



TALKING Trash

Landfill receives clean-up money

By GIOVANI BENITEZ
Contributing Writer

Against a backdrop of tropical landscapes and exotic wildlife, FIU's Biscayne Bay Campus sits along the coast of what many consider to be one of Miami's most photogenic areas.

The campus sits shoulder to shoulder with a 193-acre former landfill. Government documents show it was used as a garbage dump over two decades ago.

The inactive Munisport landfill, which lies west of the campus along Biscayne Boulevard, poses no threat to human health, but does have the potential to harm organisms in the surrounding wetlands, according to a 1988 "remedial investigation" by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

However, three environmental groups have expressed concern about the land surveyed. The Miami-Dade County Commis-

See LANDFILL, page 2



IN MEMORY: (Top and bottom, center) President Modesto A. Maidique holds hands with family members and FIU students and staff during a Brothers to the Rescue silent vigil held on Feb. 24. The memorial was held to honor the death of the four Brothers to the Rescue members who lost their lives during a humanitarian effort in international waters near Cuba. "We hold this moment of silence every year on this day," said Neri Martinez, the Free Cuba Foundation coordinator and vigil planner. Following the commemorative memorial, family members announced that with the help of the Federal Bureau of Investigations, two rewards of \$100,000 and \$50,000 will be given to anyone with information leading to the capture and arrest of known suspects involved in the 1996 shooting. **LUIS NIN AND JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON**

FIU unites to raise money for tsunami victims

By Monica Zacarias
Contributing Writer

The United Way and FIU have worked together for over 22 years to improve the community and to provide for those in need. Each year, the United Way and the university collaborate to set a monetary goal that is raised through different charitable events.

Last year alone, the United Way of Miami-Dade supported over 250 health and human service programs in Miami-Dade County. In 2003, FIU and the United Way helped to raise over \$370,000 for the community.

Recently, the United Way has turned its attention toward aiding the tsunami victims in South Asia. Money for the victims will be raised through United Way pledge cards allocated toward the Tsunami Relief Fund.

Ann Goodrich, United Way

Hopefully we've met our goal. We want our community to be the safest and best place to live.

The aid will include shelter, food, water, clothing and anything else that may be needed by the tsunami victims. Donations taken from employee payrolls will also help make this relief possible. Payroll deduction is an option available to all FIU employees. Employees can sign up for a one percent deduction by filling out the pledge card that is provided by their department's ambassador.

In order to make the United Way and FIU collaboration possible, United Way ambassadors are appointed from each department at the university to provide information to the department's employees regarding the United Way campaign. The ambassadors are also responsible for handing out and collecting

all the pledge cards from their department.

According to the Marcos Perez, vice president for administration and co-chair of the United Way 2005 Campaign, ambassadors are key members of the United Way.

"The ambassadors' role throughout the campaign is essential for its success," said Perez.

Even though the tsunami put the traditional campaign on hold, the organization has already met many of its goals, one of which, according to the United Way's website, is to raise \$300,000 with FIU's support. A tennis tournament at FIU raised over \$4,000 and an auction of decorated baskets raised more than \$10,000.

During the month of February, University President Modesto A. Maidique will host a leadership reception, where he will honor over 150 staff members who have donated one percent or more of their salaries to the United Way.

"Hopefully we've met our goal. We want our community to be the safest and best place to live. If the faculty and staff choose to donate, it will be a lot easier through their payroll," said Ann Goodrich, the United Way Coordinator who is in charge of organizing United Way events and training the ambassadors who recruit donors for the campaign.

According to Goodrich, the United Way's monetary goal is set between April and May of each

year. The next step for the organization is to ask for donations from every major company, school and organization in Miami. The United Way contributions help underprivileged children receive an education and stay off the streets and offer care to the elderly, the homeless and those combating illnesses.

The United Way reported that for every dollar donated, there will be a 76 percent return. This means that for every dollar, \$1.76, will be donated. Furthermore, for every dollar donated to childcare programs, taxpayers will save \$3 in costs that will later be spent on corrective education, crime and community aid.

"The FIU staff realizes that the United Way is needed and that, out of our goodness, we really care and want to give," Goodrich said.

For more information on FIU and United Way visit www.fiu.edu/orgs/united or call at (305) 348-3451.

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS**MONDAY • FEBRUARY 28**

Campus Bible Fellowship: "Where do 'races' come from?" 11 a.m., GC 305

Panther Rage meeting: 4 p.m., GC 140

Men's Basketball vs. Middle Tennessee: 7:30 p.m., Pharmed Arena

TUESDAY • MARCH 1

Campus Bible Fellowship: "Where do 'races' come from?" 7:30 p.m., GC 305

Dance Marathon Lip Sync: FIU organizations will showcase their talent at 7:30 p.m., GC Ballrooms

Latin Jazz Quartet: 8 p.m., Wertheim Performing Arts Center Concert Hall. Free and open to the public.

WEDNESDAY • MARCH 2

SPC Films presents "Chasing Amy": 7 and 10 p.m., GC 140

Frost Art Museum: After Hours with Maria Jose Arjona. Performance artist Maria Jose Arjona will execute the piece entitled "Body Over Water" in exploration of the nature of time. 7 p.m. - 9 p.m., Frost Art Museum, PC 110. Free.

THURSDAY • MARCH 3

Food and Discussion: International Relations Club presents "Lord of the Flies," 7 p.m., GC 150

SPC Campus Entertainment presents Karaoke Night: 9 p.m., Gracie's Grill

FIU Concert Choir: 8 p.m., Wertheim Performing Arts Center. Free and open to the public.

FIU Theatre presents Second Stage Production: an evening of one act plays by Christopher Durang 8 p.m., DM 150. \$5.

FRIDAY • MARCH 4

Tennis hosts Eastern Michigan: 12 p.m., University Park tennis courts.

Landfill neighboring BBC declared safe**LANDFILL, from page 1**

sion set aside \$50 million in its annual budget, released in Sept. 2004, for the additional cleanup of several county sites.

In a joint letter to several government agencies, the South Florida divisions of the Sierra Club, the Tropical Audubon Society and the Urban Environment League submitted, according to the letter, "questions concerning the adequacy of the cleanup and the development of the site."

These questions were raised after the city of North Miami announced that it would build a 6,000-unit residential complex called Biscayne Landing on part of the Munisport landfill.

The environmental groups are concerned that the EPA studied only a fraction of the landfill. Though the Munisport site stretched over 190 acres, the groups claim that only 30 acres were surveyed and then designated by the government as a Superfund area.

The nation's Superfund program, which aims at cleaning up

potentially hazardous landfills and wastelands, currently has at least seven sites in Miami-Dade County and more than half of them may have contaminated drinking water, according to the Environmental Defense Fund, a non-profit organization.

Although the Munisport site is nearly 1,000 feet away from BBC, administrators insist that the water flowing into the campus is clean and does not come from the surrounding contaminated areas.

"There is no contamination in the water which is flowing - nothing on our campus," said Raul Moncarz, BBC's vice provost for Academic Affairs. "We have relations with the city of North Miami. We get their water. It is as good as any other."

Meanwhile, the water in the Biscayne Bay may not be so clean. A public health assessment by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services suggests that long-term consumption of contaminated fish from the bay may affect the immune system.

Health threats



NO THREAT HERE: The Biscayne Bay campus sits in front of an areas many consider one of Miami's most photogenic sites. COURTESY PHOTO

from swimming in the water, though, cannot be determined because the health assessment shows the water has not been tested for bacterial contamination since 1982.

The EPA's study also shows that water for the city of North Miami is taken from inland sources away from the bay.

Despite concerns that the area is still polluted, members of the FIU community might not be fully aware of its history.

"I would never have known there used to be a solid wasteland in the area," said junior Stephanie Broad, majoring in environmental studies. "I haven't seen any signs that it is contaminat-

ing our air or water. If the EPA says that it is safe for humans, I have no reason for concern."

However, the air and water quality may not be the only issues at hand. According to

an EPA site summary, rainfall through the solid waste that was once in the area has "caused the release of elevated levels of ammonia" in the soil and its underlying groundwater, but there is no evidence that even ingesting the soil could lead to health hazards. In 1999, the site was removed from the EPA's National Priorities List. Today, EPA and Miami records indicate that all natural soils in the landfill area have been removed.

THE BEACON**EDITORIAL BOARD**

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WEATHER**MONDAY**

Hi/Low
77°F/57°F
few showers

TUESDAY

Hi/Low
73°F/51°F
partly cloudy

WEDNESDAY

Hi/Low
68°F/50°F
partly cloudy

THURSDAY

Hi/Low
71°F/57°F
partly cloudy

FRIDAY

Hi/Low
76°F/58°F
scattered
showers

SATURDAY

Hi/Low
77°F/59°F
scattered
showers

SUNDAY

Hi/Low
76°F/57°F
partly cloudy

Courtesy of www.weather.com

POLICEBEAT**TUESDAY • FEBRUARY 3**

A student reported that he left his wallet inside a practice room at the Wertheim Center for the Performing Arts at the Biscayne Bay Campus. After returning to the location at 10:30 p.m., the student noticed that his wallet had been stolen. At this moment, there are no suspects.

MONDAY • FEBRUARY 14

A student reported his wallet was stolen at the W10 building located at the University Park campus. There is no information on the suspects.

A student reported that prior to parking his car on the third level of the Blue Parking Garage near the northeast stairs, a driver in a dark colored, 4-door, 1990's model vehicle honked his car horn in anger.

Upon returning to his car, after class, the student reported that his 2000 black Honda Accord had been vandalized and that an unknown suspect had written derogatory terms on it.

WEDNESDAY • FEBRUARY 16

A student reported that she put her purse in a storage bin in the hallway of the Pharmed Arena Fitness Center at the University Park campus. After working out, the student discovered that an unknown individual(s) removed the purse, which is valued at \$230. Inside the purse the student claims she had a Puerto Rican driver's license, dorm room keys, a Motorola cell phone, credit cards and identification cards. No suspects have been identified.

While working out at the Pharmed Arena Fitness Center at UP, a student reported that an unknown individual stole his wallet. The wallet contained \$140. After the incident, the student reported that a person attempted to use his Exxon credit card at a gas station on 117th St. Suspects have not been identified.

- Compiled by Rodolfo Roman

BBC NEWS

February 28, 2005

WWW.BEACONNEWSPAPER.COM

The Beacon - 3



GRAPHIC BY LUIS NIN

Multiple workshops prepare students for Mega Career Week

By **DAVID SMILEY**
Contributing Writer

"Experience needed." It's almost a fact of life for anyone seeking employment in a specialized field. Thanks to Career Services, FIU students can get a jump on the competition during "Mega Career Week," which begins March 2.

As a prelude to the Career and Intern Fair, held at the Biscayne Bay Campus on March 9, participating employers will hold informational workshops for students. These workshops will be tailored to explain different expectations employers have of applicants. In addition, they will offer an opportunity for participants to make a good first impression at the Career Fair.

D. Claudia Reich, newly appointed associate director for Career Services, stresses the importance of appearing professional during an interview. "From an employer's point of view, if [students] are not prepared, they will not be hired," Reich said. "Employers have let us know they have been discouraged in the past with some of the students' dress."

With major companies scheduled to appear at

March's career fair, it's no surprise that FIU is making a major push to prepare students. Among the list of 150 participating employers are Washington Mutual, Walt Disney World, the FBI and Prudential Financial.

Because recruiters will hold students to certain expectations, several informative workshops will be conducted starting with "Bring Your Resume to School Day" on Wednesday, March 2. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., students can bring a sample of their resume to the Oasis in Academic I for a free critique from Career Services staff and employers. This is the only workshop where no registration is required.

Also on Wednesday, at the Wolfe University Center in room 255, a workshop called "Interviewing Skills: How to Put Some Bling in Your Step" will be held from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This workshop will feature guest presenter Claudia Vasquez, regional recruiting supervisor for Enterprise-Rent-A-Car's.

On Thursday March 3, "Under Cover: The Secret to Making a Good First Impression (Resume Writing)" will take place in WUC 255 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. Erika

Raul Quintero, Graduate

Career Services, especially at BBC, really do try and help you gain advancement [in your field].

THIS WEEK AT BBC

MONDAY • FEBRUARY 28

SPC presents belly dancing classes: 6 p.m., WUC 155

African new World Studies presents Muta-baruka lecture and performance: 7 p.m., WUC Ballroom

TUESDAY • MARCH 1

SPC presents Salsa dancing classes: 6 p.m., WUC 155

Zeta Phi Beta Pageant: 8 p.m., WUC Ballroom, Side A

WEDNESDAY • MARCH 2

Student Government Council meeting: 3:30 p.m., WUC 159

THURSDAY • MARCH 3

Catholic Student Association presents weekly mass: 12:30 p.m., WUC 157

SPC presents ballroom dancing classes: 6 p.m., WUC 155

Black Student Union meeting: 6 p.m., WUC 155

FRIDAY • MARCH 4

Iranian Cultural Club meeting: 7 p.m., WUC 155

Camuth of Kent Security will provide tips on how to develop professional quality resumes.

Also on Thursday in WUC 255, the "How to Prepare for A Career Fair" workshop will be held from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Aaron Moshel, a senior in the School of Business Management, plans to attend the Career and Intern Fair. Moshel has previously participated in Career Services workshops, including the "How to Prepare for a Career Fair" workshop.

"It's very beneficial. You get to learn how to approach employers, impress and write a resume," Moshel said.

"Career Services, espe-

cially at BBC, really do try and help you gain advancement [in your field]," said public administration graduate student Raul Quintero. Quintero is participating in the fair to look for government jobs.

Certain employers are specifically targeting younger students. INROADS, a participant in the March career fair, is offering internships for underclassmen minorities.

The Career and Intern Fair will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the WUC Ballroom on March. For more information about Career Services and the Career and Intern Fair, visit www.fiu.edu/~career.

Hearst series presents final two lectures

By **ANA SANCHEZ**
BBC Editor

"60 Minutes" has covered four decades of reporting, and now David Blum has unveiled the inner workings of the show in his new book.

"Inside 60 Minutes" is the next lecture brought to the Hearst Distinguished Lecture Series. David Blum, author of "Tick...Tick...Tick...: The Long Life and turbulent Times of 60 Minutes," on March 2 at the Wolfe University Center Ballroom.

Over a period of two years, Blum interviewed current and

former employees at "60 Minutes" and offers inside access to story meetings, rivalries and the history of the long-running CBS show.

With the help of the lecture series partners, the Miami Ad School, the SGA lectures Committee, the Student Programming Council. And the FIU Wolfsonian, Jody Rafkind, visiting assistant professor for the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, made the contacts necessary to bring David Blum as well as some of the other speakers from previous lectures to FIU. The lectures are free and open to the

community.

"Originally this event was created for students from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, but the subjects are pertinent and of interest to all the students on campus," said Rafkind.

Following the "Inside 60 Minutes" lecture, the Hearst Distinguished Lecture Series will also host a lecture on "Media and Democracy." The lecture is set to take place on March 30 at the WUC Ballroom at 6 p.m.

The "Media and Democracy" lecture will cover political media related issues such as the change

in media after 9-11 and how it is affecting democracy today.

Allen Richards, interim chair for the SJMC, planned and organized the "Media and Democracy" lecture.

"We have a prestigious group of people coming to the lecture," said Richards.

One of the speakers will be FIU alumnus Princell Hair, part of the CNN News Group and senior vice president for program and talent development.

David Kidwell, an investigative reporter for the Miami Herald, will accompany Hair along with Greg Michell, editor of *Editor and Publisher Jour-*

nal and Manuel Poig-Franzia, Miami Bureau Chief of the *Washington Post* and Bruce W. Sanford, partner for Baker & Hostetler LLC Attorneys at Law. After the lecture, students will be able to ask the speakers questions and engage in discussions.

"It is very important for students to participate and they will have that opportunity," Richards said.

These two lectures represent the last of the Hearst Distinguished Lecture Series, sponsored by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation and presented by the SJMC.

OPINION

Alejandra Diaz Editor In Chief • John Lovell Managing Editor • Leoncio Alvarez Opinion Editor

The BOY without a RACE

By **DANNY MUELA**
Staff Writer

I have always been told that I am Cuban-American. Notice that "Cuban" comes first. But in reality I don't feel very Cuban at all.

Despite growing up in an environment in which Spanish was the dominant language and pork was the dominant meat, I feel about as Cuban as Al Pacino.

Don't get me wrong. I don't hate my heritage or the fact that I can't dance; the lifestyle just doesn't seem to fit me.

I sound ridiculous speaking Spanish. Cuban food tastes like paper. Gloria Estefan is over-rated. I look more American than a hick on Jerry Springer.

I mean, it's February: Black History Month. I always enjoyed Black History Month, because it really shows how unified and committed one race can be.

It is a very special celebration that shows how certain individuals feel about being African-American.

But, when Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct

"
I feel out of place when everyone is living it up and doing dance steps that take more hip movement than one should be able to handle.

15th) comes along, I feel nothing.

I really don't want to eat yuca or talk about José Martí, because I don't feel right about it.

It's like I'm a poser in my own race.

I feel out of place when everyone is living it up and doing dance steps that take more hip movement than one should be able to handle. So of course, in my family I'm Danny, the American who can have a somewhat coherent conversation in Spanish and loves *croquettes*.

On the other hand, I'm not exactly white either. I did grow up as a Cuban, so some things that the average American does are still weird to me like drinking out of the tap, eating mashed potatoes without butter or actually watching NASCAR instead of just making fun of the Viagra car.

So all of my American friends' families know me as

Danny, the Cuban boy who listens to classic rock and can quote almost any Mel Brooks movie ever made.

Race is something that only defines us when we let it. Sure, I can go out of my way and hang a Cuban flag on my car and start actually caring about Pitbull, but I choose not to, because, when it comes down to it, you are your own person.

Not every black person likes rap, not every Eskimo enjoys fish and not every German is fat, slightly effeminate and has a chocolate fetish.

Culture makes people very uptight; it can mean the world to some people. Saying that you are outspoken because you are Cuban is just a stereotype.

The only thing that I, a boy without a race, can say to comfort myself, is that if you don't know where you are or where you're headed, then where you came from is meaningless.



LUIS NIN / THE BEACON

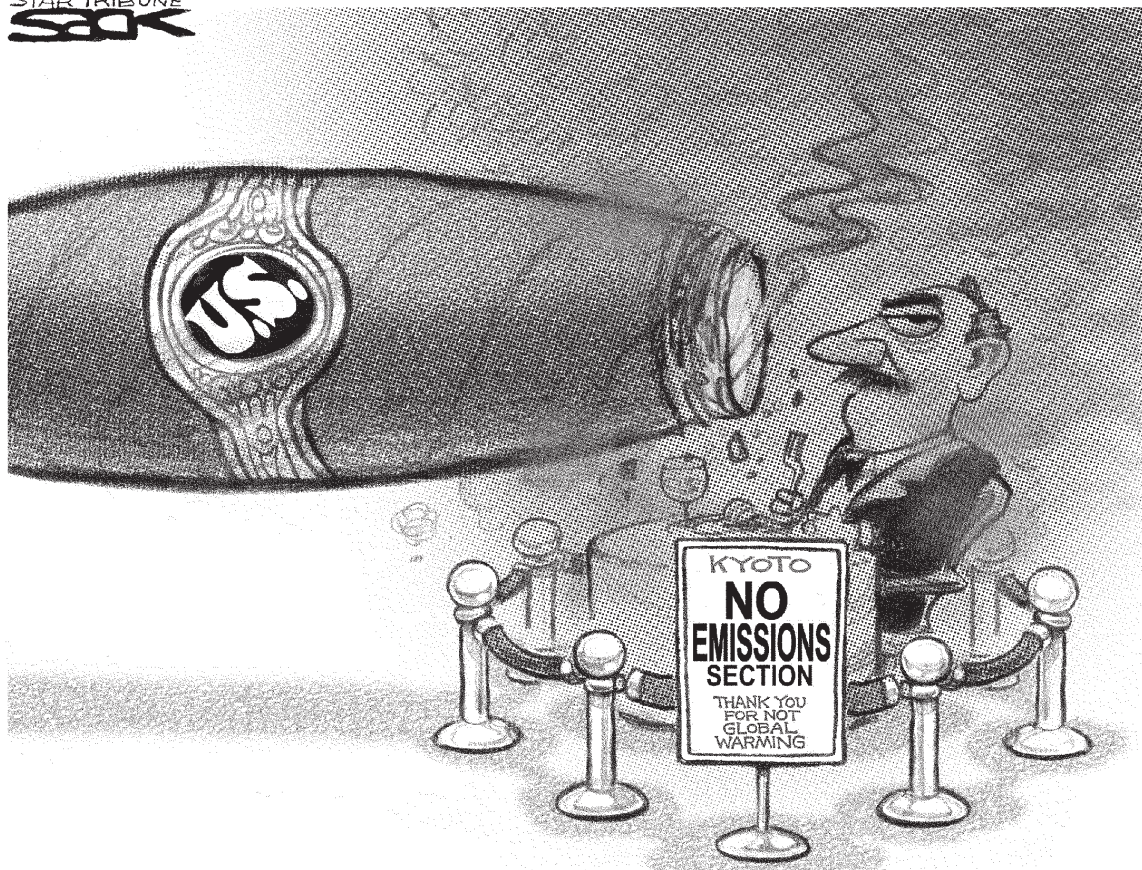
Phew! [FIU]

BY LUIS NIN

THE LIFE OF THE PARTY



STAR TRIBUNE
SOK



Gospel music too secular to profit

By E.R. SHIPP
New York Daily News

“ Kanye West, entertainer

Kanye West is the hot new thing in music, having won last week three Grammy awards, including for a song called “Jesus Walks” on an album called “College Dropout.”

Now gospel music, which came out of the blues and honky-tonk, is trying to figure out whether folks like West are too secular to be gospel. Hello!!!

These churches of ours find too many ways to chase away the truly faithful — based on race or class or gender or sexual orientation or youthfulness.

While gospel music is popular, even with new recognition of hip hop gospel music by the Stellers and the GMAs, gospel music as such was originally branded as too secular when the likes of Thomas Dorsey, the now-revered father of the genre, brought it in from the streets. Too secular!

“Yo. We at war. We at war with terrorism, racism, and most of all we at war with ourselves,” West sings, with the refrain “Jesus walks.”

“God show me the way, because the Devil trying to break me down,” he says with the refrain “Jesus walks with me with me with me with me.”

He uses the N-word, which I abhor, and he raps about the realities of life on streets too familiar to urban America — particularly to “hustlas, killers, murderers, drug dealers, even the strippers.” That includes foul language.

West, however, wants “to talk

to God, but I’m afraid because we ain’t spoke in so long.”

A group called Holy Hip Hop (www.holyhiphop.com) has been around since 1997, “taking the Gospel to the streets.” Minister Reproof Battle, a member of the group who describes himself as “just a member of the camp, a fellow artist” applauds West and his Grammys.

“What Kanye West did opened some doors for the die-hard Christian rap artists,” Battle said. “Christian rap is at the bottom of the music industry per se because it’s one of the newest forms of hip-hop.”

Kurtis Blow, an old-school rapper, last fall co-founded the Hip Hop Church in New York with the Revs. Darren Ferguson and Stephen Pogue. “I think gospel music is now reaching kids more than ever with gospel rap being at the forefront of gospel music these days,” he told me.

Blow, now a seminarian, says he takes “the good with the good” and doesn’t even care what else was on West’s album. A cleaned-up version of “Jesus Walks” is the anthem to which his parishioners rock the church at the start of services on Thursdays and Fridays in Harlem.

“The song is an incredible song. Many things make it incredible,” he said. “The hook,

the refrain, the singing, also the track, the very, very funky track and also his lyrics. Jesus walked with everyone.” That means, according to Blow, “anyone out there doing sin.”

The Stellar Awards people (www.gospelflava.com) dissed West by withdrawing a nomination for best gospel hip-hop song.

The Gospel Music Association has nominated him and will say what they think in April.

Anything new, whether when Dorsey was peddling his music or West and Mase and R. Kelly are doing their thing now, is a shock to the status quo. I am still of the James Cleveland, Mahalia Jackson, Aretha Franklin and Hawkins Family generation.

Lately many celebrities, including civil rights leaders and family-values zealots and rap artists, have been compromised because of their inability to control their libidos. That only proves that we all fall short.

The point is to keep striving to be better. While jumping around and doing calisthenics (as I call all that action encouraged by deejays and preachers) doesn’t work for me as a form of worship, if it does for young folks or even not-so-young folks, then so be it.

But we’ve got to work on that grammar!

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What do you think about the supposed tuition increase for the Fall 2005 semester?

- I am entirely against the increase. Things should stay the way they are.
- I am for the increase. The money will be put to good use.
- I don’t care about the increase. I will continue to study at FIU no matter how much money I pay.
- I would rather transfer out of FIU than pay more for my classes.
- Tuition increase? I love tuition increases!

Cast your vote at www.beaconnewspaper.com

WINNER & LOSER

WINNER



Wet pants: A recent study done by Fox news shows that the smell of urine instinctively attracts women more than cologne. Men everywhere have sold their toilets in an attempt to snatch a date.

LOSER



Peeing Pooch: Pako, a three-year-old dog in France died by electrocution when he peed on a lamppost with loose wires. The dog’s owner believed he should have used that as a form of potty training a long time ago.

QUOTEABLES

“There’s no reason for me to try and draw attention to myself. I want to make it on my own merit.”

– April Florio, actress, denying accusations that she has any kind of a love connection with Brad Pitt.

“I did ‘Bill & Ted’s Excellent Adventure.’ They made a cereal out of it, so once you’ve had a cereal, it doesn’t get much more surreal than that. Surreal Cereal.”

– Keanu Reeves, actor, on how his acting career first began.

“Everything is wonderful. It was a beautiful night.”

– Kid Rock, musician, on his arrest for allegedly assaulting a DJ at a strip club.

“I think my own genre is dead. I don’t really think that there is anyone in the modern pop business who I feel I want to spar with.”

– George Michael, musician, on his decision to quit the music business once and for all.

“You can say, ‘I don’t feel so great about this part of my body today. When we roll over, can you make sure your hand is covering that cellulite?’ And you can have her augment things: I’ve had scenes where I went, ‘Can you just lift it up, so I look a little bit more ripened?’”

– Jennifer Beals, on the pros of doing love scenes with women instead of men.

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor must be dropped off in GC 210 at the University Park campus, WUC 124 at the Biscayne Bay Campus or sent to beacon@fiu.edu. Letters must include the writer’s full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. If brought in to an office, a legitimate ID may be accepted instead of a phone number. *The Beacon* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 400 words.



Need Advice?
Write to Leoncio and Alicia and appear in
The Beacon’s advice column, “Our Two Cents!”
beaconopinion@yahoo.com



CHEERS MATE!

NORTH MIAMI ALE HOUSE IS A FAVORITE FOR BBC STUDENTS



By **HOLLY CASTILLO**
Contributing Writer

Ever feel like grabbing a bite to eat and going out for drinks without making a hole in your pocket? Well, search no more. The North Miami Beach Ale House is a place where FIU students can go for wings and drinks, to watch sports games and to hang out with friends.

The North Miami Beach Ale House has been around for quite some time, and students from Biscayne Bay Campus flock there because of its inexpensive menu and broad selection of beers.

The Ale House has over 30 televisions, four of which are plasma TVs that can be seen from any seat in the restaurant. Want to watch a specific game on the screen near you? Just ask, and the server will change the channel to the game of your choice.

When college football season starts, the Ale House

is packed and the atmosphere is louder than usual. Cheers for the football teams resound throughout the Ale House.

"I love watching the big college football games at the Ale House," said junior Marina Bussell. "Everyone is rooting for their team, and everyone explodes when the team scores. It's so much fun."

Because the tables and booths are for big parties, it's easy to get a group of friends to sit together. The neutral colors of the restaurant are calming, and the seats are comfortable enough to watch an entire football game. The hang out is roomy but small enough to see the entire setup from the door.

The drink specials are for everyone, but women drink free from the well all night.

FIU students grab a quick bite there during lunch and between classes. Thursday night is when the younger crowd, ages 18-25, hangs



FILL YOUR GLASS: Offering a wide selection of domestic and imported beers, a tasty menu, 30 television screens with a variety of sports games and plenty of people to socialize with, the North Miami Beach Ale House is a popular hangout for FIU students at the Biscayne Bay Campus. **ALEX HERNANDEZ/THE BEACON**

“Holly Littleton, Student

It's nice to know there is a place for college-aged people to hang out later in the evening and meet people with some of the same interests.

out, because it's both College Night and Ladies Night.

"It is nice to know there is a place for college-aged people to hang out later in the evening and meet people with some of the same interests," said student Holly Littleton.

On Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the Ale House sells \$1.75 pints of Miller Genuine Draft and \$5 pitchers of Miller Lite or five bottles

for \$5.95. Chicken wings are also a must. Prices range from \$6.99 for 10 to \$19.99 for 50. The wings and boneless wings called zingers are the most ordered items on the menu.

"I highly recommend the Cajun Chicken Pasta. It's delicious and not at all expensive," said sophomore David Slapak.

Two pool tables and a couple of arcade games flank

the bar. An in-house ATM machine is available in case patrons need quick cash.

It's not hard to track a server down, even between 5 and 6 p.m.

"It's a great job. I love interacting with different people on a daily basis. I have fun, and I hope the customers do too," said 21-year-old server David Massey.

The NMB Ale House's hours of operation are Monday-Saturday 11 a.m.-2 a.m., Sunday 11 a.m.-12 a.m. and its Early Bird is every day from 2 p.m.-6 p.m. It is located at 3227 N.E. 163rd St., next to Denny's.

Comedy tugs heartstrings

By **VALERIE SANCHEZ**
Contributing Writer

Weddings are a prime setting for comedies because they offer an atmosphere for amusing, unpredictable events that inevitably lead to laughs. “My Best Friend’s Wedding,” “Four Weddings and a Funeral” and “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” are some of the movies that have embraced this setting. The *dernier cri* to join the family is “The Wedding Date.”

“The Wedding Date,” directed by Clare Kilner, is based on the novel “Asking For Trouble” by Elizabeth Young.

The movie’s main character is Kat Ellis (Debra Messing), a desperate woman driven to hire Nick (Dermot Mulroney), a male escort, to pose as her new boyfriend and accompany her to her half-sister’s wedding in London (an excuse to shoot in the beautiful English country side).

She rents her date at a virtual bargain of \$6,000. The purpose of the conniving scheme is to make her ex-fiancé, Jeffrey (Jeremy Sheffield), who happens to be the best man at the wedding, passionately jealous.

Debra Messing maneuvers her way from the television sitcom, “Will & Grace,” to the big screen. She is a versatile actress who can scurry into comic relief or plunge into a somber moment. Her performance is flawless. She turns the spastic Kat into a loveable, funny character that leaves the viewer wanting whatever makes her happy.

Messing plays a nervous head case whose primary objective is to make Jeffrey regret that he ever left her. Her capriciousness stems from not knowing how she feels about hiring an escort and how she feels about her ex-fiance. Does she want to get back with Jeffrey or did she



KISS THE BRIDE: The new romantic comedy “The Wedding Date” stars Debra Messing in her first major role on the big screen. **COURTESY PHOTO**

dig into her 401K just to make him miserable?

Nick is the right man for the job. He plays a handsome, sophisticated, well-mannered gentleman, who, over the course of the weekend, becomes the object of every woman’s desire.

As Nick suavely charms Kat’s parents, Bunny and Victor Ellis (Holland Taylor and Peter Egan), Kat and her sister become defenseless to his mystical enchantment, along with the audience. Nick doesn’t seem to say much, but when he does, he knows exactly what to say at.

This leads him to become the ideal son-in-law, the groom’s new best friend and the bride’s therapist. Nick helps Kat deal with her whacky family and nourishes the

belief that he and Kat are a madly in love item. But what starts out as a pretend relationship soon turns into mutual attraction, leaving the audience wondering if it will evolve into a real connection.

The weekend leading up to the wedding reveals a surprising turn in the plot. The wedding couple (Amy Adams and Jack Davenport) are headed from a picture perfect amour to a major revelation. This unexpected turn of events leads the audience to sympathize with Kat.

Warning: Guys, this is a chick flick. Girls, if you want to see a movie that is going to leave you feeling warm and fuzzy inside, then this is a sure fit.

With this film, you can’t leave the theater without having laughed (at least once).

Mozart opera rings magnificent

By **C. JOEL MARINO**
Senior Staff Writer

With its occult and Masonic references, cryptic plot and assortment of strange characters, Mozart’s final operatic work, “The Magic Flute,” has been considered by some critics to be one of the strangest *singspiels* – a Germanic form of the musical – ever composed.

However, despite the many secrets hidden behind the work, the piece proved to be a well-chosen follow, up to the Florida Grand Opera’s seasonal line-up of the dramatic (Giacomo Puccini’s “Madama Butterfly” in November) and the quirky (Benjamin Britten’s “Paul Bunyan” in January).

Set in what appears to be ancient Egypt, the opera follows the adventures of innocent Prince Tamino and his comical sidekick, Papageno the Bird-Catcher, after they’re commissioned by the cunning Queen of

the Night to find her kidnapped daughter, Pamina.

The heroes run into villains and strange creatures during their quest. At the end, they find the lost princess and an ancient, secret society that reveals the true purposes behind the evil queen’s mission.

Though the extensive symbols within the plot might make the opera a hard one to stage, director Bruno Berger-Gorski managed to pull great performances from a cast made up of many new and young artists.

Tenor Brian Anderson (who also held a leading role in “Paul Bunyan”) brought a soft complexity to the love-lorn Tamino, portrayed as a youth trapped between his passion for a girl he’s never met and the deadly oaths he made to the mysterious Brotherhood.

Soprano Christina Pier also gave a good show as the ever-confused Pamina, but the main actors were, in the end, out-staged by hilarious performances from

the ensemble cast.

The most memorable scenes were those involving baritone Aaron St. Clair Nicholson in the role of Papageno and tenor Richard Coxon (dressed in sadomasochistic garb) as the perverse but cowardly henchman Monostatos. Nicholson actually managed to improvise a few lines while directly addressing the audience and the conductor, a hard feat to accomplish in the strict vocal choreography of opera.

The only faulty performance was that of soprano Amanda Pabyan in the demanding role of the Queen of the Night. While performing the famous “Der Holler Rache” aria in which the queen’s voice is supposed to imitate the sound of a flue, Pabyan instead belted out notes during the pivotal crescendo that made many in the audience squirm in their seats.

Besides the acting, the opera would not have been as great a success if it hadn’t included the magnificent

scenery and special effects designed by children’s book author and illustrator Maurice Sendak.

Sendak perfectly captured the esoteric atmosphere of the work by painting scenes on canvases that when lit from behind, turned into metaphorical veils that shielded the story’s true purposes.

Despite the oddness of the supposedly Egyptian characters dressed in colonial American costumes, Sendak’s otherwise fitting production designs managed to bring a grandness to the performance that is rarely seen in many FGO’s shows.

“The Magic Flute,” which premiered at the Miami-Dade Auditorium Feb. 12, will be showcased next at Ft. Lauderdale’s Broward Center for the Performing Arts, March 3rd and 5th.

Though the opera is in German, English subtitles are projected on a screen above the stage during every performance.

LIFE!



SOME FAVORITE THINGS
BY **ALEJANDRA DIAZ** –
EDITOR IN CHIEF

1. PENGUINS

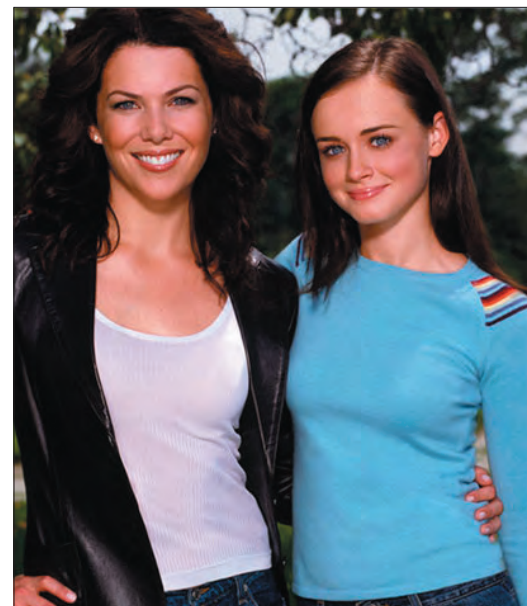
The black and white tuxedo-colored birds are the most extraordinary creatures on earth. Their waddling and swimming skills are unparalleled to any other species. With over 18 species of penguins, there are plenty of birds for me to love. Favorite species: King penguin

2. POTATOES

Oh, the wonders of potatoes. Thousands of recipes can turn any spud into a delicious meal. For breakfast, lunch or dinner...potatoes are fine by me. Favorite style: Mashed potatoes

3. GILMORE GIRLS

A Tuesday night trip to Stars Hollow is the perfect end to the weekend stress. The zany characters and delightful dialogue have kept me tuned in for the past five seasons. Now, if I only had TiVo, I could give my VCR some much needed rest. Favorite character: Luke



GILMORE GIRLS **COURTESY PHOTO**

4. JOHN MAYER

The guitar playing singer has the perfect song for any situation. It’s good chilling music. ‘Nuff said. Favorite song: 83

5. NAPPING

Napping is the bomb. What could be better than having even more hours to sleep? Favorite nap time: 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

DID YOU KNOW?

Avocado is derived from the Spanish word *aguacate* which is derived from *ahuacatl*, meaning testicle.

– www.kellys.com/know.html

With tuition skyrocketing, low-income students face steep odds

By LYNN FRANEY
Knight Ridder
Newspapers

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Jason Pratt was no math whiz in high school, but he can understand how bad the odds are for low-income students like him to graduate from college.

Just six out of 100 kids from families making less than \$35,000 a year earn a bachelor's degree by the time they are 24.

In families making more than \$90,000 a year, 51 out of 100 kids graduate.

As college tuition skyrockets and financial aid for low-income students stagnates, it's no surprise the gap has grown in the past 30 years.

That gap is prompting an increasing number of colleges to take action.

Some, including Pratt's school, Northwest Missouri State University, give low-income students more money for college.

Harvard University now pledges that students from families making less than \$40,000 will pay nothing.

More schools have joined College Goal Sunday program, which makes college financial aid counselors available for free to students and their families to help fill out the complicated federal financial aid form.

Some are working to give disadvantaged children a vision of themselves as college material by bringing them to campus at ever-earlier ages for summer programs.

"Colleges and universities are very heavily invested in this and very anxious to do the right thing for the nation by boosting achievement," said Terry Hartle, senior vice president at the American Council on Education in Washington, D.C.

Nationally, colleges make more grants to low-income students than the federal and state governments combined.

The problem is that poorly performing wealthy children are as likely to go to college as the most academically talented poor children, Hartle said.

Colleges know something has to be done.

Northwest Missouri State introduced the American Dream Grant program this school year. In the first two years it pays tuition, room and board for qualified students whose families earn less than \$30,000. The students must pitch in \$1,500 a year and apply for other aid.

Not being from a well-off family presents many educational challenges, experts say.

Many attend inferior high

schools that don't have the academic resources and strengths as better-off public or private schools.

Often they are from families without much experience with higher education. That means they need extra help with college and financial aid applications and extra support once they get to college, through tutoring or help navigating the bureaucracy.

Angela Lindsey-Nunn, a 36-year-old University of Kansas student, knows the struggles of the poor to earn

a bachelor's degree.

She grew up in Salina, one of four children of a single mother who emigrated from Asia. After high school she went to Marymount College, a now-closed private school in Salina.

But after a year she couldn't afford it. She left with debt that took her years to pay off.

After a divorce, Lindsey-Nunn, who has a seizure disorder, and her two children for a time lived on \$400 a month.

Now, after quitting work under her doctor's orders, she has enrolled at KU. She gets disability benefits and is studying wildlife conservation.

While applauding efforts to make college more affordable and accessible, one critic of higher education says the changes aren't enough to close the gap.

President Bush wants to increase the amount of Pell Grants, the main federal aid program for poor students. But the amount of the pro-

posed increase would do little to make the program catch up with tuition, which continues to rise much faster than inflation.

The lack of commitment by state and federal government disturbs Tom Mortenson, a higher education policy analyst in Iowa.

He crunched the numbers that show just 6 percent of kids from families earning less than \$35,000 earn a bachelor's degree before turning 24, compared with 51 percent for kids from

wealthier families.

"What are we doing here? If we limit this (higher education) to people who come from the most privileged backgrounds, are we saying to the poor, like the immigrants moving to Iowa, 'Sorry. You can clean out our homes. You can weed our gardens. But you don't have a shot at what we have created here for ourselves.'" Mortenson said. "It's just un-American. We ought to hang our heads in disgrace."



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COURTESY PHOTO

Chocolate used as health prescription

By RICK ASA
Chicago Tribune

As guilty pleasures go, chocolate has to be at the top of the list. But would it still be as pleasing if the guilt went away?

Food scientists are compiling strong evidence that chocolate, or more accurately its cocoa foundation, contains plant chemicals called flavanols that offer cardiovascular protection in several ways.

But before you gleefully start planning dinners around big chocolate Easter rabbits keep in mind that the studies on chocolate and humans, like those involving other phytochemical-laden foods, remain an inexact science.

Research has yet to determine, for example, whether the observed benefits will translate to the population at large and how much is enough. Another obstacle is taste; generally speaking, the less processed chocolate is, the higher the flavanol levels and the higher the bitterness and astringency.

Even before chocolate studies picked up steam in the past five years, scientists suspected that connection, having observed that indigenous populations that consume a high level of cocoa have a reduced risk of heart disease, said Carl Keen, chairman of the nutrition department at the University of California, Davis.

The Kuna Indians of the San Blas Islands off Panama, for example, his-

torically have had extremely low blood pressure. They also drink a lot of locally grown, minimally processed cocoa high in flavanols.

Most chocolate we eat today is made from cocoa beans that have been stripped of the flavanols during a heating and chemical process that removes bitterness and prepares them for the mass market. The relatively bitter Kuna drink, on the other hand, would be an acquired taste that has little in common with our hot cocoa.

According to a study at the University of Glasgow, in Scotland, we would have to eat twice as much milk chocolate to obtain the same amount of flavanols as in bittersweet dark chocolate.

Keen was among the first researchers to show that gently processed, high-flavanol cocoa indeed has a biological effect. He and other researchers have since shown that flavanols can:

- Help the blood protect against oxidation damage
- Reduce the risk of blood clots, an aspirinlike effect
- “Turn on” the production of nitric oxide, a key molecule in blood that helps protect blood vessels, lower blood pressure and increase circulation in the extremities
- Help reduce cytokines, compounds that increase damage to cardiovascular tissue

NOT SO FAST WITH HEALTH CLAIMS

The inevitable backlash we’re talking about chocolate and a deeply engrained public perception here has already begun.

When a St. Louis artisanal confectioner hired a university-based dietitian to lend credibility to its claims that its chocolates contain ingredients “linked to improved cardiovascular health,” the activist Center for Science in the Public Interest quickly swooped in, saying the claims are putting the marketing cart in front of the science horse.

“Chocolate isn’t broccoli,” said Bonnie Liebman, director of nutrition at CSPI. “Antioxidant claims (for all foods) have been around for some time and in general have lost favor because of disappointing results on studies for vitamins E and C.

“The evidence could get stronger,” Liebman allowed, but to date “no studies show that people who eat chocolate are healthier.”

Oddly enough, Mars Inc., one of the biggest chocolate producers in the world, agrees. Its head of research, Harold Schmitz, insisted that Mars has invested tens of millions of dollars into cocoa and flavanol studies to “make sure the story is right in a sustainable way,” noting that all of Mars’ studies have been peer reviewed and are replicable.

“We really get concerned when we see the truncated headline ‘health chocolate,’” he said. “We’re concerned because the science does not support chocolate as

‘healthy.’ The science supports the claims that certain types of cocoa or certain types of chocolate can make a contribution to cardiovascular health.

“Most cardiologists would agree that nitric oxide is the central paradigm and we can quantify that. So we at least have a starting point to do dose-response studies (in humans). The world of science will be hearing from Mars and our research collaborators on studies directly addressing this over the next two years,” Schmitz said.

GO AHEAD, ENJOY

From her clinical perspective, dietitian Lynn Danford, a nutrition specialist and research coordinator at the Northwestern Memorial Hospital Lynn Sage Cancer Center, noted that cocoa has been in the food supply for hundreds of years and was used medicinally by ancient civilizations in South and Central America.

Though chocolate may not appear on a food pyramid anytime soon as an essential nutrient, she said, “it certainly can be enjoyed without the guilt which is too commonly associated with pleasurable foods in our culture.”

Danford said her advice to most patients is to include chocolate in their diet if they enjoy it.

“The bottom line is, chocolate is not a necessity, but it is certainly an enjoyable part of our diet. The universal advice, everything in moderation, applies quite well to this delicious food.”

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O'Neal dominates NBA Nash makes team better

SHAQ, from page 12

playoffs. And without a big man, it is extremely difficult to do so.

Take a look at what the Dallas Mavericks have done in the playoffs these past few years.

Yeah, they had players who could light it up, but in the play-offs any good defense could shut them down.

The Heat's offensive approach has done an about-face since the acquisition of Shaq.

The Big Aristotle has averaged 22.7 points-per-game and ranks fifth in the NBA with 10.4 rebounds-per-game as Miami's go-to guy.

He also leads the NBA with a 59.9 field-goal percentage.

As of Feb. 25, the Heat is ranked first in the Eastern Conference and has a five-game lead over the second-ranked Detroit Pistons.

They have a 27-6 record against Eastern Conference opponents, making them the only team in the East with single-digit losses against other Eastern teams.

You can give me the old, tired argument about how the East is so much weaker than the West, and how the Heat doesn't have a good record against Western Conference teams," but Shaq has already said that he and the team have an "extra gear" they haven't even used yet.

The team gave us a preview of that "extra gear" in their Feb. 13 victory over the San Antonio Spurs – arguably the best all-around team in the NBA.

Without Shaq, the Spur's Tim Duncan would have stepped all over any Heat player that had to cover him under the basket.

Before coming to the Heat last season Shaq said, in an interview with ESPN, that any team with a dominant big man should play the game "inside-to-outside," meaning that the offense should begin by giving him the ball and attracting attention from defenders near the basket.

Then, if he gets double or triple-teamed, he will pass the ball to an open shooter on the outside. Shaq makes his teammates better and gives them open shots.

That is what the Heat has done this season. Granted, their offense is a heck of a lot more boring than it was last year. Nevertheless, it gets the job done.

Shaq is the centerpiece of the Heat offense this year. The team would be in disarray if he was removed from the offensive system that was made especially for him.

NBA basketball in Miami has become relevant again.

The Heat practically sells out every game. And, most importantly, they are actually winning—All because of Shaq.

If that isn't valuable to you, I don't know what is.

NASH, from page 12

about the so-called writer on the opposite side.

Steve Nash! No question about it.



NASH

Yes, he is the smallest of all the candidates and no, Nash doesn't possess those ridiculous selfish statistics like 30 points per game, and he doesn't average five sky-scraping ESPN top-ten dunks

per game, either.

What Nash does have is the distinctive team leadership and incredible will to share the ball with teammates. Share the ball?

Does that still exist in today's NBA? Nash actually takes great pride in his passing game and is always looking to make his teammates better.

Some players say they try to make their teammates better, but Nash actually does it.

OK. Enough of that. I'm getting tired of dominating this debate with such inarguable statements. Let me mention some valuable numbers and statistics.

First, 16.4 points-per-game is quite a handsome average for a point guard. His 11.5 assists per game is three more than the next player on the leader board, further proving my argument that Nash

is unselfish.

But, the most significant statistic is that he is the quarterback of the Phoenix Suns – the second best team in the NBA with a 42-13 record.

There is no doubt Nash is responsible for this feat. One can argue that Stoudamire deserves much credit as well, and he does.

But, Stoudamire was on the team last year. In fact everyone else was too, minus Steve Nash and the inconsistent Quinton Richardson. Yet, Nash brings a vast improvement in the overall standings from a year ago.

Also, in addition to leading his run-and-gun offense to one of the league's elite, the team is just not the same without Nash in the lineup.

In the four games that Nash has missed this season, the Suns are 1-3. They lost to Detroit, Washington and Memphis by an average of nine points per loss, while only beating the woeful Clippers.

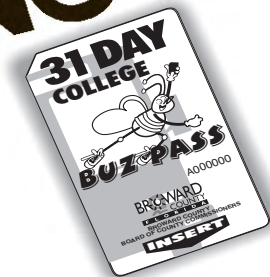
Now, if that wasn't enough, how about the fact that the Suns average 10 less assists, 11 less points and a far lower shooting percentage from the field without Nash running the offense.

Nash is like the quarterback of the Suns offense. When he's on the floor, he always knows where his teammates are and he always finds a way to get them the ball.

As a result, despite his lack of flashy dunks and juiced up scoring numbers – that the rest of the candidates possess – Nash is the epitome of what MVP really stands for.



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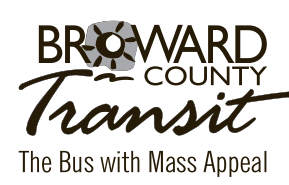
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Tennis coach recruits internationally

By **MICHELLE FLEMING**
Contributing Writer

Today's college recruiter can't afford to fly around the world looking for the perfect player, but living in a diverse community like Miami, is a great opportunity for Ronni Bernstein, Head coach of FIU's women's tennis team.

"All the international players know Miami," said Bernstein. "This gives me some help in the initial contact."

Although Bernstein works with a limited budget, she has closed deals with players from all around the globe. This season, she is coaching players from Croatia, Yugoslavia, Australia, Lithuania, Venezuela, the Bahamas and two locals with Cuban and Columbian roots, who

add spice to FIU's team.

Bernstein, who became the head tennis coach eight years ago, said she relies on good recommendations, player's videotapes, e-mails and talent scouting with the help of assistant coach Carlos Casely at the Orange Bowl International Tournament in Key Biscayne.

"A lot of the players contact me by e-mail and we start the process," Bernstein said. "It can be tricky because you want to recruit a person, not just a good tennis player." Bernstein, a four-time All-American at the University of Miami in the 1980's, said that most of the athletes are far away from home for the first time and making them feel comfortable is a challenge.

"They are all in search of a full scholarship, so you try to offer a package that will be beneficial for them and make the journey from their homes easy and affordable," she said. "FIU has given them this opportunity, and that is what it is all about."

But it's no walk on the court for the

Golden Panther tennis players, who study and train hard during the week, often spending their weekends traveling.

Often, players have classes at the University Park and Biscayne Bay campuses. Some study English at Miami-Dade College, which makes it difficult to organize their time and keep up with their schedules.

Junior Courtney Jonson commutes to and from both campuses daily because she majors in journalism.

"Juggling school and tennis is like

a full-time job for me. I am always on the go. As soon as training is finished, I shower, grab a quick bite to eat and journey back over to [BBC] for my night classes," said Jonson.

The Golden Panthers are currently ranked 10th in the Southern region of the Sun Belt Conference with a 3-2 record.

Bernstein makes all the team's travel arrangements approximately a year ahead of time in order to schedule tournaments in diverse places. Next year, the Golden Panthers head to California.



BERNSTEIN



DIVERSE GROUP: Coach Bernstein (far left) has recruited players from all over the globe. She credits the city of Miami for being a huge recruiting advantage. **FIU MEDIA RELATIONS**

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SPORTS

Who's the NBA's Most Valuable Player?

SHAQ



By **XAVIER VILLARMARZO**
Staff Writer

There really shouldn't be an argument over it. When you think of the Most Valuable Player, you should think of no one other than the Miami Heat's Shaquille O'Neal.

First of all, he is the most valuable player in the literal sense, because he is the highest paid player in NBA. That should count for something.

The Miami Heat would be nowhere without him.

That's right. I said it. Without Shaq, the Heat would be running around the court like a group of bewildered teenagers with their shorts around their ankles.

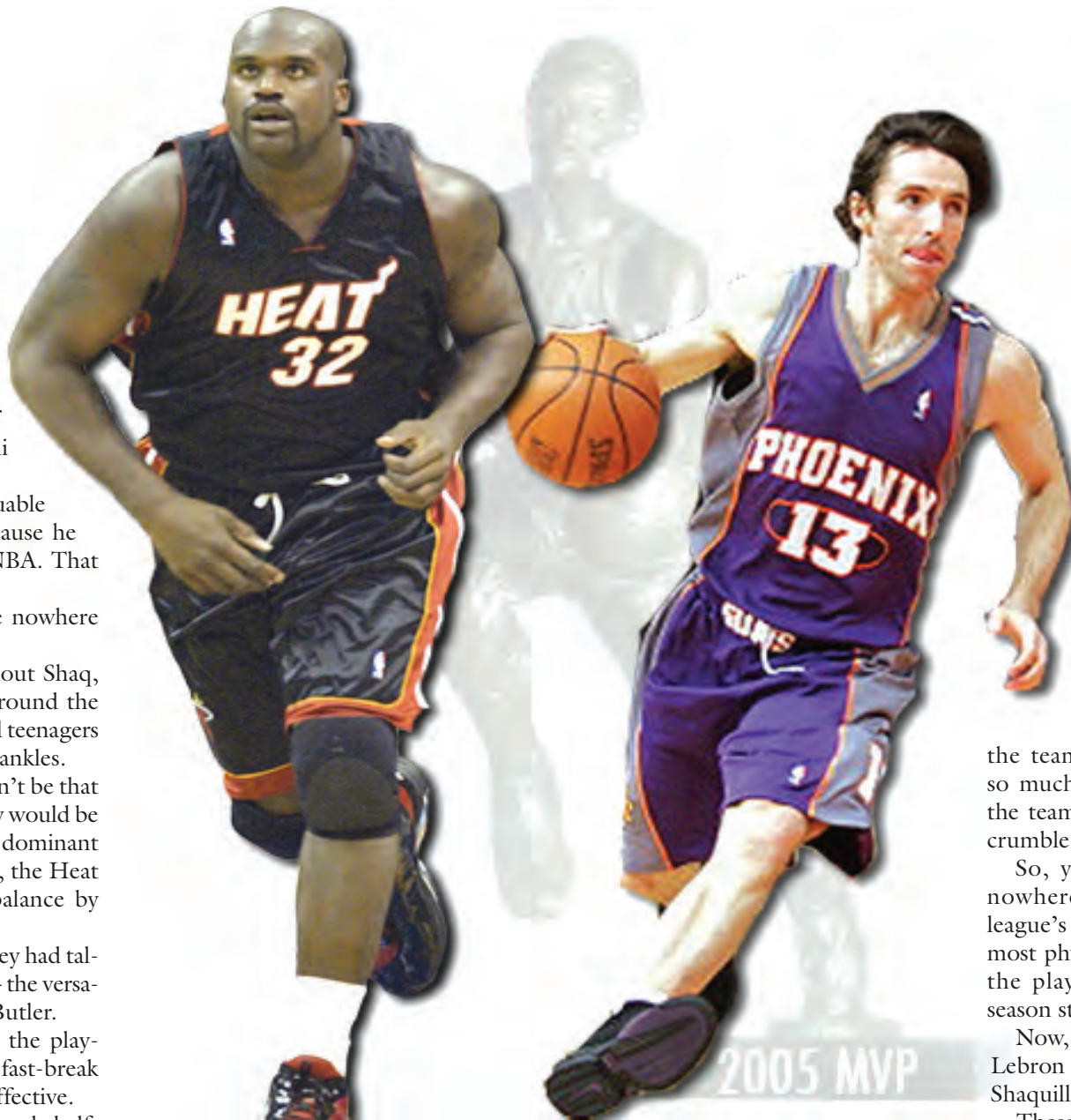
OK, maybe the Heat wouldn't be that hopeless without Shaq, but they would be substantially worse. Without a dominant force in the middle of last year, the Heat was able to keep teams off balance by running a fast-break offense.

This was possible because they had talented athletes at their disposal - the versatile Lamar Odom and Caron Butler.

Once the Heat made it to the playoffs last season, however, that fast-break offense was nowhere near as effective.

Teams must play a slow-paced, half-court offense in order to win in the NBA

See **SHAQ**, page 10



ELITE PLAYERS: Shaquille O'Neal and Steve Nash have been huge additions to their new teams. Both are mentioned as possible MVP candidates. COURTESY PHOTO

NASH



By **NIKOLAY OREKHOV**
Staff Writer

It's that time of the NBA season when the trading deadline is in the rear view and the team rosters are set for the playoff run.

The question now, is, which player will emerge as the season's Most Valuable Player.

First of all, let me define the term "MVP." It means the most valuable player on a given team; the player who makes the team go.

The one player who improves the team's performance and outcome so much that if he was removed from the team, it would lose its identity and crumble.

So, you should have noticed that nowhere is the MVP defined as the league's best player, the player with the most physical talent and ability, or even the player with the most glamorous season stats.

Now, let's announce the candidates: LeBron James, Amare Stoudamire and Shaquille O'Neal - right?

These are solid choices; players from quality teams with great stats, but they're

See **NASH**, page 10

Golden Panthers to play in final home game



By **ANDONI GONZALEZ-RUA**
Staff Writer

Maybe this wasn't the season Head coach Sergio Rouco imagined when he took the job last year at FIU.

The Golden Panthers close out their season Feb. 28 at Pharmed Arena with a 7.30 tip-off against conference rival Middle Tennessee.

The team currently has a 10-15 overall record and 3-9 in Sun Belt Conference play.

After a positive start to the season, the men's basketball team has experienced some ups and downs along the way, most notably a seven-game conference losing streak.

With that behind them, led by junior Ivan Almonte, FIU looks to head into the Sun Belt playoffs riding a high. The Dominican forward leads the conference in rebounds and is averaging a double-double a game for the season.

His output, as well as Ismael N'Diaye's and Junior Matias'

will dictate the game. If the three struggle like they did in the last road-loss to New Orleans, the fans at Pharmed Arena are in for a long night.

All three leaders must put on a solid performance in order for the team to come out with a victory.

The Golden Panthers will look to slow down the output of Marcus Morrison who shot 9-of-12 against them from the floor for 26 points, Feb. 5. FIU will look to avenge a 13-point loss, 82-69.

Freshman guard Antonio Jones should be back after sitting for the two games last week with a deep thigh bruise. If he is unavailable, look for Jayce Lewis to play a major role at the point guard position.

This game brings to a close the home careers of Junior Matias, Byron Burnett and Warren Gale as the Golden Panthers will not host any conference playoff games.

Look for Matias to have a big night in front of the home

fans as he closes out his colorful career at FIU against a team he scored 30 points against the first time around.

All eyes will be on the production of freshman Kenny Simms, as he is the player to take the place of Burnett next season. Look for him to get increased minutes in the playoffs as he tries to fulfill the shoes Rouco has put him in.

Despite a losing record, the season is a vast improvement over last year's group coached by Donnie Marsh.

Marsh's team finished a horrible 5-22. Moreover, the team struggled all year in the Sun Belt, where it finished 1-13.

Only three players from last year's team - Burnett, Gale and Matias - are on this year's roster.

All three look to finish their home careers with a win.

There's a saying in sports that teams that struggle all season but get hot at the end make a run in the playoffs; let's see if the Golden Panthers are up to the challenge.

FINAL HOME GAME: Fifth year senior Junior Matias will play his final home game on Feb. 28. GEOFF ANDERSON/SPECIAL TO THE BEACON