

SCHOOL CREATIVITY
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Replacement has some big shoes to fill

JULIA CARDENUTO
BBC Managing Editor

With the news that Modesto A. Maidique is resigning as FIU's president, a search for his replacement has already begun.

"It's going to take a while to find a new president," Maidique said at the Nov. 14 Board Of Trustees meeting. "Don't worry, I will be here ... When you are comfortable and you believe that you have found the right person then I will move on."

The Board Of Trustees will take the advice of a community advisory board and hire a firm to perform a national search for Maidique's successor.

The firm will be in charge of finding the candidates, and Mark Rosenberg, Chancellor of the State University System of Florida, already showed interest in the presidential position.

"He does have an interest in being a candidate for the next president of FIU," said Bill Edmonds, director of communications of the Board Of Governors in an e-mail.

Rosenberg has served as provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs at FIU from 1998 to 2005 and was named FIU's acting president from January to July 1999.

He announced in September that he will be returning to teach at FIU.

Speculations have been made about Provost Berkman being considered for the job as well.

He said on Nov. 14 that it is too soon for him to think about that and that he will "wait for the search process to start," according to a *Miami Herald* article.

SEARCH BEGINS



JOSEPH KOSANKE/THE BEACON

SEARCHING: President Modesto Maidique announces his resignation alongside trustee David Parker at the Nov. 14 Board of Trustees meeting.

"We're going to do a national search," said Chairman of the BOT David Parker at the Nov. 14 meeting. "There may be excellent candidates locally, but with that said, we want a future leader who has the same level of intensity, leadership and impact that Dr. Maidique has had on this community for 22 years."

Parker said he will seek Maidique's advice in the search of the new president, but Maidique said he will not play a grand role in the matter.

"The job of picking my successor is the

responsibility of our Board of Trustees," Maidique said.

STILL ON THE JOB

As Maidique announced his retirement plan, after 22 years on the job, one thing was made clear: he will still be president until a replacement is found.

The current president and his replacement will face a host of pressing issues: reaccreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 2010; hiring replace-

ments for five dean positions; surviving a four-year probation imposed on Athletics by the National Collegiate Athletic Association for violation of its bylaws and watching as the College of Medicine receives its first 40 students in August 2009.

"I want to get the next round of funding for the medical school," Maidique said. "I want to welcome the 40 medical school students on campus and I want to make a complete and solid case for accreditations."

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'Frosties' excited about opening new art building

ELSIE PUIG
Staff Writer

When the Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum opens in late November, its success may lie on the shoulders of the students who interned last summer.

Catalina Jaramillo, a Bachelor of Fine Arts graduate, is part of the tight knit group of students involved with the museum.

Jaramillo remembers the day two years ago when Carol Damian, director at the Frost Museum, split her \$3,000 paycheck with her.

She was a new mother and as Damian's assistant, was given the task of digitizing a whole art history class Damian was teaching. She willingly agreed and Damian thanked her

generously with a part of the check.

"We're like a big family, we even call ourselves the 'Frosties,'" said Allison Garcia, an architecture student.

As dedicated as Damian has been to the "Frosties," these students are now focused on designing and curating for opening day, which will be on Saturday Nov. 29. They have done everything from drafting press releases, preparing guest lectures and marketing.

"I think [Damian's] really great. If you go to other places you see interns running errands or getting coffee. She really wants you to get physically involved in the work you put in," said Nicole Espailot, a sophomore in art history.

Their most delicate work, how-

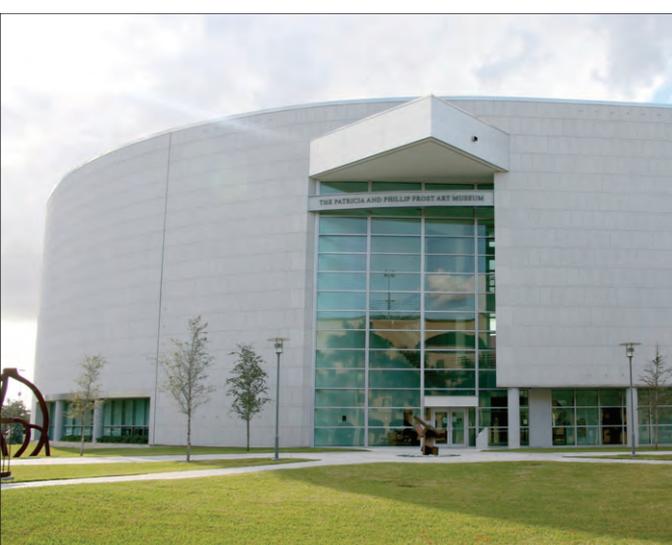
ever, has been the handling of 6,000 art pieces from the permanent Frost Art Museum collection, which for the first time will be housed in the new building. Since the summer of 2008, all the art pieces have been securely nestled in the second floor of the museum.

"It's the first time we don't have to drive 30 miles to Artex in Davie to retrieve pieces," said Jaramillo, who has helped in curating exhibitions.

Transporting thousands of dollars in century old art is not an easy task, especially making sure each piece is documented and accounted for.

"It is a lot like being pregnant," Jaramillo said, "You are constantly worrying if an art piece is going to break, or something is going to

FROST, page 2



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

WORK OF ART: Students work diligently in designing the museum that will be ready for viewing on Nov. 29, 2008.

NEWS FLASH

FIU

Professors look to aid countries in preparing for natural disasters

FIU has been awarded a \$4.5 million federal project to help reduce high casualties from natural disasters in areas around Latin America and the Caribbean, according to a news bulletin on the University Web site.

The five year project is headed by University chair of the Political Science department, Richard Olson, alongside future FIU Professor Juan Pablo Sarmiento, who will be traveling around cities in Latin America and the Caribbean to help better prepare these areas that are heavily prone to natural catastrophes.

Both professors will work with scientists, engineers, non-governmental organizations and civic leaders to analyze past natural disasters and see what mistakes were made in preparation. The project also looks to bring communities together in order to enhance success and minimize fatalities.

Interior Design department showcases creativity through Festival of Trees

The Department of Interior Design is presenting the 22nd annual Festival of the Trees. This year the exhibit will be held from Dec. 2 through Dec. 23, 2008, according to the College of Architecture and the Arts.

The annual festival showcases holiday tree designs made from various materials.

Each guest will receive a ballot at the entrance and can vote for their favorite tree. At the end of the night the votes will be tallied and two winners chosen — judge's choice and people's choice. The opening reception on Dec. 2 is a preview which annually attracts over 800 people. Tickets can be purchased prior to the event or at the door.

Net proceeds from the festival will be used to fund scholarships and help students pursuing a degree in interior design at the College.

– Compiled by Sergio Bonilla and Julio Menache

EXPANDING HORIZONS



JONATHAN DAVILA/THE BEACON

STUDYING ABROAD: Shawna Malawskey, a special education major, and Roque Corona, a TV production major, get information on studying abroad in Spain during the Study Abroad Fair on Nov. 5.

Students give tours during first week

FROST, page 1

happen.”

During opening week, there will be six shows available to the public in which students will be in charge of giving tours to faculty, staff and students. Through the Ambassador Program offered by the Frost Museum, interested students will get the chance to learn first-hand how to give tours of the museum.

“We are designating an area in the museum, and we have to learn how to facilitate the understanding of each art piece,” said Ana Garcia, an art history student interning at the Frost Museum who hopes to be an art dealer some day.

The program offers a holistic approach to museum studies where interested students are trained to make connections between different art pieces. However, the program is open to stu-

dents of any discipline or major.

During the opening week, the students will also be in charge of giving tours to faculty, staff, and students.

All in all, the “Frosties” look up to Damian, a woman whose dedication and hardwork helped make the new museum a reality.

“She [Damian] gets on a personal level with you. She really does want you to get the most out of this job,” Espailloit said.

Online classes a better fit for vets looking to learn

IVAN MORENO
AP Writer

Diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and recovering from a grenade attack, Iraq war veteran Ian Newland wanted to pursue a business degree after his discharge from the Army last year. What he didn't want to have to do was set foot in a classroom.

And thanks to the Internet, he doesn't have to.

The world of online higher education has given thousands of vets like Newland — and active-duty soldiers — the opportunity to work at their own pace.

“Being online, I can work on my college work at 3 a.m. if I'm feeling rambunctious,” said Newland, 28, who often does homework when he can't sleep.

Online education is increasingly attractive for military veterans, according to Denver-based Jones International University, a Web-exclusive institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. About 350 current or former soldiers are pursuing a degree at Jones, three times the number last year. The university has a total of 2,000 students.

“Being fully online, we go to wherever that service member goes,” said Bruce Ricketts, vice chancellor for military programs for JIU, which has pursued military students. Some students keep up with their classes from Iraq and Afghanistan. “A deployment doesn't mean that your education

necessarily has to stop,” Ricketts said.

Other universities with online programs that accommodate service members and veterans include American University, the University of Phoenix and Troy University, according to Eduventures, a research and consulting firm specializing in higher education.

Jim Selbe, assistant vice president for lifelong learning at the American Council on Education, said about 50 percent of active duty service members receiving tuition reimbursement from the Department of Defense are taking online courses.

In the 2007 fiscal year, Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force personnel took more than 710,000 online and traditional courses, according to the council's most recent data.

Richard Garrett, program director and senior research analyst at Eduventures, said an estimated 10.5 percent of students at schools nationwide are enrolled in online programs.

Newland, who grew up on a farm north-east of Dayton, Ohio, was wounded while serving with the 26th Infantry Regiment out of Germany on Dec. 4, 2006.

An insurgent threw a hand grenade through the gunner's hatch of his Humvee on patrol in Adhamiyah, northeast of Baghdad.

Spc. Ross McGinnis, a 19-year-old from Knox, Penn., dove on top of the grenade, taking the brunt of the explosion and shield-

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Maidique accomplished what he wanted

MAIDIQUE, page 1

BUDGET CRISIS

For the 2008-2009 fiscal year, according to Chief Financial Officer Vivian Sanchez, the University might suffer further budget cuts.

During this year's budget crisis, where Florida state universities suffered a 6 percent cut in state funding due to unexpected state tax revenue, University administration made some tough decisions regarding the future of the University. Cutting 23 academic programs, affecting about 150 staff and a 15 percent increase in tuition were among them.

Next year, a 7 percent cut is projected, Sanchez said at the BOT Finance and Audit

I arrived to FIU when there were five buildings and about 13,000 students. The growth of the University is wholly attributable to him.

William Beesting, *Asst. Dean Undergraduate Studies*

Committee on Nov. 13.

The decreased budget will be addressed and further actions taken.

"We are managing, we are vigilant, we are concerned, but we are planning," Sanchez said.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Despite the turmoil of the budget crisis, Maidique showed leadership and established that "no budget crisis, big or small, will slow down FIU's growth," on a memo he sent to the FIU

community on Sept. 2008 where he referred to "FIU 3.0," his vision of an improved University.

His performance and leadership earned him bonuses and outstanding ratings.

On Friday's meeting the BOT voted to give Maidique a \$50,000 bonus and awarded him a superiority rating. Also, at a BOT meeting one year ago, he received a 5 out of 5 performance grade.

Maidique is the longest serving university president in Florida and had the sec-

ond longest tenure of any U.S. public research university president.

During his tenure, enrollment has more than doubled, reaching 38,000 students.

The Cuban American president added 22 new doctoral programs and 18 undergraduate programs, and research expenditure grew from \$6 million to \$110 million - all this played a role in transforming what was once known as a commuter school to a major research university.

"I arrived to FIU when there were five buildings and about 13,000 students," said William Beesting, assistant dean of Undergraduate Studies, who has been at the University since 1983. "The growth of the University is

wholly attributable to him."

During Maidique's tenure, a colleges of law, architecture and public health and a School of Journalism and Mass Communication were added. In addition, in August 2009 the College of Medicine will receive its first students.

Maidique changed the athletic team's name from Sunblazers to Panthers, thus beginning a sports tradition at the University. That same year, 1987, athletic teams began competing in Division 1-A. In 2002, FIU was considered the fastest university to achieve Division 1-A status.

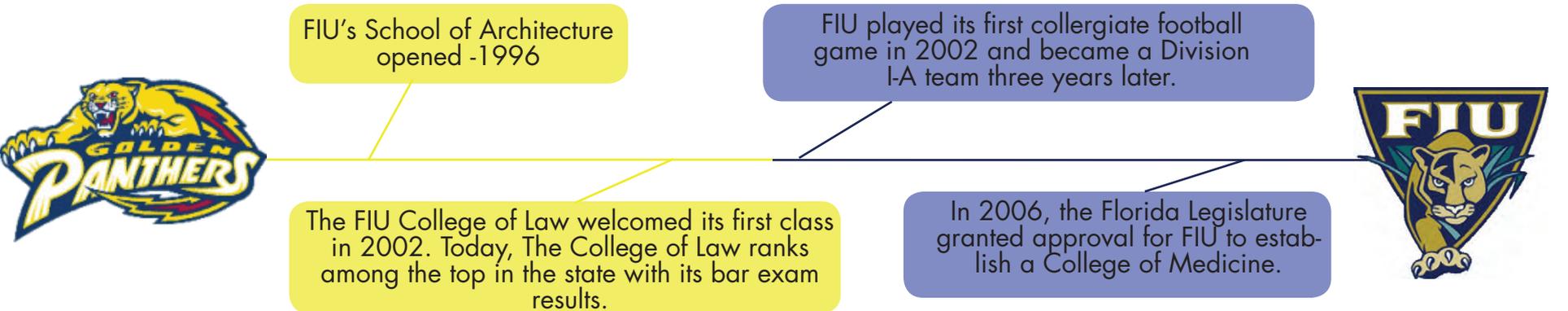
Athletics weren't always good news for Maidique, though: in 2007, more than 17 scholarships due to low

Academic Progress Rates were lost and FIU Athletics was placed under a four-year probation.

"He developed FIU. He was able to push against legislature. He delivered a full scale University to the Miami community," said Butler Waugh, one of FIU's founders who was related to the University from 1969 to 2003. "The upper administration has to work closely with the political aspect of the state. He's politically astute and he can take a punch and counter punch."

Maidique said he will spend more time with his family, teaching and researching.

"The mission that I set out is accomplished," he said after resigning.



Disabled soldiers find solace when logging in

ONLINE, page 2

ing other soldiers. McGinnis was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Newland said about 40 pieces of shrapnel hit his legs, arms and face.

He suffered a brain injury, short-term memory loss, stuttered and started seeing words backward, as if he was dyslexic.

Newland returned to the States and found out about Jones International University after Sentinels of Freedom, a San Ramon, Calif.-based nonprofit that serves severely wounded soldiers, awarded him a four-year scholarship, placed him in a home in Denver and got him a job at a realty company where he handles phone calls in the information technology department.

Newland said he still limps, uses a cane and had to learn to type with only one hand. Initially, getting an online education

seemed far-fetched, given his limited background in computers.

"Yesterday, I wrote three papers and took around 50 phone calls," he said. "Plus, I'm reading about four textbooks at a time."

Mike Conklin, executive director of Sentinels of Freedom, said taking online courses is often the best way to go when disabled soldiers leave the military. Some have been blinded, others paralyzed and others have full-time jobs.

"All of these guys have reasons for why the classroom is not where they want to be right away," Conklin said.

Newland, who is married and has two children, said the flexibility of being able to write papers on renewable energy sources and space exploration while working allows him to spend more time with his family.

"I could do it after I came home from work," Newland said about his course work, "but I'd be sacrificing something else."

#10

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SGC discusses creativity, passes parking proposal

BARBARA QUIJANO
Staff Writer

Departmental services should be more creative and visible with marketing, according to student surveys taken Sept. 2008.

The first reading for the resolution promoting available campus departmental services, written by Student Government Council-BBC interns Zahra Arbabi Aski and Eddie Giglio, took place Nov. 12 at the SGC-BBC meeting.

The departments mentioned in the meeting were the Multicultural Programs and Services, Career Services and International Student Services.

According to Sholom Neistein, speaker of the senate for SGC-BBC, there needs to be more interaction with the students so the messages being sent by these departments are received. Students can then become more aware of SGA and the different departments within the school.

"It came about from surveys we took earlier on in the semester, and students complained about a myriad of things. Career Services wasn't focusing on student body, [like] handing out flyers so students can be involved. [Career Services] needs to be more precise," Neistein said.

During this first reading,

which is required for a resolution to be passed, the resolution was discussed, and council members agreed that there was a need for more specifications on how each department needed to promote its services.

"I would like to make a friendly amendment to add ways in how the departments can promote or market their services," said Ana Maria Silva, SGC-BBC president. "Because if we pass this resolution, we're basically saying that these services are not marketing to the student body, so we should mention that they are marketing, but they shouldn't pass their services by these following ways, with the help of Student Government."

The second reading will take place Nov. 19. It will be followed by a vote to determine if the resolution will pass, depending on whether it must be amended.

If passed, it will be sent to administration for approval.

I would like to make a friendly amendment to add ways in how the departments can promote or market their services.

Ana Maria Silva, president
SGC-BBC

EATING RIGHT, LATE AT NIGHT



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

ATTENTION ATTENTION: Raising awareness for healthy lifestyle changes in the Bay Vista Housing Dorms, Arthur Lindermann heads the semester-long food demo series. The demos showcase easy-to-make food recipes the residents can recreate on their own, instead of ordering fast food take-out.

"I think that is a dubious resolution. I think it'll pass in the senate if it gets more in depth; it'll show administration that [depart-

mental services] are not giving back to students in their fullest capability," Neistein said.

Other business included a resolution in support of the reapportionment of parking spaces at BBC.

The resolution was discussed Nov. 6 after its second reading, with nine votes in favor, zero opposed and zero abstained.

The resolution states that, at minimum, 15 faculty parking spaces from Lot 1G be reapportioned for the utilization of the student body.

tioned for the utilization of the student body.

The 1G lot is located in the western side of the parking area, in front of the Library.

"We're not taking all of their faculty spaces in that lot; we're just taking one portion," Neistein said.

"I have a faculty decal, and I park in front of the Library every day and all day. [I see] free parking spaces for faculty, and half of it is empty," Silva said.

Photo contest allows students to showcase originality

ANDREA CRUZ
Staff Writer

Photography aficionados, as well as those who just happen to have a camera at the right moment, will get to show off their work through the 2008-2009 International Photo Contest, sponsored by International Students & Scholar Services at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

"The photo contest is an initiative to raise awareness, and promote the breadth and richness of the cultural diversity that ex-

ists on our campus," said Julie Wilbers, coordinator of ISSS.

According to the official contest rules, which can be picked up along with a submission form in room 363 at the Wolfe University Center, all currently enrolled students can submit five high resolution images.

Faculty and staff are also encouraged to participate, and though they are ineligible to win, they are suitable for the honorable mention, according to Wilbers.

Entries must be the orig-

inal work of the entrant and must be photographs taken outside of the United States. Each photograph must fall into one of five categories: people, landscape, culture shock, panthers abroad and overall.

"International students will be able to portray a glimpse of their home countries, while study-abroad students can reflect on their experiences in a foreign country," said Wilbers, who is the main contest orchestrator for ISSS.

The prizes donated by sponsors so far include a two-night stay for two with full American breakfast at the Hyatt Regency Miami, a \$50 gift certificate to Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., a two-night, three-day stay at the DoubleTree Surfcomber Miami-South Beach Hotel and a complimentary Sunday brunch for two at the Rusty Pelican Restaurant in Key Biscayne. Wilbers said she

is in the process of acquiring one more sponsor to add more prizes to the list.

The contest is an opportunity for these sponsors to advertise their businesses and get involved with the student community, according to Wilbers.

Color, as well as black and white images are accepted. Entries must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Dec. 12.

According to the official contest rules, submissions must be in both electronic and print formats. Prints should be unmounted and enlarged to a minimum of 8" x 10". Electronic ver-



sions must be on a CD, saved as a JPEG of at least 300 dpi.

"The winning photographs will be displayed on campus and on our Web site," Wilbers said. "Other photographs will be displayed in the conference room in our office."

According to Wilbers, the photographs will be judged until the spring, and

winners will be announced during that semester.

"I am still working on getting a panel of photographers together to judge the images on their technical and artistic merit, originality and communication of culture and place," Wilbers said.

According to the official rules of the contest, the owners of the winning photos will need to submit a small write-up about their picture.

Entries may either be mailed or hand-delivered, along with the official submission form, to the ISSS office in WUC 363.

"The photo contest will not only provide students the opportunity to display their artistic abilities, but it will also allow viewers to ponder the world through a new lens," Wilbers said.

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Simplicity is best: giving thanks to foods that make your life so much easier

Thanksgiving is almost here. It is one of my favorite holidays because not only does it usher in the festive season, but I get to cook all day. I usually wake up at 8 a.m. and have a timeline prepared so that I can maximize oven space.

The turkey usually goes in around noon, while I make cranberry apple pie and green bean casserole from scratch. Basically, I don't sit down until dinner time at 6 p.m., totally pooped while my family enjoys their home-cooked meal. To be honest, it's quite exhausting.

Now don't get me wrong. I love to cook, and Thanksgiving is a table top smothered with my favorite foods like mashed potatoes, gravy and my lemon sage turkey. But I think it's the time of year when we should give thanks – thanks to the products and foods that make college life easier.

Let's get real – we don't cook everyday. We don't even look at our kitchens during midterms and finals, and if you work too, you are probably a professional take-out chef with your top five restaurants on speed dial.

My "foods I'm thankful for" list that follows might not include the most epicurean treats or meals, but like Tim Gunn says on Project Runway, we "make it work."

So, thank you Vitamin Water for making me feel like I am being healthy

at the vending machine. Sure, I know you are coated in sugary goodness, but the Defense flavor really makes me feel good.

No thanks to you, coffee. Sure you keep me awake, but you stain my teeth and give me insane cravings, not to mention, you have zero vitamins. Get with the program!

Thank you, noodle soups, for being cheap and easy. I only need a microwave, and I've got a quick lunch on the run. Pour the water in, two minutes in the microwave, a spoon and you can get to class. Sure it's not gourmet, but it's delicious, and you can spice it up by adding flavors you love to it. I like a squeeze of lemon juice in my shrimp-flavored broth.

No thanks to you, ramen. You don't come in a convenient cup, and you require me to get a pot, put water in it, and approach the wasteland that is my stovetop. And you just don't offer the easy, fast, on-the-run aspect that the cup of



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

THANK YOU, CHOCOLATE: Columnist, Bianca Rojas, eats her favorite foodgasm-inducing chocolate bar.

noodles gives me. Like I told coffee, it's time to get with the program.

Thank you, rotisserie chicken. Oh, my mouth waters just thinking about how speedy it is to run into a supermarket and pick up a hot meal. In 10 minutes tops you can run in, grab your favorite seasoned chicken, whether it's lemon

pepper or BBQ, and you have a hearty protein you didn't even have to cook.

My favorite part of rotisserie chicken is how diverse it is.

First, on Monday night, eat your chicken right off the bone. Then on Tuesday, throw your carcass of bones in a pot of boiling water with some veggies. Don't worry about picking the fresh, pretty veggies, or even chopping them into symmetrical pieces – remember we are giving thanks to easy, not complicated.

Choose your bruised veggies, give them a rough chop, and throw them into the water. In a few hours, after straining, you have a stock that you can refrigerate or freeze, so that when you get that post-midterm flu, you can have some homemade chicken soup all for the price of one rotisserie chicken.

No thank you to having to worry about side dishes. Publix should really get on that, and package some corn on the cob

right in the bag. Don't they know we have a life?

Finally, thank you chocolate. Whichever form you take, whether you are a candy bar or cake, you are the number one "de-stresser" and foodgasm-giver in this article. Without you, PMS would destroy our campus like Godzilla did Japan. I would cry uncontrollably under pressure, and I would not be able to make it through the 10 hours of home cooking on Thanksgiving.

This holiday season, grab your favorite form of chocolate. Whether it's a Pepperidge Farm Milano cookie, or an old Kit Kat bar, take a deep breath and relax because cooking on Thanksgiving should not make you want to kill yourself.

The best part is that no preparation is required. Quick and easy, that's what I'm talking about. Your only job is to unwrap it, put it in your mouth and then of course, foodgasm.

Have a happy holiday, hopefully filled with foodgasms. Enjoy this time of year because it is probably the only time your shopping list consists of more ingredients than are on this list of college life foods. Remember, if you're just adding hot water, it's not home cooked.

Need help with a recipe or finding a place to eat? Bianca is here to help! Send any questions, comments or Foodgasm ideas to bianca.rojas@fiusm.com.

NEWS FLASH

FIU

Health Center to offer free screenings for the holidays

The Health Center is offering free holiday health screenings on Nov. 19 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The screenings are free to students, faculty and staff, and include blood pressure, pulse, chiropractic, vision, blood sugar, podiatry and dental. Nutrition and STD consultations, as well as hearing screenings will be offered. Free food will also be provided for attendees. For more information, call (305) 919-5620.

ICC forum welcomes noted Communications speakers

The Integrated Communications Council will host a forum Nov. 20 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Wolfe University Center room 244B. The forum is open to all students for free, and will feature five guest speakers specialized in different areas of communication. Two of the speakers will be Spero Canton, Comcast Cable Communications regional director of public relations and Melissa Gonzalez, brand specialist and event planner from Team Enterprises.

For more information, e-mail fiuicc@gmail.com.

Upcoming Legacies lecture features psychology professor

The "Exercising Passion and Restraint" lecture will take place Nov. 20 at 8 p.m. in the Wolfe University Center's Mary-Ann Wolfe Theater. The lecture will feature Ronald Fisher, psychology professor. It is part of the Legacies lecture series, a series in which University professors talk about what they would say if they only had one last lecture. The Legacies series is sponsored by the Tau Sigma Alpha Honors Society and the Student Alumni Association. It will be free and open to all students.

Wellness Center offers discounted massages

The Wellness Center is offering one-hour massages for \$30 to students, faculty, and staff until the last day of Fall 2008 semester. Shari Little, a licensed massage therapist who also works at the Wellness Center, will be giving the massages, regularly priced at \$60. Those interested can also buy gift certificates, which can be used throughout the Spring 2009 semester, if purchased by the end of Fall 2008. For more information, call (305) 302-1091.

– Compiled by Pamela Duque

FOODGASM



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HPV FACTS: #10

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VIRTUAL EDUCATION

E-classes leave out critical life lessons

MATTHEW RUCKMAN
Staff Writer

Have you ever taken an on-line course and felt dissatisfied as if you didn't get much out of the "class" besides an "A" and a peculiar surcharge?

Well, thanks to the ingenuity of Florida's Department of Education, kindergartners will be able to experience that same regret through what has been coined the School District Virtual Instruction Program.

That's right. Starting in the 2009-2010 school year, students will be able to pass through not only kindergarten and grade school but middle school and high school as well, without ever seeing a teacher or stepping foot in a classroom.

The measure is being implemented under the auspices of "choice": the choice between a real education and a fake one. One that teaches you life lessons and one that eases the guilt of lousy educators.

How could this even be considered?

One answer is obvious – cost. Florida has a budget crisis and some bureaucrats see "virtual schools" as the solution. This is ridiculous, if education isn't important, what is?

If you're going to throw the baby out with the bath water, what

use is the nursery? Education is the bedrock of any civilization. These cuts, any cuts, go too far. They damned the state's progeny to these diploma factories and pixelated professors.

The bureaucrats go pass fat, muscle and bone, to amputation and lobotomy – sacrificing minds for money.

It is a travesty.

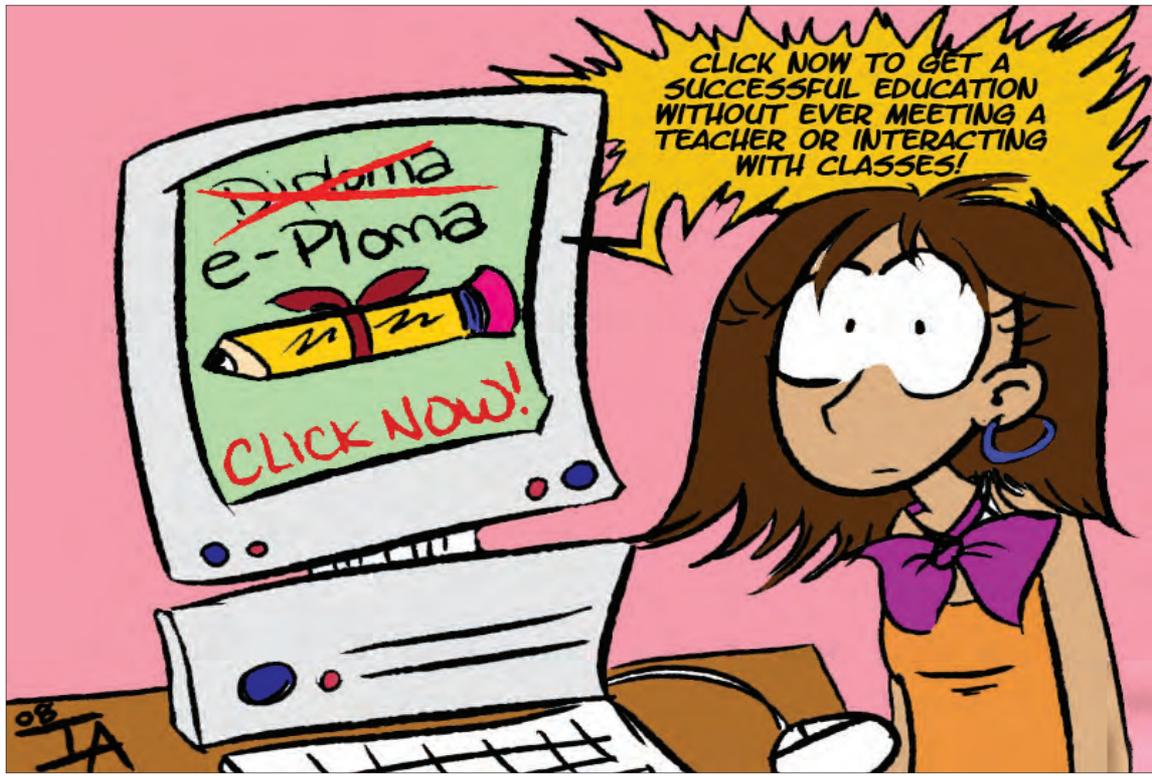
If education and expenses become your enemy, then it follows that ignorance and revenue will become your ally. We'll be able to spend that money on tons of stupid crap, like the \$1.7 billion to buy sugarcane fields or football stadiums.

Beyond the cost is the social factor. Everyone knows that kindergarten is not about the curriculum.

The crayoned drawings and gold stars are not important in themselves, they provide a backdrop for what is really occurring at that tender age – socialization.

Kids are learning what other kids are like, what makes them laugh, what makes them bruise, what life is like outside.

This nascent period is vital. Students who miss crucial steps in development, like Seung-Hui Cho, Ted Kaczynsky and the una-bomber all skipped ahead in school. They were more prone to live isolated and sometimes homicidal lives.



IRIS A. FEBRES/THE BEACON

The quality of these virtual schools is the real problem though. Anyone who has taken a course here at the University knows that the hardest part of any virtual class is probably reading the syllabus.

Nothing is gained besides a "good luck" e-mail from the professor and a hollow wasted feeling near the end of the semester.

True scholarship, to me, is the installation of an undying curiosity that will last a lifetime, not this regurgitation of facts or opened-noted tests.

I'm sure most students have some high school story involving a teacher inspiring them. This would not have been possible if it occurred over the Internet. Teaching by its very nature is

interactive, almost in an intimate way. Something is imparted from mentor to student, something that can't be compressed or digitized.

W.B. Yeats once said, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

A student who matriculates completely through K-12 online will be an intellectual eunuch; having all the parts but none of the desire.

Those in Tallahassee seem to be missing the trees for the forest; watering down, if not drowning, what makes teaching so crucial and being taught so enjoyable.

Maybe I'm just short-sighted though. Virtual schools could just be the next step in a society

trending toward the faster, the less expensive, the easier. The Spark Notes generation, it would be called, is so abridged that "satisfactory" is measured by knowing the title and author.

The Facebook age; the friendliest place on earth, knowing everybody's status but not how they look or feel. The Blackboard College of So-And-So, giving out credits for a \$100 a pop.

Maybe it is the next step, but my stance toward education has always been summed up by the famous B.F. Skinner warning which stated, "We shouldn't teach great books, but a love of reading."

Does Tallahassee really believe that a love for learning can be downloaded?

Jurassic Farce: Extinct species should stay that way

ANDREW SOLOMON
Contributing Writer

The ability to clone is one of humanity's hallmark achievements in science. Since the birth of Dolly the Sheep, the first mammal to ever be cloned, geneticists have sought more funding for research and the development of better technologies for the advancement of cloning.

Now scientists have a new idea: instead of replicating species still existent on Earth, why not clone creatures that are extinct? We've all seen *Jurassic Park*, where scientists clone dinosaurs using DNA preserved perfectly in hardened amber for millions of years.

And though the movie was purely science fiction, today's scientists envision bringing back to life creatures that have long gone from the face of the earth.

Japanese scientists recently succeeded in cloning mice that died 16 years ago. Now, they and other scientists worldwide want to make what Dr. Ian Malcolm, the fictional character in *Jurassic Park*, described as a "rape of the natural world" into a reality.

Yes, we humans are amazing. We have our medicine and our machines, and we have come a long way with the Human Genome Project.

but that doesn't make us God.

A person assumes this divine role when he or she creates a living organism that isn't meant to be alive. Let's look at our planet: its temperature, weather patterns, landscape, chemical composition and bodies of water are constantly changing. Therefore, life on Earth must adapt accordingly to keep up with these changes. Nature has a process of selection as to which life is suitable to evolve and adapt to change and which life doesn't have what it takes, and therefore must come to its end.

Take the mammoth, one of the prime candidates for this new experiment. We see them now as huge skeletons in our museums because they went extinct at the end of the last Ice Age, nearly 10,000 years ago.

As recent as May 2007, the carcass of a female woolly mammoth calf was discovered in a northern peninsula of Russia's Arctic coast. The specimen had been preserved very well in the permafrost for around 40,000 years with its major internal organs still intact. If scientists were able to clone Lyuba, as the specimen was called, would the clone even last six days, much less six months?

I think not, just as a human being would not be able to live in the time of the dinosaurs. When the Earth's average temperature was

much warmer, the same would be true for a mammoth living on present-day Earth. Just because we can do it does not mean we should.

However, when it comes to cloning species that are extinct due to human intervention, I support that. It is not fair that other creatures are losing their natural habitats, food sources and families due to deforestation or poaching. Species such as the Yangtze River Dolphin lived over 20 million years and adapted to the most dramatic and amazing changes the planet has seen. However, they're now extinct because of human pollution and commercial use in their waters.

Species like these were given life by the Earth and the Earth had not yet decided to take it from them. I would consider it a duty to humankind, if we have the technology, to do what we can to bring back these creatures that were robbed of life unjustly.

We as people tend to sacrifice what's right for what's profitable and in doing so we write

our own dooms, as well as the dooms of those we put at risk. We have the amazing ability to clone, but as stated in the Spider-Man flick, "With great power comes great responsibility."

The technology we created to develop nuclear weapons is amazing and a testament

"We as people tend to sacrifice what's right for what's profitable and in doing so we write our own dooms."

of human genius, but the power we gave ourselves in doing that was also the capability of destroying the planet several times over and exterminating the human race.

Bottom line – these animals are extinct for a reason. Nature selected them for it, and no amount of human wisdom can, or should attempt to override nature's conscience. The cloning of long extinct creatures spells catastrophe, not so much for us humans as for the subjects at hand.

OH, JAMES

Stars of latest "Bond" installment talk making of

STEVE MESA
Staff Writer

Sean Connery, Roger Moore, Pierce Brosnan and Daniel Craig all took a role in Ian Fleming's creation, James Bond, and turned the character into a cinematic icon. Since the first "James Bond" film ("Dr. No") released in 1967, the Bond franchise has pushed out 21 films and six actors have played the role of the suave and debonair spy.

"Quantum of Solace" is the 22nd Bond film and the second outing for Craig as the man with a license to kill. Craig and Olga Kurylenko, who plays this film's lead Bond girl, were in Miami at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel for a press day for the film, and *The Beacon* was on hand.

THE BEACON: What was the most difficult part in filming this movie?

DANIEL CRAIG: The physicality. There is a lot to do on the set, but it is very satisfying. I work with some of the best people in the business, and we push each other to try to improve what we did in "Casino Royale." The rooftop chase was pretty difficult... once we fell in the art gallery with the ropes. That was tough. I had two doubles, an acrobat and a gymnast, but I was also hanging up there as well. It is tough, very tough.

OLGA KURYLENKO: The fight sequence was difficult because I had to try hard in order to choreograph my moves. The littlest detail, like the way you throw a punch on film,

was difficult to do because you have to make it look, not only real, but good on camera. You do the moves precisely because the camera captures what gets filmed and that is why I trained for six months for a 30 second action scene. To get it right is so much work. It was fun to shoot it, though, because it is a different job from acting.

TB: Do you have any input on the script?

DC: Yes, I do. I have been involved with this script since the beginning.

TB: You've already done two Bond films. Is there any talk about expanding the later movies with some of the old characters from the past Bond films?

DC: Yes. What we are doing or what we are trying to achieve with the second movie is to make a solid base.

One of the biggest things is expectation, where everybody is expecting the real Bond, what Bond becomes with the martinis, characters such as Q and M.

Unfortunately, we have to earn them instead of just plopping them into a movie without explanation. What this has been about is inferring all these things. At this point, we can do anything we want. We can introduce Q back in, we can introduce Moneypenny, we can introduce the submarine base. We're there. We got to that point, and I am very excited in doing the next movie.

TB: Why do you make films like "Quantum of Solace" and

"Casino Royale?"

DC: Because they are rare. To be given a chance to make a movie like this as an actor, and hopefully as an artist and filmmaker, is just a privilege. I grab it with both hands and see what we can do with it.

TB: This role must take a physical toll on your body. Does it take a mental toll on you as well?

DC: Of course. I am just tired, both physically and mentally. At the end of the shoot, I go on a holiday to go back to my friends and family. I hope to become normal again.

TB: What is your opinion on the new interpretation of the James Bond role, is he crazier than the other incarnations?

DC: I do not think he is crazy at all. Most of my cues are from the earlier films such as "From Russia With Love," and I think what Sean Connery did was that he devolved an incredibly strong character from the Ian Fleming novels and made Bond a very edgy man.

I would never copy what has been done. I just put my take and effort to the role. I've seen all the movies, read all the books and did my research. I am a Bond fan.

TB: What did you have to do in order to submerge yourself into this role?

OK: This role requires me to undergo a huge transformation; and I am not just talking about the fight scenes, learning how to sky dive and working with guns, which I never

did before. I had to adopt a different personality as a different person from a different country and having a painted-on tan. It is interesting because I've [gotten] into a different skin.

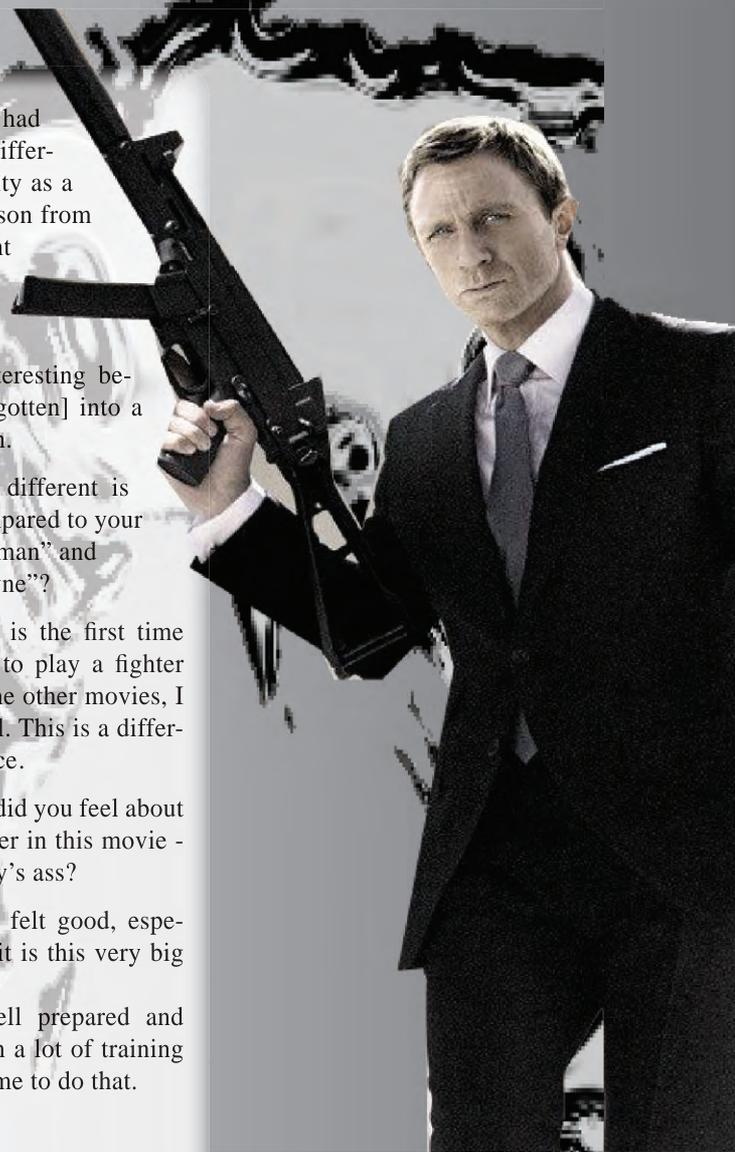
TB: How different is this role compared to your roles in "Hitman" and "Max Payne"?

OK: This is the first time where I get to play a fighter because in the other movies, I am just a girl. This is a different experience.

TB: How did you feel about being a fighter in this movie - kicking a guy's ass?

OK: That felt good, especially when it is this very big guy.

I was well prepared and went through a lot of training in order for me to do that.



HPV FACTS: #10

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Gulfstream Magazine faces possible cancellation

ELSIE PUIG
Staff Writer

The University may be a top-notch research institute that rakes in millions of dollars, but it's also home to a premier literary magazine.

Gulfstream Magazine has been published by the Creative Writing Program at the University since 1989, and its pages have nurtured top-selling authors and poets. According to Pete Borrebach, Master of Fine Arts student and associate editor of *Gulfstream*, the magazine has published 28 volumes of literary artistry.

But lately, the magazine has run into a

bit of trouble.

"*Gulfstream* is having somewhat of a financial problem," Borrebach said.

The grant received from Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs was suspended two years ago, and subscriptions have declined. Their last issue was published in June, but the issue that was scheduled to come out in January had to be canceled.

"It is sort of like a catch-22. We need the money to put out the issue to generate the subscriptions, but we don't have an issue to generate the subscriptions to get the money," Borrebach said.

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Online networking that goes beyond the usual suspects

So you're realizing there's more to life than virtual pokes and friend counts? I'm glad you're catching up!

Since Facebook and MySpace have been hogging the social networking market for years now, it's only fair that you should be introduced to new places to hang out online that you can get more out of than the current offerings of virtual baseball card collection of friends and acquaintances.

Here are of social networking sites that aren't Facebook or MySpace just waiting for you to sign up and make something more of yourself than the number one in your friends top eight.

VIRB

From the creators of Pure Volume, a music networking site for unsigned bands, <http://Virb.com> is effortlessly what MySpace wishes it could be: an arts and music oriented social site with few ads and a clean basic design.

If you know something about hyper-text markup language and cascading style sheets, then Virb becomes your fully customizable sandbox.

Imagine life beyond two column layouts. And the best part ... if you come across a profile that hurts your eyes, Virb will let you toggle the design back to the site default to save your retinas.

Prettiness aside, Virb is the place to be in terms of genuine connections: you

won't find your request inbox flooded with friend invites from wannabe international supermodels or too-good-to-be-legal overseas bargains inviting you to visit their Web sites here.

If you want even more indie credit to your name, you can sign up to privately beta test their working redesign at <http://virb.com/beta>.

Insufferable self satisfaction can finally be yours.

ILIKE AND LAST.FM

Audiophiles – these are your networks! Join <http://ilike.com> and let the site take stock of your iTunes or Windows Media Player library, then sit back and hear new music based on your known tastes.

iLike will connect you with other musically minded members and their collections as well as let you download free mp3's from unsigned artists – legally!

An account with <http://last.fm> will hook you up to the largest streaming music catalogue online. Like iLike, Last.fm will connect you to musical twin souls and let you listen to full songs and albums for free that others have uploaded to their server.

Free mp3 downloads are available but, based on your preferences, Last.fm will do you one better and mix together a personal radio playlist for you that grows according to your taste's changes over time.

There's only one bad point going for

both of these sites: once you tune in, you might never tune out.

GOOD READS AND SHELFARI

For those of you looking to share more than music, age, sex and location, <http://goodreads.com> and <http://shelfari.com> are there for you with brain food: books.

Connect to either Good Reads and Shelfari and start building up your virtual bookshelf to let others know what you've read, what you're in the middle of right now and what you're hoping to get your hands on soon.

Read other users reviews to find new books to love or hate and even write your own to help others along their literary ways.

The only difference between both bibliophile sites is aesthetics: sign up to Good Reads if you're a utilitarian Spartan, Shelfari if you can't live without shiny web 2.0 eye candy.

Regardless of which of the two you choose, you'll still relish the superior quality of your friends intellectual tastes when comparing lists with your meatspace friends on other, glitter graphics saturated social networks.

MEETUP

Want to share your love of vintage skateboard decks with other aficionados? Get an <http://meetup.com> account and start a group to meet with real people in meatspace to talk about your hobbies.

If starting and maintaining a group

sounds like too much effort, you can browse through local groups to find some Friday night sports bar flies or full moon kayaking buddies to join.

In MeetUp's search bar, plug your zip code and number of miles you're willing to travel and you'll find meet up groups for everything from picking apart your favorite TV show over coffee to belly dancing on the beach, to downtown triathlon training, karaoke bar hopping and even urban farming.

TWITTER

Yes, I've talked about <http://twitter.com> before and I'll talk about it again. Why? Twitter is Facebook statuses distilled for those too busy to manage a full social network profile's upkeep.

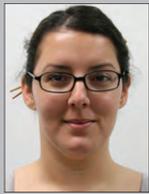
Want to let friends know what you're up to in 140 characters or less? Tweet it. Share a neat photo you just shot without having to upload it to a gallery? Tweet it through <http://twitpic.com>.

Build up your friends list on Twitter and you'll have a real time update of how and what everyone's doing when they update their profiles.

Simple and sweet, Twitter makes staying in touch as easy as it gets online.

Technolust is a weekly column written by Susana Rodriguez that appears in the Beacon and FIUSM.com. E-mail ideas for Technolust to life@fiusm.com.

TECHNOLUST



SUSANA RODRIGUEZ

WEDNESDAY • NOVEMBER 19

WHAT: Dine In with the Divas
WHERE: FIU Faculty Club
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door

WHAT: Diplomat in Residence/Education Abroad: International Business Etiquette
WHERE: GC243
WHEN: 11 a.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: International Student & Scholar Services: International Coffee Hour with International Trivia
WHERE: GC355
WHEN: 3 a.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: "Mr. & Mrs. DM" Pageant
WHERE: GC Ballrooms
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$7

WHAT: Pat De Leon: Solo Acoustic Blues and Latin Mojo Songwriter
WHERE: The Van Dyke Cafe. 846 Lincoln Road. Miami Beach.
WHEN: 9 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Prices Vary

WHAT: Center for Leadership and Services: International Service Learning Panel
WHERE: GC 243
WHEN: 1 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

THURSDAY • NOVEMBER 20

WHAT: Center for the Study of Spirituality: Sufi Poetry, Music and Whirling with Peter Rogen and the Mevlevi Sufis
WHERE: Temple Emanu-El. 1701 Washington Avenue. Miami Beach.
WHEN: 7:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE and Open to the Public

WHAT: Women's Center: International Women Leadership EXPO
WHERE: GC Pit
WHEN: 4 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: Le Cercle Francais Movie: La Duchesse de Langeais
WHERE: GC140
WHEN: 2 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: Diogo Brown: Brazilian Bassist
WHERE: The Van Dyke Cafe. 846 Lincoln Road. Miami Beach.
WHEN: 9 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Prices Vary

WHAT: FIU Volleyball v. South Alabama. Sun Belt Conference Opener, First Round.*
WHERE: FIU Arena
WHEN: 12 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE with Valid Student ID

* Listen to WRGP Radiate FM 88.1, 95.3, 96.9 FM for live game coverage. Hosted by Andrew Julian and Jonathan Alpert

Compiled By: Paulo O'Swath

Book Fair gives literary magazine a second chance

GULFSTREAM, page 7

This past Nov. 15 and 16 provided much needed relief for the magazine. The Miami International Book Fair served as a safe haven for the literary arts.

"[It was] a great opportunity to spread the word about what we're up to and to sell some back-issues," said Corey Ginsberg, an MFA student and assistant editor of *Gulfstream*.

According to Ginsberg, *Gulfstream* has had a booth at the Book Fair for about a decade. This year, however, due to the financial problems, they are sharing a booth with ConJelCo, a publishing company that sells books about poker.

Gulfstream will also present readings at Write Out Loud Café on Sunday, Nov. 16, from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

"It gives us grad students a home base when we are hanging out there. There are various readings I want to go to, and we

can just wander around and buy books," Borrebach said.

This year, the lineup will include David Norman, who is flying in from Texas, and local talents: poet Elisa Albo and author Vicki Hendricks, a University graduate.

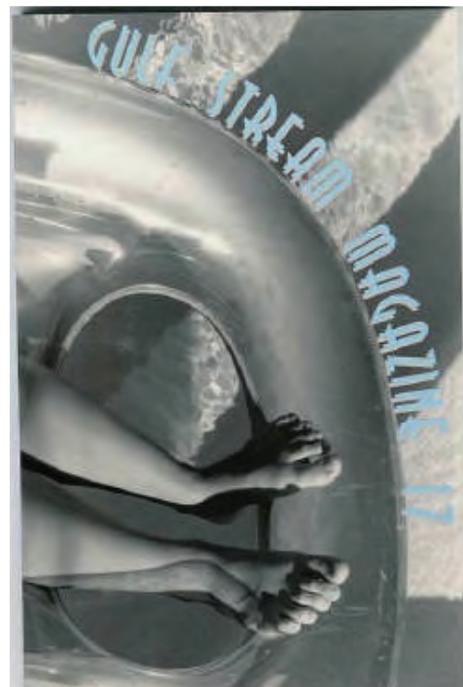
"The Great Basin' is one of my favorites [that] we've published in the recent years at

the magazine, and I am really excited for his reading," Ginsberg said about David Norman.

The group of about 12 MFA graduate students will be alternating at the *Gulfstream* booth, trying to make a presence felt in the literary world.

Borrebach hopes that by selling back-issues with the works of the authors that will be presenting this year through *Gulfstream*, they will be able to generate enough money and subscriptions to publish other issues.

"We really should be seen as Miami's premier literary magazine," Borrebach said.



COURTESY UBOUNDPRESS.COM

Fraternities, sororities stomp up a stepping storm

Stepping has become extremely popular at the University over the past couple of years. This year in particular, stepping has been getting more attention from the University's community.

Alpha Phi Alpha, Fraternity Inc, has been among a few fraternities and sororities on campus that participate in the art of stepping. Stepping originated in Africa, where many tribes would step and chant for religious ceremonies, to express themselves or just for fun.

"Stepping is important to us because it is a very large part of American tradition and history ... it is a blazon display of emotion and tradition for us," said Alexander Miller, president of Phi Beta Sigma, Fraternity Inc.

Alpha Phi Alpha's president, Georges Etienne, shared similar sentiments.

"It's part of a rich history that was brought over to African-American fraternities and sororities. Stepping, as well as chanting and strolling, is our way of expressing ourselves and showing pride for our individual organizations. It isn't what we were founded upon but it is a very important tradition in our organizations," he said.

The brothers of Alpha Phi Alpha have participated in many competitions and events these past two years.

In 2007, they won first place at the Homecoming step show.

This year, they placed second. They don't participate in events only at the University, however.

In the spring of 2008, they stepped at Barry University's Homecoming step show, where they earned third place.

In Oct., they also participated in Nova's Step, Stroll and Salute competition where they earned second place. They don't only participate in step competitions for NPHC. As a fraternity, they also compete against other chapters in the state at our District conference.

The winner of the Florida district goes on to compete in regionals and then nationals.

"Competition isn't the only reason why we step, though. We've stepped [on] nu-

merous occasions, such as [charity events], community service at local schools, and just for pure entertainment," said Etienne.

On Oct. 29, they stepped at Alpha Omicron Pi's Alpha Male Pageant, and last year they stepped for Alpha Xi Delta's Casino Night.

We can't forget this year's Homecoming, in which they participated in the step show that was put on by the Student Programming Council at BBC.

Phi Beta Sigma also participated in this year's Homecoming step show.

Phi Beta Sigma has also been involved in different step events such as UM's Greek Extrav and FAU's Sunshine Step Show. They have won the Sunshine Step Show in the past as well as the FIU Homecoming show in the past. They also placed second in the FIU Homecoming step show last year.

Last year, some of the sisters of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc went all the way to New York City to step in the "Step Correct" competition.

This competition is a huge deal because chapters from different sororities and fraternities throughout the nation participate in it, and you have to be invited to take part in it. The competition was even on MTV's True Life show.

This year, I've seen Zeta Phi Beta's coming out show, and Alpha Phi Alpha's step show at the Alpha Male pageant, where I got a glimpse of these organizations' abilities to step and stroll.

Next Spring, Alpha Phi Alpha plans to participate in more competitions, as well as many other organizations, so it looks like we will be seeing a whole lot more of stepping in the near future.

There will be plenty more opportunities to see these steppers in action if you haven't already.

Greek Life is a bimonthly column by Amanda Batchelor. Read it in the Beacon and FIUSM.com every other Wednesday. Ideas for Greek Life can be sent to life@fiusm.com.



GREEK LIFE

AMANDA BATCHELOR

MUNCH ON THIS



JAVIER DE LA VEGA/THE BEACON

CRISPY CREPES: The French Club sponsored Crepemakers on Campus on Thursday, Nov. 13, in which student's lined up to buy the native French food.

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Volleyball dominates FAU in 3 sets

JONATHAN ALPERT
Asst. Sports Director

For the first time in school history FIU Volleyball reached 26 wins as well as being alone atop the Sun Belt standings at the end of the season. With FIU's sweep over FAU (25-14, 25-22, 25-20), FIU clinched the regular season Sun Belt title.

In the first set, Setter Natalia Valentin contributed two aces early to help the Golden Panthers to an early 4-1 lead over the Owls. FIU dominated the set, continuing on an 8-2 run and easily took it 25-14. Yarimar Rosa notched five kills during the set, and with her fourth kill, she became the all-time leader in career kills leader at FIU, in the rally era, breaking Adriana Fundora's record of 1,641. FIU played

a very efficient first set, attacking at an excellent .467 percentage and holding FAU to a zero attack percentage.

FAU jumped out to an 8-4 second set lead, but FIU climbed back and retook the lead 12-10. The Golden Panthers and Owls exchanged points, and when the set was tied at 17, FIU went on a 5-0 run to take a 22-17 lead. FIU easily closed out the Owls in the second set, taking it 25-22.

With FIU one set away from seizing the conference title, FAU didn't concede easily. The third set consisted of 11 ties and 3 lead changes. FIU went on a 6-1 run after trailing 0-2 early. The Owls slowly fought back and eventually tied the set at 13, after which FAU jumped out to a quick one-point lead, 14-13, and subsequently traded points with FIU. With the score tied at 18,

closed out the FAU Owls on a 7-2 run to take the third set 25-20.

Rosa and fellow outside hitter Isadora Rangel led FIU with 15 and 13 kills respectively. Becoming the all-time leader in kills at FIU wasn't the only record Rosa broke this week. She won her fifth Sun Belt Player of the Week this season, and has 10 for her career, more than anyone else in Sun Belt history. Rangel recorded her 20th match with double-digit kills, joining Rosa with more than 20; Rosa has 29 this season.

"It was a very exciting match for all of us," Outgoing senior Vanessa Romano said. "We never let down, that's what its about." Romano and fellow defensive specialist Mariana Drumeva were the two seniors on FIU honored on Senior Night.

Volleyball looks to future after record setting regular season

At what point does a young team stop playing above its head? At what point does a team that regularly plays just one senior, and three true freshman start to show its youth? At what point does a team who lost its second best offensive option go into a scoring funk that costs it a game or two?

Never that's when ... well, at least not yet.

Over the first 31 matches of the season, the FIU Golden Panthers volleyball team has exceeded expectations, the conference writers picked FIU third in the preseason poll. It will now carry the regular season banner onto its home floor for a conference tournament it will undoubtedly be favored to win - hopefully advancing the team to its first NCAA tournament since 2001.

It's always a little easier when you've got a player, in Yarimar Rosa, who could play and start for, and maybe even be the first offensive option at 99 percent of the other schools in the country. And when you have as great a home court advantage, in terms of fan support and sheer noise, as the Golden Panthers do, it makes for a perfect storm of youth, talent, and exuberance, and the fruits of this brewing whirlwind have been exposed in two parts.

The first of the two resolutions that can be drawn for these convergences is the more simple of the two; the fact that FIU has led the Sun Belt standings from start to finish and has an excellent chance to hoist the trophy on Saturday afternoon.

The second is further reaching than just this weekend, and is perhaps the more encouraging of the two; this team projects to be better next year than it is this year.

Consider this: it will return an AVCA All-American (again), an All-Conference setter (projected), its entire front line, which at the moment has FIU ranked second in the Sun Belt in opponents hitting percentage, at .173. It will also return a player who did not play in the 2008 season that was a preseason all-conference selection.

The resulting maelstrom may produce a dynastic side effect led by the FIU head coach, Danijela Tomic, who is ultimately responsible for the confluence of this collection of factors, and who it will ultimately fall back on.

Her charge is now two fold, and those modules mirror the pair of conclusions, drawn from the storm she's help to create.

At first, it is her responsibility to keep level a team that presses into it's conference tournament. One still without the pressure of a Middle Tennessee or Western Kentucky, who have combined for 9 of the last 14 conference titles, both regular season and tournament combined. Second, and further reaching than this weekend, managing those same personalities, who'll wear the "2009" target on their back, the day this tournament ends, so that when the conference tournament is held on someone else's floor next year, the Golden Panthers will have that MTSU-WKU make up, and will have an opportunity to make a run to the conference championship.

COMMENTARY



ANDREW
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PANTHERS CLINCH IT

Women's Volleyball achieve top speed in conference tournament

JONATHAN ALPERT
 Asst. Sports Director

"This was our goal from the beginning of the season" head volleyball coach Danijella Tomic said upon winning the Sunbelt regular season championship.

"This is a special group of kids, but we're not finished," Tomic continued after FIU disposed of FAU in three sets, earning the Golden Panthers the number one seed in the tournament and the easiest path to the post-season conference crown.

FIU will open the tournament against South Alabama on Nov. 20 at FIU Arena at noon.

In addition to celebrating FIU's school record of 26 wins and first Sunbelt title in volleyball, the program also commemorated the achievements of two seniors: Mariana Drumeva and Vanessa Romano.

Drumeva, Tomic's first recruit, ranks second all-time at FIU in service aces in the rally scoring era.

Drumeva has been a true "team player", spending time at three different positions during her time as a Golden Panther.

"She was my first signee, we have a special relationship

and I'm so happy for her." Tomic said of Drumeva.

Romano, who transferred to FIU from Xavier for her junior and senior seasons, has high hopes for the conference tournament.

"We are going to keep practicing, playing hard, and will be conference champions." Romano said.

LEADING THE WAY

"Winning was sweeter because we were able to do it at home, and we were predicted to finish third in the conference," Tomic explained, alluding to the resilience and focus she instilled in her team throughout the season.

Poised for a third consecutive All-American bid, Junior Yarimar Rosa carried the Golden Panthers, leading the conference and NCAA in kills per set, averaging 4.95.

Rosa passed Adriana Fundora in the final regular season match of the year for the all-time career kills leader at FIU.

Sophomore setter Natalia Valentin emerged as the emotional leader and catalyst of FIU's offense.

She finished second in the Sunbelt Conference in assists per set averaging 11.97, notching 696 helpers during

conference play. Valentin also finished second in the conference in service aces with 31.

Freshman Sabrina Gonzalez emerged as a defensive stopper this season, finishing 8th in the conference by averaging one block per set, stopping 61 and assisting another 55 during conference play.

Gonzalez's play, along with teammates Andrea Lakovic and Gaby Jaimes on the front line, helped FIU finish third in the conference in opponents hitting percentage, holding foes to a .183 average.

In her first season at FIU, Junior Isadora Rangel contributed 2.95 kills per set, totaling 319 on the season, good for second this year.

Freshman Angelina Colon contributed during the final stretch of the season, providing a defensive presence on the back line that FIU lacked during the beginning of the year.

LOOKING AHEAD

"We will have to step up for the tournament, but we're peaking at the right time," said Tomic.

"Our goal every year is to play our best volleyball in November, and that's what

we're doing."

The top-seeded Golden Panthers open up the Sunbelt Tournament tomorrow at noon when they take on No. 8 South Alabama.

At 2:30 p.m. No. 5 Arkansas-Little Rock will take on No. 4 New Orleans.

The winner of this match will face the winner of the FIU-USA match in the semifinals on Friday at 5 p.m.

No. 2 Middle Tennessee takes on No. 7 Alabama State at 5 p.m. on Thursday, and at 7:30 p.m. No. 6 Western Kentucky looks to upset No. 3 Denver.

The second semifinal match will feature the winner of Western Kentucky-Denver and Alabama State-Middle Tennessee on Friday at 7:30 p.m.

The Sunbelt Tournament final will be held on Saturday at 3 p.m.

"We've been preparing all year for this," said Tomic. "The adrenaline rush you get when you know the championship is on the line gives you the extra edge. I think our team is in good physical shape, mentally we are right there, and it will come down to who wants to win it more. We have a huge advantage playing at home. It should be an exciting weekend."



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

ONE MORE STEP: Well, actually three, but the first overall goal of the regular season was completed when FIU won the Sun Belt east division banner against FAU

