



Okoye looking forward to vice president role

BY ANA SANCHEZ
News Editor

After serving as Student Organizations Council vice president this past year and being actively involved in 10 different organizations in her tenure at FIU, Providence Okoye will take on a new role.

She will join Representative-at-Large Alfonso Leon, (newly elected Student Government Association president) in SGA to fulfill the duties of a vice president. Leon and Okoye were announced SGA president and vice president April 6.

The Beacon recently interviewed Okoye on her goals and new responsibilities as SGA vice president.

Q: What thoughts ran through your mind when Leon asked you to run as vice president?

Well, I was excited but humbled to know that he thought me worthy to be a counterpart in this venture with him. Leon is someone I actually respect and admire. I don't know if you ever knew him before all of this, but he is really down-to-earth and overwhelmingly friendly to his peers.

There's hardly anyone who walks by him that he does not know, he has a good heart and has always had the interest of the students at heart. So, I was truly honored.

Q: What responsibilities will you have as vice president?

Most of my duties, as expressed in our constitution, entail fulfilling the responsibilities of the president in his absence. But primarily, I will be responsible for any new ventures or special initiatives we decide to take on in our term. Also I will be working with our standing and governing councils like SOC, Student Programming Council, Panther Rage etc. to ensure an open-line of communication.

Q: How do you and Leon complement each other?

I believe we complement each other in a lot of ways. First, there is this obvious fact of cultural differences. I'm not from

this country and each day is a learning experience, Leon is from here so where I lack experience and knowledge he abounds in it. Also, I'm able to project a different view as an outsider. Another is he is very outspoken. He can conjure up ideas on how to make things better in the twinkling of an eye, new ways to do things and I love that about him. I am more of a technical kind of person, very detail-oriented and I will truly rather have someone else do all the talking, except where I have to and I just do the work. I think we complement



OKOYE

each other really well and are a great team together. That is very important because it makes our job a little easier.

Q: What is your main goal for next year?

We have a lot of goals we have set for next year and, for me, they are all main goals, because an entire year we have to accomplish them. Everything we put on our platform is a priority.

Q: What are the goals on your platform?

Our goals are to ensure a first-time parking ticket forgiveness policy, to fight for a cost-effective insurance solution for international students, implement campus safety initiatives, providing grocery carts for housing students and improve facilities and funding initiatives for engineering and graduate students.

Q: What would you say prepared you the most for this position?

Wow, that's a tough one. From the Academy of Leaders to Student Ambassador to SOC, then SGA, I can only say it has been a gradual but steady course preparation. Every position I attained, every organization I became a part of, every project I worked on constantly geared me toward attaining greater heights and here we are today.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish next year?

Being an international student entitles me to a little bias. I will spend time to

ensure that the international students are happy with insurance and also work to establish a tuition payment plan and I know I have Leon's support in this.

Q: What will be your biggest challenge and how do you plan to overcome it?

Right now, I can say that my biggest

challenge is the fact that I have never been SGA vice-president before. I know there is a saying, "there's always a first time for everything," but this is one first in a first. I believe that I will overcome this challenge as I consistently learn what my duties entail and fulfill them to the best of my ability.

MTV INVASION



WAITING: People began standing in line up to two hours before the doors of the Pharmed Arena opened for the mtvU Campus Invasion Tour concert on April 11. Look for the April 17 issue of *The Beacon* to read the concert review in the Life! section. CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

Career services teaches students how to 'market themselves'

BY EDDITH SEVILLA
Contributing Writer

Matthew Yeasted, a graduate student in mass communication, is an example of how the staff at the Biscayne Bay Campus' Career Services helps students build an airtight resume and obtain creative job-hunting ideas.

Yeasted, who heard about Career Services through a class presentation, staff members and ads posted around campus, said that students could benefit from this service.

"I would absolutely recommend it to other students," Yeasted said. "Their help is amazing and their suggestions can help anyone, even those not searching for employment immediately."

Career Services, located in the Wolfe University Center, room 255 and at the University Park Graham Center, room 230, has useful tools for students seeking



Matthew Yeasted, graduate student

I would absolutely recommend it to other students. Their help is amazing and their suggestions can help anyone, even those not searching for employment immediately.

a job opportunity or an internship.

According to Claudia Reich, associate director of Career Services, students receive assistance to find jobs or internships including full-time and part-time positions through Pantherlink, Career Services' main employer database.

Filled with both local and national employers, Pantherlink offers a wide variety of job opportunities through two service levels, Basic Services and Golden Panther Services.

Employers seeking qualified candidates post job opportunities on the site. Postings are available to University students

only, while sites such as *Monster.com* and *Careerbuilder.com* don't offer exclusivity to students – giving students an edge.

Basic service level is free and students are asked to register online. However, the positions are limited because it's not exclusive to FIU. Other universities nationwide access it also.

The Golden Panther Services level displays jobs specifically posted for FIU students therefore minimizing the competition.

The Golden Panther Services also allows students to upload up to 10 resumes – giving students the option of

uploading different resumes reflecting different skills for various positions.

"When I realized the benefit in this service, I switched to Golden Panther service," Yeasted said. "The search results are area specific and well worth the money. I'm able to find jobs in my field with greater ease and apply directly through the system. I even get notified through e-mail when jobs are posted that match my criteria."

Golden Panther Services is accessible for a one-time fee of \$20, which lasts the entire time the student is at FIU and a year after graduation. After that, the fee becomes \$55.

"One of the main reasons this is done is because the person is no longer a student at FIU, which means they are no longer paying student fees," Reich said.

The \$20 charge covers the cost of

See CAREER, page 2

NEWSFLASH

Compiled by Ana Sanchez from Beacon staff and wire reports

FIU

State of Student Address to take place

Student Government Association president Alex Prado will give the State of Student Address April 13 at 11:30 a.m. by the fountain behind the Graham Center.

Prado will give a speech in which he will review the year and SGA's accomplishments along with Vice President Christine Denton.

Prado and Denton will give their farewell speech and Representative-at-Large Alfonso Leon, newly elected SGA president, will give a speech on what he plans to accomplish during his term.

Podcasting useful in university

For college and grad school students, iPods will now serve a more pragmatic purpose.

Kaplan has launched a new podcast series which will allow students to download information about exams, financial aid, admissions, finding jobs, and more on iPods.

Advice will be available from testing specialists, experts from prestigious universities and corporations, as well as from peers.

The clips, which will be available on the Kaplan website, kaptest.com, and on iTunes, will be free. Podcasting is catching on.

About six million U.S. iPod users now use it, and the numbers are expected to only grow, reaching estimates of 12.5 to 56 million by 2010.

As of now, the podcast series is only available for the LSAT.

Soon, it will be available for GMAT, SAT, GRE, MCAT and USMLE students.

"We felt this would be a great way to share practical insight with college and grad bound students," said Chris Snyder, business programs manager for Kaplan Test preparation and admissions.

However, Snyder warns students to not solely rely on the podcast for the test.

"These are designed to give students useful information about the test, but they should not be considered complete preparation for the test."

The podcast series started with the LSAT, which was launched in December 2005. The MBA was available late February or early March.

- Nicole Acosta

Students receive interview training

From CAREER, page 1

supporting Pantherlink because it is not an FIU based system, and the University is charged annual licensing fees. IBM, Microsoft, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency and Univision are some companies available in the Career Services database.

The staff at Career Services also prepares students from the ground by offering workshops about cover letter and resume writing and preparing for career fairs, according to Reich. Counselors at

Career Services are also available to critique student resumes and to assist those who don't have a resume.

"I think that what we try to do is to show students how to market themselves," Reich said. "It's all about showcasing their skills."

Because not all job interviews are held in an office, Career Services hosts a Business Etiquette Dinner. Once a year during the Fall semester to prepare students for a restaurant-style interview. Students are served a three to four course meal, while etiquette experts advise stu-

dents how to get through each course.

"The whole idea is that you now get to show that future employer what you're made out of," Reich said. "Now you're a professional. You will eat properly. You will order properly. You'll make good decisions."

One of Career Services' largest events is the Career and Internship Fair, held every Spring semester.

During the fair, companies target juniors and seniors for possible employment or students who are geared for an internship.

Among the companies that attend are Marriot, Carnival Cruise, Royal Caribbean, Walt Disney World, MTV Latin America and Hertz.

Based on past experiences with freshmen eager to find jobs, Career Services hosts the Part-time Volunteer and Internship Fair during the Fall.

They've been holding the event for the past four years, according to Reich.

For additional information contact Career Services at (305) 348-2423 or (305) 919-5770 or visit <http://www.fiu.edu/~career/>.

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NEW LOCATION



OPENING: From left, Jeff Nadlman Aramark district manager, Alex Prado Student Government Association president, Rosa Jones, vice president of student affairs and academic affairs and Ruth Hamilton, director of the Graham Center cut the ribbon at the opening of the new Subway venue at the GC Atrium on April 10.
EDDIE ZENG/THE BEACON

The Beacon



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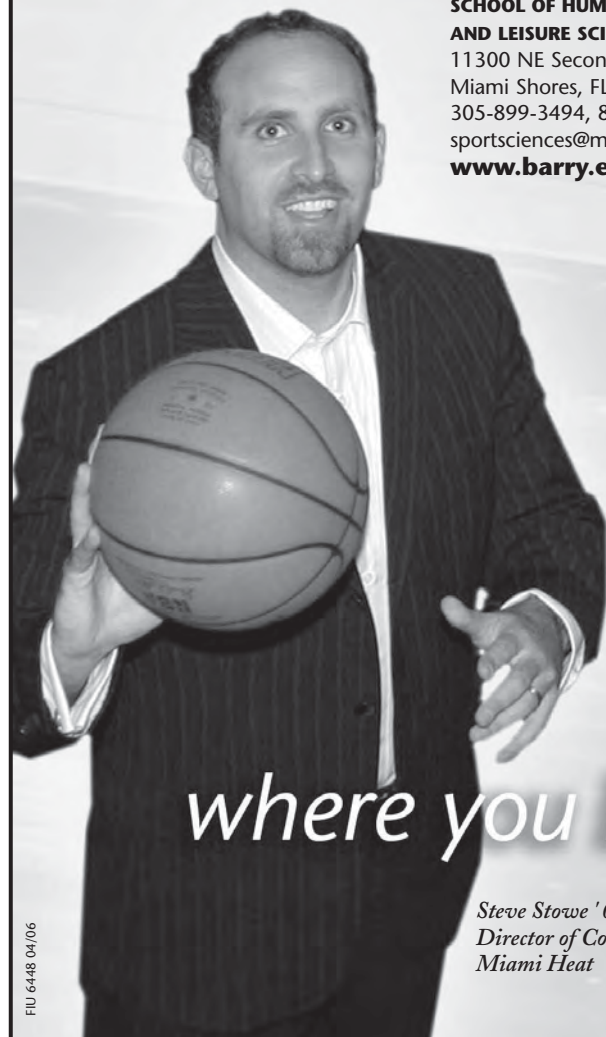
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OPINION

Harry Coleman Editor in Chief • Christopher Necuze Opinion Editor

Democrats look to Christians for help

BY CHRISTOPHER NECUZE
Opinion Editor

As the November Congressional elections near, the United States political arena is once again preparing itself for another battle royale between Republicans and Democrats.

Liberals and conservatives alike are preparing for a very decisive election in November, in which all 435 seats in the House of Representatives, 33 out of 100 seats in the Senate and 36 out of, you guessed it, 50 governorships are up for election.

This election will basically determine the political orientation of both houses of congress, a big deal if you're President George Bush and still have three more years left in your tenure as Commander-in-Chief.

Both Democrat and Republican planners are hard at work coming up with catchy slogans, cool T-shirts, bumper stickers – propaganda designed to do nothing more than deliver a single message on behalf of their respective parties.

What will that message be, exactly? If recent statements by key Democratic leaders are any indication, the message that will be delivered by the Democrats this November will be taken straight out of the Good Book itself.

Speaking at a retirement party for longtime Democratic National Committee finance chair Maureen White, former



HELP FROM ABOVE: Bill Clinton shakes the hand of Rev. Billy Graham of New York. Democrats have started to approach mainstream Christians, a base usually reserved for Republicans, for support. **KRT Campus**

President Bill Clinton gave Democrats probably the best advice they have gotten in years. “We don’t have to be afraid of our values,” Clinton said, delineating a message in which he said Democrats need to communicate when asked by doubtful voters what they stand for. “We believe in ... shared opportunities, shared responsibilities and shared participation in the community.”

Obviously in reference to the upcoming Easter Sunday holiday, Clinton reminded those present at the dinner that Democrats stand for one of the biggest staples in the New Testament, helping the poor,

and that Republicans “believe in concentrated wealth and power and using ideology to divide people.”

Clinton is not the only Democrat calling on Christian values to get his point across. Former first lady Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and former Presidential candidate John Kerry (D-MA), both Senators and both likely candidates for president in 2008, have both criticized a tough, Republican backed immigration bill, claiming that the bill was inconsistent with Christian values.

Though I am curious to know exactly which Christian values Senator’s Clinton and

Kerry are speaking of, I am more interested in knowing why the sudden change of heart? In recent weeks, Democratic leaders have tried to frame their message, or at least what they call their message, using religion.

Speaking at the same fundraiser as Clinton, former Vice-President Al Gore coined a new term, calling on donors to use their “moral imagination” in dealing with environmental issues. The answer to this riddle is simple: If you can’t beat them, join them. For years, Democrats have marveled at the way the GOP can mobilize its base of staunchest supporters and get them to the polls.

Most of these supporters are hardcore Christians, whose ideals are in line with those of the president, at least when it comes to social issues like abortion and embryonic stem-cell research.

Even with lavish and expensive get-out-the-vote campaigns, Democrats have failed miserably in their attempts to counteract this movement. Only now, with Republican poll numbers dwindling, are Democrats starting to get a piece of the pie.

I find it ironic, hypocritical and smart that Democrats are practically starting to quote scripture in the lead up to the start of campaigns.

I think that mainstream conservatives, however, are going to have a rather hard time swallowing some of Democrats’ more liberal ideas on social issues like abortion, stem-cell research and homosexual marriages.

Those issues, no matter how cleverly liberals may phrase it, are never going to be okay in the eyes of die-hard evangelicals, whose interpretation of Christian scriptures leaves no room for the tolerance of such things.

Though hypocritical, even I must say that this is the first smart move Democrats have made in a long time.

With a bottom line frame of mind, in which getting elected is all that matters, this is the smartest thing the DNC could have done and that is simply get in touch with mainstream America, a majority which is, whether you like it or not, Christian.

Medicaid healthcare cuts unacceptable

BY BEN F. BADGER JR.
Staff Writer

You know, I thought our government couldn’t go any lower than it already has. Personally, I have always believed that the government was meant to be here in order to protect and aid the people of this country, particularly the weakest among us.

In an attempt to save money, Florida Medicaid officials have stopped paying for feeding supplements, for possibly thousands of children who suffer from severe physical diseases, have HIV, or depend on kidney dialysis to survive, healthcare officials said.

Who is most at risk? Doctors say those who are completely dependant on feeding tubes connected directly to their stomach, such as those with cerebral palsy.

I cannot understand why something like food supple-

ments would be denied for such sick children - it must be a trend in Florida to starve the sick to death. Oh but I know the reason, a goal of Governor Jeb Bush was to return \$1.5 to taxpayers as stated in his State of the State Address. Well Jeb I’m glad your administration found something worthy of being cut. Man, I wish our government would budget properly and stop trying to ruin lives.

Medicaid has been telling officials to instruct their patients to “blenderize” their food ouch, that gave me another migraine. Are they insane?

They must be because you cannot just “blenderize” food and put it in a feeding tube. Food like that could clog up feeding tubes and cause even greater problems than just starving.

Children are going to suffer from this disgusting decision. In fact, a 12-year-old girl who receives care from the Univer-

sity of Miami was hospitalized recently because Medicaid refused to pay for her formula and as a result became seriously malnourished. The girl suffers from a form of muscular dystrophy and cannot eat enough to sustain herself.

When I first read about this I was disgusted. When I read that over a million dollars was spent last year to lease luxury cars for our House Representatives I was infuriated, not to mention the hundreds of thousands more spent on gas and insurance.

That’s right, it’s a perk of being a House member; you can have a luxury car leased to you at absolutely no cost because the taxpayers take care of it.

Some defenders of the system say that leasing cars can be cheaper than reimbursing lawmakers for driving their own cars. All I can say to that is why should anyone be reimbursing

them for doing their job? Plus I highly doubt that any one member of the House only uses their car for official matters. They use it for trips to the beach too. Again why should the taxpayers pay for them to do that? Don’t they already have a salary?

A spokesman for Representative Kendrick Meek said that the SUV that Meek leases came in handy after Hurricane Wilma in delivering water and ice to storm-wrecked homes, which could not have been done without the 2003 GMC Yukon. Hell, my father’s old pick-up truck that’s literally falling apart could do more. Any car could in fact.

My point is that our government is making radical budget cuts that harm and will harm many children throughout Florida. Rather than cut the perks of government officials. Seriously, when you make budget cuts, you cut what is not

needed. The leasing of luxury cars is not needed. But, then again, why would these people get rid of their own perks?

Giving children nutritional supplements that keep them alive is needed. So in the end, sick children are going to starve to death and government officials get to drive around in luxury vehicles. Does anyone else see the problem with this?

Did this revelation upset you? If not, try not eating for a few days until you pass out and hospitalized. Why do I say this? Because I’m certain at least a few of you who graduate from FIU will move into politics and become a House Representative or maybe even a Senator or more.

So for those of you who do make it that far, don’t lease a luxury car just because you can. Instead, try to actually help the citizens of this country, rather than make “tough and necessary” decisions.

Bush's job performance better than polls suggest

BY BRIAN O. GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

As of March 22, President George W. Bush's approval ratings for "handling his job as a president" have dwindled down to 37 percent. That is a 10 percent decrease from March of the previous year.

With a simple glance at his poll history, you can see that Bush took three major hits resulting in his approval ratings being sent down to the furnace. The first, and most prominent, was after the events of 9/11, which saw his almost 88 percent approval ratings drop more than 30 percentage points over the course of the following year and a half.

When things began to look optimistic in the ratings, the beginning of the Iraqi War sent his administration down once again to a less than stellar 53 percent approval.

But truth be told, I really do not see the point. It is clear that the reasons his approval has dropped down is due to the War on Terror and the events that have been taking place overseas. No one has mentioned the multiple tax cuts we have seen in the past six years or how our economy has been booming despite the billions the war has caused this country.

Domestically, this country is arguably the best it has been for years; with the unemployment rate at 4.8 percent, the lowest it's been since before 9/11. But we have been blind-sided with his weaknesses instead of strengths. Blaming him with ludicrous statements and accusations that he began

the war for oil, or being verbally attacked alongside with FEMA for the wrong doings during the events prior to and aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

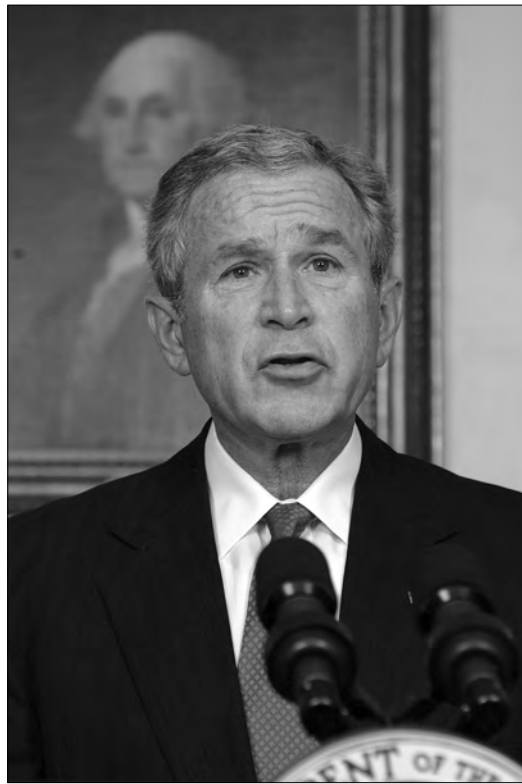
The War on Terror and attacks from the liberal media have no small part in his approval ratings that seem to keep dropping month by month, while New Orleans Mayor C. Ray Nagin and Gov. Kathleen Blanco get by with a slap on the hand.

You better be damn sure that if something like that ever happened in Florida, Gov. Jeb Bush would be pinned to the wall by the press and slaughtered by the media.

With all this going on, is there a chance that Democrats will be able to use the low ratings to get back some power in upcoming elections, including the presidential race in 2008?

Yes, Bush's approval ratings are in the slump. Yes Bush has failed in a few places in his career, we all have. But I don't think every single person that voted gave a complete opinion or full thought of his or her vote.

Honestly, how can you vote on the way he handles his job if it



LOSING THE FAITH: President Bush's approval ratings have dropped 10 percent since march of last year. **KRT Campus**

covers so many problems domesticity and internationally? I doubt there is anyone that disagrees or agrees with everything Bush has done in six years. But I wouldn't sweat it.

CNN, ABC, FOX, NBC and other local and national news stations have been trying to explain why his approval ratings are shooting down and thinking of ways he can bring them back up again.

He's not eligible for reelection. If I were him, I would do what I think is right for my country, and let FOX worry about his approval ratings.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you think Internet voting is a good idea to increase voter turnout in the SGA elections?

- Yes - I don't have time to vote but I'd still like to be able to have a part in picking a candidate.
- No - It is not safe enough and would make it easier to manipulate the votes.
- Either way people won't vote.

Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

WINNER & LOSER

WINNER



Belgian children: An organization in the country is encouraging kids to drink light ale instead of soft drinks because it is healthier.

LOSER



Venusians: A European spacecraft went into Orbit around Venus April 11. It will study the permanent hurricanes around the planet and why FEMA's response to them came so late.

QUOTATIONATION

"Merck thought they were bulletproof in New Jersey. They just got hit with \$13.5 million in damages for a 75-year-old diabetic who had a heart attack."

– **W. Mark Lanier**, lead plaintiff's lawyer in a New Jersey case against the pharmaceutical firm. The jury found that Merck had misled the Food and Drug administration concerning Vioxx.

"Such a tiny difference necessitates a scrupulous checking of the counting."

– **Paolo Buonaiuti**, spokesman for Italian Prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, on the recent elections in the country. The opposition party won but only by a very small margin.

"We want to live without hiding, without fear. We have to speak so that our voices are listened to and we are taken into account."

– **Ruben Arita**, illegal immigrant who took part in a demonstration in the nation's capital on April 10. Demonstrations took place in some other cities as well.

"Because we haven't found our deceased. Being honest with you, in my opinion, they forgot about us."

– **Wanda Jackson**, New Orleans resident, on family members that still have yet to be located. Bodies are still being found in the city. Nine bodies were found in March.

"It's a protection for the citizen that's being interrogated. But from a chief's point of view, I think the greatest benefit is to police because what it does is provide documentation that they didn't coerce."

– **Ella Bully-Cummings**, Detroit police chief, on the police department's decision to videotape police interrogations of suspects in crimes that carry a penalty of life without the possibility of parole.

"Their help is amazing and their suggestions can help anyone, even those not searching for employment immediately."

– **Matthew Yeasted**, mass communication graduate student, on FIU career services offering interview training.

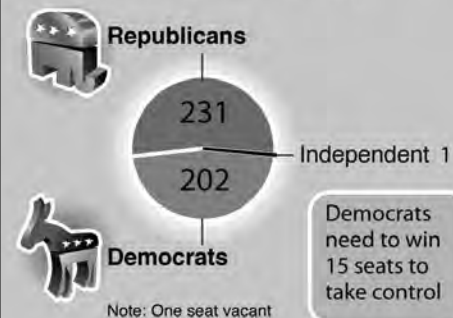
MIDTERM ELECTION

Can Democrats get lucky?

President Bush's low job approval ratings could help the Democrats take some House seats from Republicans in the November midterm elections. A look at the political tea leaves:

Balance of power in the House

There are 435 seats in the House



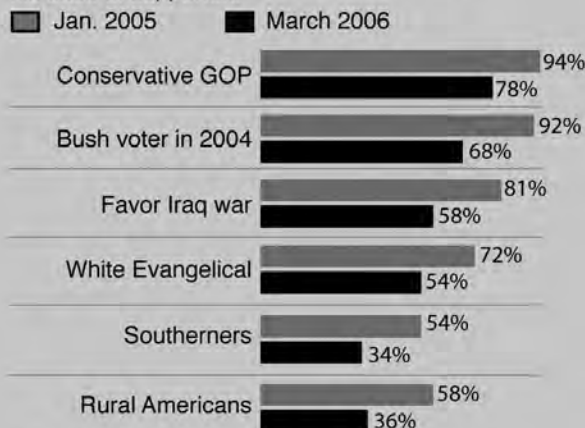
Where the action could be

Competitive and potentially competitive seats, according to the Cook Report

	Dems	GOP
Toss-up: Either party has a chance	2 seats	10 seats
Leaning: One party has advantage	9 seats	14 seats
Likely: Not in play, but could be	9 seats	23 seats

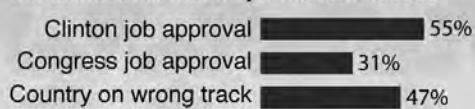
Bush's base is not happy

Bush's job approval ratings are down among his base of supporters



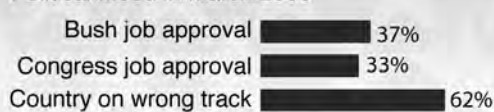
When the Dems lost big in 1994

Political mood in March 1994, months before the Democrats had major midterm losses



Could it happen to GOP in 2006?

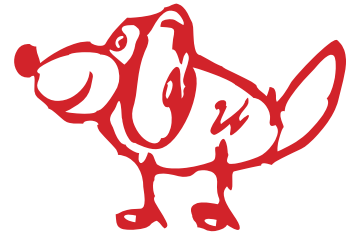
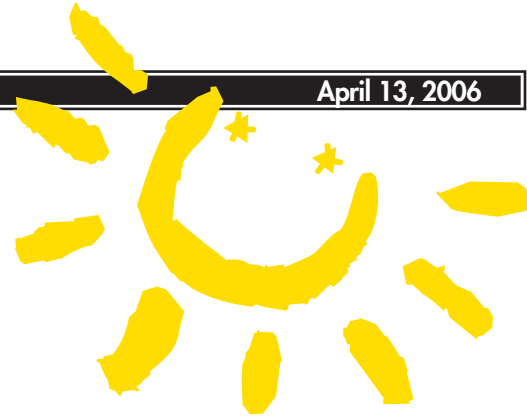
Political mood in March 2006



Source: The Cook Political Report; Pew Research Center for the People and the Press poll of 1,405 adults, March 8-12, 2006, margin of error: +/- 3 percentage points; NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll of 1,503 adults, March 4-8, 1994, margin of error: +/- 2.6 percentage points; NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll of 1,005 adults, March 10-13, 2006, margin of error: +/- 3.1 percentage points
Graphic: Eeli Polli, Judy Treible



Child's Play



Children's Creative Learning Center remodel teaching techniques

BY LAURA CATHERINE JOKISCH
Contributing writer

Thirty years ago, FIU's Children's Creative Learning Center consisted of a tree and a trailer divided into three small classrooms.

Today, although the tree and trailer still stand, Assistant Director Libby Kirsch's former cramped classroom has been converted into a storage space.

During the tour of the building Kirsch and Director Nancy Ponn designed 11 years ago, Kirsch proudly gushed on their current focus on teaching the life cycle, in celebration of spring, as she pointed out a calendar counting down the days until 12 fertilized chicken eggs hatch from their incubator.

Turning her attention to the walls, plastered with the children's artistic reactions to their introduction to impressionism, she explained that rather than directing the enrolled 2-and-a-half to 6-year-olds with a limited selection of materials and a specific objective, the Center encourages free self-expression.

In its hands-on, self-selected style, CCLC is on the cutting edge of early education. Over the 30 years of its existence, America has undergone a radical rethinking of child development and CCLC reflects what we've learned in its emphasis on the

development of communication skills and emotional intelligence.

The result of CCLC's approach seems to be a resounding success according to all involved.

"I couldn't have picked a better place," said Krishnamurthy Surysekar, professor in the School of Accounting, whose son had turned down a play date to attend school that day.

He sees his son's satisfaction as the best indicator of the program's performance.

"He's consistently very happy; happy to come in the morning and reluctant to leave."

Former CCLC student Michael Prasad, son of FIU's Dean of the College of Engineering and Computing, Vish Prasad, frequently returns to visit his old teachers.

"I come back because it was a great experience for me overall," 12-year-old Michael Prasad said.

The teachers also make time to visit their former students. Kirsch recounts her recent trip to see a 16-year-old graduate perform in a rodeo while showing off the myriad photographs on display throughout the halls.

"The fact that they're still connected to their preschool is really special," Kirsch said.

Kirsch looks forward to the upcoming celebration of CCLC's 30th anniversary, a series of cer-

emonies and activities that will take place in the Graham Center May 6.

She expects to see several generations of caregivers and students come together to honor their common foundation.

The program is packed with second generation enrollees, children of former volunteers, and students turned teachers.

"The tone is different," Kirsch said as a child sought a hug from her arms. "Continuity of care is a high priority."

Familiar faces of a small, returning staff of predominantly FIU students provides an ambiance of safety and comfort, making school an extension of the child's family and home.

Parent involvement is encouraged through family picnics and workshops that explain what and how the children learn.

Kirsch's only worry is that there are FIU students with children who aren't taking advantage of their offered services.

"As a division of Student Affairs, we're closely linked to Campus Life. We're a part of the [FIU] experience."

Children of FIU students are given priority over all other applicants, and those eligible for a Pell Grant, who are taking at least 9 credit hours, and have a dependent child of the appropriate age can collect on substantial discounted rates courtesy of the CCAMPUS grant.



BUILDING BLOCKS: The Children's Creative Learning Center offers cutting edge education and much more. Jared (above) is one of the many children who attend the center. CHRIS CUTRO/THE BEACON

FIU's CCLC is one of the three universities in the state that has received this prestigious award, now for its fifth year.

Interested students can visit CCLC's website at www.fiu.edu/~children or call the Center at 305-348-2143.

Well performed deviancy authenticates "Balm"

BY MARIA CHERCOLES
Contributing Writer

From the moment you enter the FIU Black Box theatre you will be transported to a dark alley. As you reach your seat, you'll find yourself surrounded by all sorts of characters, from a prostitute who has trouble staying on her feet while she pulls out a bottle of alcohol, to a homeless woman who sifts through a trash can.

There are cigarette filters, old newspapers and other pieces of garbage scattered on the floor. While distant city noises fill the theater, these characters seem to be

quietly waiting for something. You are so close to them that with the sounds, darkness and set design, you are immediately carried away to 1970s New York.

This is how Lanford Wilson's play *Balm in Gilead*, currently showing at FIU's Wertheim Performing Arts Center, begins.

As the play opens, the tranquility of the night is invaded by a number of unique characters. They enter a 24-hour diner and immediately all sorts of conversations are carried on.

"How much did you make tonight?" "Can I have a cigarette?" and "Would

you come to my apartment?" are all part of the overlapping conversations between prostitutes, pimps and drug dealers. In the middle of this confusion, lighting is strategically used at points to focus the viewer's attention to a particular character.

There are 24 characters in total, but the main plot is centered around Joe (David Solomon), a potential drug dealer, and Darlene (Lisa LaGrande), a young girl full of illusions who just moved to New York and barely notices the danger around her. They have a short romance and Darlene seems to bring hope to Joe, although not soon enough.

Although *Balm in Gilead* has a comedic tone, I soon realized the play carries a more serious message. As the characters reveal more about their stories, I realized Darlene has more in common with the rest of the characters than we think: they too arrived to New York full of illusions, yet their dreams faded as they confronted the injustices of the real world. Darlene's closing line "Are we even moving?" made me wonder the role of these people in our society.

One of the best performances is found

Feminist DiFranco expresses herself through edgy, clever wit

BY JOSE DE WIT
Copy Editor

Whether you are a fan of Ani DiFranco or you have never even heard of her, you should go out and buy her new live album immediately. This statement might seem a bit strong; but this album is seriously that good.

Those who are not familiar with Ani DiFranco should know she has a reputation for being a feminist's feminist. For most who are casually familiar with DiFranco, but have not really had the chance to get into her work, she tends to conjure images of man-hating feminism, women with shaved heads and unshaven legs, butch lesbians and angry gender politics.

Needless to say, this image has won her a large following among the progressive-minded woman demographic, but it has also tended to turn off less radical women, and most men, to getting to know her music.

That's a shame really, because her music is very, very good and most of those stereotypes are off-center, anyway. Besides, she has grown her hair out now and is even dating men – and writing songs about it (much to the distress of her large lesbian fan base, though DiFranco

has confirmed in interviews that she is bisexual).

DiFranco has matured and so have her ideas, thoughts and feelings.

Yes, she still writes lyrics so feminine they could make a grown man ovulate, but feminine is the key word here, rather than feminist. DiFranco is no longer the angry little girl who ran away from home at 14 to write music to vent the resentment and rage she harbored inside; she's grown into a sensitive, deep-feeling woman whose words resound with depth and empathy.

Healing, change and forgiveness are resounding themes throughout her newer songs (though she hasn't lost the edgy, clever wit that makes her songs so fun to listen to).

At the same time, growing up has rejuvenated DiFranco in a way. Where her demeanor smacked with jaded anger in the past, she now exudes a candor and authentic innocence that is immediately endearing.

This is evident from the very first few seconds of the first track, when she salutes her audience with an earnest "Hi ...," and carries on throughout the album. At times, she seems so genuine and friendly that you just want to jump into the speakers and give her a great, big hug.



All this is not to say that her songs have become cheery and sappy. Her songs still address difficult topics such as family dysfunctionality, failed relationships and, especially on this album, political and social issues.

In fact, the album builds up gradually to culminate with two long-form poems that deal with the events that took place on 9/11 and the emotions that surround it. This makes the performance particularly intimate, given the setting and the timing of the set.

The album was recorded during a live set in Carnegie Hall in New York City, only months after the terrorist attacks.

Her performance of these two poems, which goes from spoken-word to full-blown rocking out

See DIFRANCO, page 8

WEEK^{end}

THURSDAY • APRIL 13

WHAT: The Worst of All Possible Worlds – lecture on dystopian literature and film presented by George Pearson and Eduardo Fojo
WHERE: BBC Library Room 150 (BBC)
WHEN: 2 p.m.

WHAT: Incode performs featuring Slapstick Remedy, Sense of Being, Metal Reign and An Immaculate Affair
WHERE: The Culture Room, 3045 N. Federal Hwy, Fort Lauderdale
WHEN: 7:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$5 – \$10

WHAT: FIU Theatre presents *Balm in Gilead*
WHERE: Wertheim Performing Arts Center (UP)
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$10 (FIU Students), \$12 (General Admission)

WHAT: Comedian Steve Bryne performs
WHERE: The Miami Improv, 3390 Mary St., Coconut Grove
WHEN: 8:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$16.05

WHAT: Panther Power and HSO Party
WHERE: WUC Ballrooms B (BBC)
WHEN: 9 p.m.

WHAT: Caribbean Killer (Kappa's vs. Sigma's)
WHERE: The Omega Center
WHEN: Doors open at 10 p.m.

FRIDAY • APRIL 14

WHAT: SPC Films and Delta Lambda Phi present *Brokeback Mountain* (Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal)
WHERE: GC 140
WHEN: 7 p.m., 10 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Free

WHAT: FIU Theatre presents *Balm in Gilead*
WHERE: Wertheim Performing Arts Center (UP)
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$10 (FIU Students), \$12 (General Admission)

SATURDAY • APRIL 15

WHAT: Comedian Steve Bryne performs
WHERE: The Miami Improv, 3390 Mary St., Coconut Grove
WHEN: 7:45 p.m., 10 p.m., midnight
HOW MUCH: \$16.05

WHAT: FIU Theatre presents *Balm in Gilead*
WHERE: Wertheim Performing Arts Center (UP)
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$10 (FIU Students), \$12 (General Admission)

WHAT: Captain Morgan presents ... Chemistry
WHERE: Metropolis
WHEN: Doors open at 10 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Limited discount student tickets

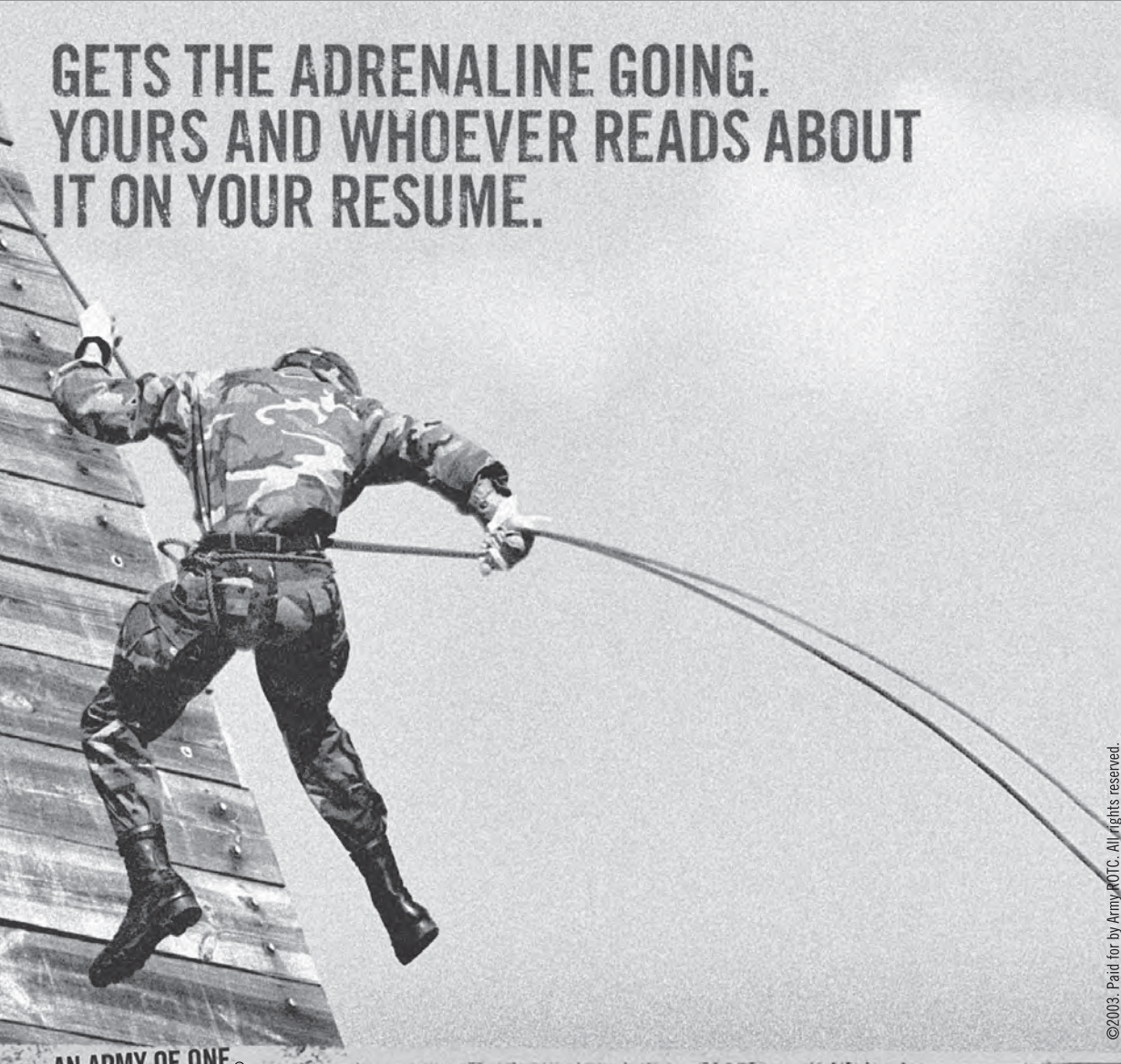
SUNDAY • APRIL 16

WHAT: FIU Theatre presents *Balm in Gilead*
WHERE: Wertheim Performing Arts Center (UP)
WHEN: 2 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$10 (FIU Students), \$12 (General Admission)

WHAT: Bay Vista Hall Council Awards
WHERE: Mary Ann Wolfe Theatre (BBC)
WHEN: 8 p.m.

– Compiled by Reuben Pereira


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Emotional, soaring lyrics go far

From DIFRANCO, page 7

and back again, rising to a shout and descending to a whisper, is exhilarating, like a modern-day Patti Smith, and it conveys the full emotional range of the lyrics perfectly.

The emotional beauty and depth of the songs on this album are fantastic, but without the music they accompany, they would probably be better suited to the pages of a

book.

It is DiFranco's musical performance that makes these songs truly breathtaking. She has a stupendous voice and is great on the guitar and she makes her songs work by exploiting those talents.

To listen to her sing with soothing tenderness accompanied by spidery chords on the guitar is just as lovely as experiencing her soaring vocal acrobatics and emphatic, percus-

sive chords is exciting.

Overall, *Solo - Carnegie Hall 04.06.02* is an almost flawless album.

CARNEGIE HALL
4.6.02

★★★★★

4 out of 4 stars

Artist: Ani DiFranco
Released: April 4, 2006
Genre: Alternative rock / contemporary folk

Costumes recreate original feel

From BALM, page 6

in Darlene's monologue. Other smaller roles to take note of are that of Dopey (Zee Garcia), a homeless man who, although is one of the most repulsive characters, is the wittiest one, David (Hess Wesley), a transvestite, Ann (Elizabeth Ferrer), a prostitute, and Fick (Matthew Mur) the overall invisible "can I have a cigarette" guy.

The costume design by Marina Pareja and Courtney Just is exceptional, making the characters look frighteningly real. The scenic design by Amanda

Smith looks authentic as well.

Balm in Gilead was written by Lanford Wilson in the 1970s, who was inspired by sitting in cafes and listening to conversations around him. This is exactly the atmosphere director Wayne E. Robinson recreates in this FIU production. Just as if you were sitting in a cafe, you are not supposed to understand all the conversations around you or to know about the character's backgrounds. You are only meant to catch glimpses through their overlapping conversations.

Balm in Gilead will be showing through April 16, Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$8 for FIU students and \$10 for general admission, and can be purchased at the box office. For more information call the Box Office at 305-348-3789.

BALM IN GILEAD

★★★★★

3.5 out of 4 stars

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Written by: Lanford Wilson

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The Gamekillers **OBITUARIES** April 2006

Game Killed

Andre Massis
Fernando Nieves
Zack Danielson

Hanwey Shieh
Bharat Kumar

Eric Smith
Jon Fox
Chad Utsch



MASSIS Andre, São Paulo, BR

Was lured away from a pretty young thing and into a heated game of 'Foos' by his good friend Carl—more commonly known as "The Mayor of No Women's Land." While Andre made several attempts to step away and put himself back into contention with the said female, Carl's relentless pursuit for all things that don't involve getting some, was ultimately too much for the young Andre. He quickly found himself sweating it out over the air hockey table, from where he would catch a glimpse of his young beauty heading out the door with another suitor. Andre's game will be remembered by many, just not her.



NIEVES Fernando, New York, NY

His game was alive and well on its way to a ten digit exchange with a hottie known as Britney, but was suddenly bushwhacked by a classic Gamekiller, The Drama Queen. She ran into the scene, tears streaming, and sobbed a story of having seen her ex from four years ago. "I, I, I just can't be alone tonight, Brit." Still a retrievable situation had Fernando kept his cool. But he didn't. "Four years seems like a long time ago," he said in all innocence. By the time The Drama Queen was done flipping the script, Fernando was re-cast in the role of "the villain" in front of a crowd of horrified on-lookers. No one hooks up with an insensitive pig. Rest in peace Fernando, but you sleep alone.

DANIELSON Zack, Atlanta, GA

It was early in the evening yesterday when Zack's game left us, and while it didn't go without a fight, Zack did have his arse unceremoniously

handed to him. Upon returning from the bathroom, Zack found the girl he was seeing had been surrounded by a beefy mesomorph, Early Man, who tried to use his abundant muscle to strong-arm him out of the picture. Zack did not keep his cool and accused his young lady friend of flirting with the first guy who came along. His girl, no doubt disgusted by Zack's over-the-top bravado, fled the scene when his far from attractive jealousy escalated into Zack throwing a punch, which was caught in mid-air by something that looked like a hand, but felt like a 20lb vice. By the time Zack re-gained consciousness, he was home alone and unable to console himself with his dominant hand.



SHIEH Hanwey, Los Angeles, CA

Hanwey was chatting up a Latin diva at an apartment complex barbecue and his game was hot enough to pose a fire hazard, that is until his friend and cocoon of horror known as The Mess entered the picture and snatched Hanwey up like a flash flood of distraction. Somewhat of a loose cannon, The Mess immediately engaged Hanwey in the age-old male bonding tradition of lighting one's own farts. Sure, there's little more enticing than the ignition of one's own combustible human gasses, but much like riding an electric scooter, you don't look that cool doing it. When the laughter subsided, Hanwey was left with nothing but a good laugh and the faint smell of old eggs, while his lady was snared by a new suitor. Man, talk about blowing it.



KUMAR Bharat, Jacksonville, FL

After kicking his game to a leggy redhead at a dorm mixer, Bharat was

Game Killed

interrupted by Trevor, a.k.a. British Accent Guy. Women are drawn to men with British accents, so all it took was a single "pardon" to make his girl raise an eyebrow toward this game killing Redcoat. This prompted Bharat to get riled by calling out the guy's busted grill of yellowing bad teeth and comparing the merits of baseball over cricket. The British Accent Guy smiled and opened his mouth only to offer small bits of non-confrontational banter, allowing his accent to seep into the girl's brain like a piece of brilliant propaganda. In the end, the Brit would invade on Bharat's territory with ease, taking the girl, and leaving Bharat's game strewn on the road as a piece of collateral damage.

SMITH Eric, Washington, DC

His game came to its demise in the most unlikely of circumstances. While engaging in two of his most pleasurable pastimes: talking about boats, with his other passion, a beautiful girl who seemed genuinely interested. They were even planning to go out in his 15-foot dinghy, only to hit unseen rocks in the form of The One Upper, the classic Gamekiller who lives by the motto "Anything you can do I can do better." Sure enough, The One Upper claimed to not only know boats, but he also boasted of captaining his own 40-foot vessel. Eric tried to navigate to the calmer waters of car talk but was run over again by The One Upper's supposed vintage German roadster. The tension quickly mounted, and soon the two were engaged in a ruthless game of one-upmanship. On and on they went, seeing what the other guy just said and raising him. When the smoke cleared, Eric had won the gloat-fest, but the girl was nowhere to be found. No one likes a braggart. Eric's game was last seen drifting away towards the vast sea of loneliness in an undersized boat.



FOX Jon, London, UK

Jon's game, beloved to many a cheerleader and facilitator of the ménage of 2003, was fairing well at a Gold Coast club with a delightful pair of sisters. That is until the playboy predator and full time Gamekiller simply known as Kash Munni entered the picture. A well-endowed socialite famous for trashing 5-star hotel rooms, Kash had traveled in from oil rich lands wearing expensive

Game Killed

Italian loafers and indoor sunglasses. Drinks were bought for willing and unwilling recipients alike with his family's fortune, which he shamelessly flaunted in the form of an array of high status plastic. This caused Jon to suddenly lose his cool and go on the defensive by opening a tab of his own. On his debit card. After three rounds, Jon's account was maxed. Shortly after he was dropped off alone would Jon learn the hard way that a woman's affection should never be for sale, and that many a man has gone broke trying to prove otherwise.



UTSCH Chad, New Brunswick, NJ

His game was faring nicely at the local coffee shop with a seemingly receptive latte drinker called Rita and he seemed well on his way to a little afternoon delight, that is until the corduroy-clad Gamekiller known as "IQ" entered picture. This pompous scholastic scavenger, famous for luring men into heated debates on subjects of which they know nothing, over-heard the conversation turning to art and pounced. Immediately he steered the dialogue into an area known as Out Of Chad's Depth where he would dish out ever increasing portions of intellectual emasculation. Chad reacted as anyone with a 20 point IQ deficit facing "IQ" would: the wrong way. No, the answer to "When do you feel Picasso peaked?" isn't to shove the questioner in the chest. Rita was left to apologize emphatically for Chad's actions and asked if she could make up for it in some way. Chad tried to recover, but it was too late. He had lost his cool, and his game would retire home, where it would begin its own blue period.

Obituaries can be created and sent via email to friends at gamekillers.com



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SBC ROAD TRIP



CONFERENCE: The baseball team dropped two games of a three-games series against Sun Belt Conference foe South Alabama April 7-9 in Mobile, Ala. The Golden Panthers are currently in second place in the conference with a 6-3 record (25-13 overall).

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Tournament record 272,033 fans paid to attend NASDAQ

BALLBOY, from page 12

on their beloved Sharapova, rallying behind the equally gorgeous Golovin.

Golovin won a second set tie-breaker and had a break point at 3-4 in the deciding set when the unthinkable happened. After clawing her way back from the brink of defeat, Golovin rolled her left ankle while lunging for a forehand.

She writhed in pain for seven minutes on the court before bravely resuming play. But with tears dripping down her eyes, Golovin hobbled toward the net after one forehand return. She'd won the hearts of thousands of fans - and at least one ballboy - but conceded the match when she shook Sharapova's hand.

I carried Golovin's racket bag to the locker room, leading the way for her and Sharapova off of the court. With ESPN2 cameras capturing our exit, commentators Cliff Drysdale and Mary Joe Fernandez criticized Sharapova for not checking on Golovin's condition.

But no cameras were rolling in the hallway when I saw Sharapova grab hold of Golovin's left arm and guide her to the locker room. Showing no hard feelings, Golovin laughed through her tears and said, "Thanks Maria."

I worked the men's final between Federer and Ivan Ljubicic, and what a final it was. Ljubicic outaced Federer 21 to eight and hit 44 winners to Federer's 36, good enough to force three tiebreakers against the World's No. 1 Player.

Tie-breakers can sometimes be chaotic

for ballboys, with balls quickly moving from one side of the court to the other. Though I was hard at work, it was clear to see Federer's greatness shine through when it mattered most.

At 3-3 in the first set tie-breaker, Federer yelled "WOO!" when he mishit a backhand well long. Then he won four of the next five points, finishing the first set with an ace.

Federer quickly trailed Ljubicic 4-1 in the second set tiebreaker, but behind the strength of his ferocious forehand he won the final six points to take a two-set lead.

Finally, Ljubicic earned a set point at 6-5 in the third set tiebreaker. Federer quickly erased that with two monster first serves to reach championship point.

Looking on from the net, I thought Ljubicic hit a great serve out wide as Federer stretched for the backhand return. The ball didn't look like it would clear the net, but it nipped the top of the tape and dribbled onto Ljubicic's side.

Federer won his second straight NASDAQ-100 Open title on a let cord, earning \$533,350 along the way. That's \$533,350 more than the 400 ballpeople made combined. But you won't hear us complain.

A tournament record 272,033 fans paid to attend the 2006 NASDAQ, but we weren't among them. We shared the court with the greatest athletes in the world and we didn't pay a dime to do it.

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SOFTBALL
Away vs. Louisiana Lafayette
4 p.m.

SATURDAY

15

BASEBALL
Away vs. Troy
7 p.m.

TRACK & FIELD
Miami Elite
Coral Gables, FL

SOFTBALL
Away vs. Louisiana Lafayette
2 p.m. - Double Header

TENNIS
Neutral vs. VCU
10 a.m.

SATURDAY

16

BASEBALL
Away vs. Troy
2 p.m.

TENNIS
Away vs. USF
11 a.m.

Chronicles of a Ballboy: Part 2

COMMENTARY



BY JOSHUA REY
Staff Writer

Part two of a two-part series

Wearing my orange-and-blue Fila outfit for the sixth time in seven days, I was extremely tired on March 26. But when Stadium Court comes calling, a NASDAQ-100 Open ballboy would be crazy to sleep in.

Sensational Cypriot Marcos Baghdatis stormed through the first set of his match against No. 5 seed Nikolay Davydenko, hitting the fastest forehands I've ever seen.

But Davydenko was unfazed and stepped up his game. When Baghdatis hit a drop shot, Davydenko responded with one of his own. At full speed, Baghdatis was unable to retrieve the ball and barely missed a head-on collision with me at the net. As Baghdatis raced towards me, he had a big grin on his face and looked into my eyes as if to say, "That shot was too good."

Fans groaned when Baghdatis double faulted three times in the final game to concede the match 2-6, 6-2, 7-5. But something tells me they'll be back when Baghdatis makes his return in 2007.

I had March 28 off and spent the day watching tennis. I'm glad I was in the front row, and not on the court, for the Nicolas Kiefer/Agustin Calleri match.

Widely recognized among ballpeople as the biggest prick in tennis, Kiefer approached a rookie ballboy for his towel in the second set. He then stuck his racket out as a sign for the ballboy to place a



MEAN STREAK: Nicolas Kiefer is not known for his niceness toward ballboys. Kiefer was eliminated by Roger Federer in the quarterfinals of the NASDAQ-100. **KRT CAMPUS**

ball on the strings. But the ballboy didn't know what Kiefer wanted and grabbed the racket with his left hand.

"Are you f---ing kidding me?" Kiefer said, staring deep into the ballboy's eyes. Kiefer's coach Sascha Nensel was laughing hysterically but Calleri got the last laugh, knocking Kiefer out of Key Biscayne.

Leading off the night session March 30 was a quarterfinal showdown between Roger Federer and James Blake. This was a much-anticipated match, not just because both players are exciting but also because they are gentlemen.

Federer always says "Please" and "Thank you" when asking for water and Blake thanks ballboys each time they toss him a ball. That's a welcome change from the response we get from players like Kiefer.

Up a set and 2-0, Federer hit a shot that's still replaying in my head.

Working at the net, I saw Blake leap high in the air for an overhead smash. He absolutely crushed the ball, but with the grace of a dancer, Federer transferred his weight from his right foot to his left foot and blocked the ball with a backhand past

a shocked Blake.

I quickly glanced at every other ballboy on the court. All our jaws had dropped. Federer is just plain sick.

Needless to say, he went on for the 7-6(2), 6-4 win. But the night's excitement had only begun.

Maria Sharapova was beating Tatiana Golovin 6-3, 4-1 in a semifinal between 18-year olds, with Golovin due to serve. But the Frenchwoman came out of the changeover ready to return, bouncing at the baseline with her back to the ballboys. The chair umpire had to point her finger for Golovin to realize she was serving. Golovin lost the game and looked destined for defeat.

Sharapova had four match points at 5-3, but Golovin outlasted the Russian in a series of furious rallies and broke her serve.

Then Sharapova took a bathroom break to the loud jeers of the crowd. I couldn't believe my ears. A stadium full of drunk and rowdy young men had turned

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Women's softball sweeps conference foe North Texas

BY PATRICK JORDAN
Contributing Writer

Things are clicking for the Golden Panthers at the right time as they improved their record to 3-0 in the Sun Belt Conference after completing a three game sweep against North Texas April 9 in a 3-1 victory, which brought the Golden Panthers overall record to 20-21.

Behind a dominating pitching performance by red shirt freshman Sarah Belanger, the women of North Texas never stood a chance and Belanger reaped the benefits as her performance helped her capture her third Sun Belt Softball Pitcher of the Week Award in four weeks.

"We've come together and we're learning how to play as a team," said junior outfielder and captain Deomni Murray. "I honestly believe we have a chance to win the conference. If we can do that, then we have a good chance of doing well in regionals."

The Golden Panthers will look to continue their dominant play as they go on the road to play Louisiana-Lafayette April 14-15.

FIU 3, NT 1

Coming into the championship game April 9, the Golden Panthers were filled with confidence as they were coming off a two game sweep against North Texas the day before. Due to solid pitching by both Belanger and Eastman, the women of North Texas were only able to score once in the two games combined, striking out 15 times and combining to hit just 10-52 in the first two games.

North Texas attempted to turn things around in the championship game and they looked to jump out to a fast start when junior Susan Waters hit a double at the top of the first inning to give the Mean Green a little momentum. That momentum was short lived however, as Waters was called out at third base shortly thereafter, ending the top of the inning with the Mean Green without

a run.

Belanger began to get to work at the top of the second inning as she struck out two batters and gave her teammates more confidence to step to the plate with ease and the Golden Panthers took advantage of that.

Outfielder Ashley Falk hit a single that advanced freshman Lauren Spiers to second base with two outs at the bottom of the second inning. This proved to be crucial as Spiers scored later in the inning on an error by first baseman Monica Garcia, making the score 1-0 FIU.

Things only got better for the Golden Panthers as Murray began the bottom of the third inning with a single and second baseman Tracey Deleon's successful bunt advanced Murray to second base with one out. A pop-up by Tabitha Embry resulted in a second out, but freshman Kim Rodriguez's single scored Murray to making it 2-0 at the end of the third inning.

Offensively, North Texas didn't have an answer for Belanger's assault as she

continued to strike out one batter after another, frustrating the Mean Green and adding to FIU's home-field dominance.

The bottom of the fourth inning produced another run as Jennifer Powell's double advanced Katie Bell home making it 3-0 and seemingly closing the window of opportunity for North Texas even though they were only down three runs.

A sixth inning homerun by North Texas infielder Susan Waters provided a glimmer of hope, making the score 3-1 FIU, but that's as close as they got as Belanger continued her magnificent pitching, striking out 12 in her 11th complete game of the season to improve her record to 7-9.

"She's amazing and when she's in the zone, everybody better watch out," said Murray on Belanger's performance.

With the victory and three game sweep of North Texas, the Golden Panthers improved their all time record against North Texas to 11-0.