun Belt standings Right?

And it's almost impossible to win with three freshmen contributing significant minutes.

I guess numbers don't mean much to coach Sergio Rouco and his team as they've won the past two games against conference opponents Denver and North Texas.

"We defend and keep playing like this and learning how

to play together, we're going to win some more ball games," Rouco said.

You better because the remaining games in the schedule are all conference games. And only four out of the next 10 are at home.

Following the loss to Western Kentucky on Jan. 11, coach Rouco said during his post game radio interview that he wasn't going to panic and there was a lot of the season left.

He's correct; this isn't the time to panic, but this is the time to start peaking and preparing for postseason play.

With a rash of injuries and the departure of two players that were considered vital to the team's success, younger players such as freshmen forwards Cedric Essola and Nikola Gacesa have had a chance to demonstrate their talents.

Due to the lack of bodies, the team hasn't been able to run full

contact drills for fear of injury.

"We're spending a lot of time shooting, period, from the line and from the field, because we can't do much more with eight guys," Rouco said. "We can't burn them in practice by going against each other and risking an injury, so we're shooting a lot."

Which would explain why the Golden Panthers went 10-for-20 from beyond the arc.

With only eight players playing, everyone comes ready to play because they know they're going to be on the floor that night and there isn't anybody to bail them out if they get in trouble.

Although a smaller bench may take its toll on the players endurance at times, it will help improve the teams chemistry and develop more trust amongst teammates.

"Having eight guys has given an opportunity for others to step up," sophomore forward Alex

Galindo said. "The team is actually building a relationship with another."

And sometimes relationships are better without certain individuals. Amidst the Golden Panthers five game losing streak, sophomore guard Elvis Lora and junior guard Dejon Prejean left the team -- Lora is declared academically ineligible, while Prejean transferred to St. Thomas University.

Though the Golden Panthers could have used both of them during their five-game losing streak, the team has been able to develop more of chemistry.

"The less guys you play, the more repetition there is in practice. They know they're going to play," Rouco said. "Teams with experience are the teams that win at any level. Right now, the guys are finding their groove."

Galindo is the grooviest member of the team right now.

His game winning shot against North Texas has established him as the official leader of this team.

From now on, he will be looked for during crucial situations and expected to knock down shots like he did against the Mean Green. He makes the offense go and everyone around him better.

He came in hear from Kansas University with a lot of hype and he is beginning to live up to it, now he just needs to maintain his level of play.

The Golden Panthers will only go as far Galindo will take them

"This kid made big shots for us this year and he's made a lot of big shots throughout his career wherever he's played. He wants the ball at the end of the game," Rouco said.

And he better, because his team's season counts on it.