

LACK OF ATTENDANCE
SGC-BBC senators no show

CASH FOR COLLEGE
Amendment Eight's pros and cons

PRESIDENTIAL REVIEWS
Bush biopic exceeds expectations

FRESHMAN PHENOM
Gonzalez makes major impact

AT THE BAY PAGE 3

OPINION PAGE 4

LIFE! PAGE 5

SPORTS PAGE 8

Student retention rates dropping

EDUARDO MORALES
Staff writer

In September, the Board of Trustees reported the University's failure to reach its goal of improving student retention rates.

The BOT was hoping to reach a full-time, first-year student retention rate of 88 percent. Instead, only 81.3 percent of first-year students returned for a second academic year in 2005.

"We had a set back last year," said Thomas Breslin, chairman of Faculty Senate. "Our numbers were not so good and we unfortunately went back a few percentage points."

By definition, student retention is the ability to keep students coming back for another annual term at any given university.

While the University's retention rates are low, they are still above national average, which sits around 75 percent.

Since the 1993-94 academic year, the Office of Retention reported retention rates have hovered around the 80 percent range. The lowest percentage was in 1994-95 at 78.9 percent and highest in 2001-02 at 83.5 percent.

Generally, the University has compensated with the lack of returning students by increasing the amount of freshmen each year. While the retention rate dipped in 2005, the number of full-time freshmen increased by 17 percent.

For the last 12 years, the student retention rate increased slightly for first-year to second-

year students.

But as students continue their education, their retention rates decrease.

In 2004, the rate for students returning for their third year was 73.7 percent. In 2003, the rate for students returning for their fourth year was 67.5 percent. Numbers show that the likelihood of students coming back a second year are strongest but the chance of them returning for a third and so on steadily decrease.

Transfer student retention and part-time student retention numbers look even bleaker.

According to the Office of Retention, the University's "retention and graduation of [Associate of Arts] transfer students is at the bottom of the [State University System] and has been for the last 7 years. Non-AA degree transfers have even lower rates," and part-time retention rates are 30 percent.

This information is based on retention data from students in the 2000-2001 term who did not come back for the fall term in 2001.

The same report states that "on average, 20 percent of those [students] who leave have a 3.0 [GPA] or higher. This rate is increasing annually."

The University is now looking to improve these numbers with a new Web site.

"We're setting up Grad Xpress to be put online in March," said Vice President of Enrollment Services Corinne Webb. "The

RETENTION, page 2

TRICK OR TREAT



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

B-HIVE: Ana Mendieta, a political science major, and James Richardson an international business and human resource major, fill out candy grams to be sent to friends by the RHA B-HIVE awareness club.

Third party candidates look to make an impact

CHERYL MALONE
Staff writer

For most Americans, the presidential election is about the Republican and Democratic candidates; most forget that there are about 15 third-party candidates running for the big seat at the White House.

Socialist Workers Party vice presidential candidate, Alyson Kennedy, visited University Park on Wednesday, Oct. 15, to campaign for the party's presidential candidate, Roger Calero, and to promote the socialist party's goals.

For Kennedy and her party, the rights of working class citizens are important.

"Workers are beginning to see a seed of a revolutionary movement in this country,"

Kennedy said.

Kennedy became a supporter of the working class since 1981 when she worked in coal mines.

While working in a mine in Utah, Kennedy witnessed the exploitation of Mexican workers first hand.

"We began to talk among ourselves and began to stand up for our rights," Kennedy said.

In Sept. 2003, there was a 10-month internationally supported strike that resulted in higher pay and better treatment of workers.

Today, Kennedy continues to fight for similar causes, in which the poor, working class or immigrants must battle against the wealthy.

Among the party's highest supporters are

working class citizens and younger individuals, according to Kennedy.

Calero and Kennedy are currently working on an immigration bill. The bill – an anti-deportation bill – hopes to result in the immediate opening of all borders for undocumented workers.

Kennedy will be in New Orleans over the next few days, where a crisis is developing.

Because the city is dominated by the wealthy and because of the destruction of public housing in New Orleans, the working class will become a "mixed income" class, which will be very expensive, Kennedy explained.

"It shows what the wealthy have in store for this country," Kennedy said. "The wealthy areas are rebuilt but the working class neglected."

Kennedy does not see a single similarity between the Republican and Democratic party candidates and her party's socialist movement.

The SWP believes in the establishment of a worker's and farmer's government, and the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan or any other country with U.S. troops in it.

"The wars are being fought to protect the economic interests of the wealthy in the United States," Kennedy said.

Kennedy believes the Democratic and Republican parties insult the working class and unions and they are against helping or advancing the people. This can be seen through

SOCIALIST, page 2

Students have say in future renovation projects

NATALEE GIL-DEL RIO
Staff Writer

The Classroom Design Standards Committee, created by Provost Ronald Berkman, held a focus group in Green Library 100 on Oct. 22 to gain insight from students about classrooms and the campus for upcoming construction and renovation projects at University Park.

“This is an opportunity to express what bothers you in class, the opportunity to speak out about what you like and don’t like in the classroom,” said Gloria Jacomino, director of Academic Space Management.

Jose Rodriguez, director of Operations Analysis, explained the importance of the focus group because of the size of the upcoming projects.

He used a visual explanation of the future physical progress of the University.

He explained that deans, professors, directors and committee members came together to create a five, 10, and 20-year outlook plan

which focuses on the University’s advancement. Some of the new buildings that will be finished by the end of 2012 are the Academic Support Center, an International Hurricane Center, School for International Studies, the Stemple School of Public Health and a Nursing Health Science Building, among others.

“We have spent a whole year planning these buildings and everyone has been involved in this process from deans to student partners,” Rodriguez said.

The development, the committee explained, will be so large that the University is expecting to build a road to be named “Avenue of the Sciences” that would link diagonally from 8th

St. to the Graham Center. Also, the proposed arrangement for four of the new buildings – such as the Nursing Health Science Building and the Stemple School of Public Health – will be built by the space taken over by the Housing parking lot located next to Everglades Hall.

After the presentation, more than 30 students were split up into three different groups, where they were given the opportunity to give feedback or ideas about the construction of new classrooms with a different design and the renovation of current classrooms, also a major project of the committee.

The three groups were separated according to these three questions: “What would you like to see inside the classroom?” “What do

you like and dislike about the outside of the classroom or the building itself?” and “What do you like or dislike about the campus in general?”

Students contributed ideas by writing down private suggestions on sticky notes provided by the committee.

“I think that having a larger desk space would be beneficial to students, as well as more outlets for the laptops and installing an interactive white board,” said sophomore and international business major Ivana Harris.

The committee expects to hold more of these focus groups in the future by branching out to the Biscayne Bay Campus and the Engineering Campus to gain as much feedback, opinions and insight from different students.

“We didn’t know what to expect from the students when we set up the focus group. Now we know that students are actually interested in participating in this project and we hope to have future meetings in the other campuses as well,” Jacomino said.

This is an opportunity to express what bothers you in class, the opportunity to speak out about what you like and don't like in the classroom.

Gloria Jacomino, director
Academic Space Management

New Web site designed to help plan degree track

RETENTION, page 1

Web site [is more accessible] than the current SASS report [and] will allow students to plan out their future semesters.”

Grad Xpress, part of the plan to expand PantherSoft, will display every detail about an enrolled student in an entirely accessible fashion.

The Web site’s database will show classes taken, average GPAs, the student’s standing in terms of their pacing and several charts which portray this information in an easy-to-understand way.

The program also

The way that they cut down a lot of programs may be a reason. And there’s also more history to [a school like] FSU. FIU was more of a last resort.

Carlos Morales
sophomore

comes with an upgraded Panther Chat, where students can ask questions for faculty to answer at any hour of the day.

However, students are still torn as to why it is that some transfer to other colleges while others finish their four to six year programs at the University.

“They can’t afford it,” said sophomore Cindie Rierra. “I plan on stay-

ing to get my bachelor’s in chemistry. I’m planning on getting into the School of Medicine.”

Another student offers an alternative explanation.

“The way that they cut down a lot of the programs may be a reason,” said sophomore Carlos Morales. “And there’s also more history to [a school like] FSU. FIU was more of a last resort.”

Socialist Workers Party expects more notoriety

SOCIALIST, page 1

working conditions in which there is no union, wages are being driven down and no health insurance is provided, she explained.

At the moment, Kennedy

is involved with the socialists in New Orleans, as well as supporting “The Cuban Five” regarding the imprisonment of five Cuban men who were living in Miami to infiltrate terrorist groups in the area.

The strength of the SWP will only increase, according to Kennedy.

“Based on unions not like today, which are weak, we’re going to see greater struggles by working people leading to stronger unions,” she said.

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CORRECTIONS

In the issue dated Oct. 22, 2008, the story titled ‘College of Medicine unveils inaugural class,’ it incorrectly said each student in the program will be assigned to two families and will monitor their health across four years. It should have said a team of interdisciplinary students will be assigned one to two families.

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

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Stop by one of our offices located in GC 210 and WUC 124.





JEFFREY BENTZ/COURTESY PHOTO

DIVERSE MIXER: Gaieshan Dejean and Michelle Pannullo, undeclared freshmen; Mauricio Diocis, journalism/creative writing major; and Julio Gonzalez, hospitality management major; mingle with other students over lunch at the Diversity Day luncheon hosted by Campus Life on Oct. 21.

Diversity Day celebrates culture, addresses stereotypes

DAVON JOHNSON
Contributing Writer

Food like congris, egg rolls and baked chicken brought FIU students from different parts of the world together to enjoy a full day of diversity.

Diversity Day, a whole day of events showcasing the different cultures at the University, took place Oct. 21 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Wolfe University Center at Biscayne Bay Campus.

"Diversity Day draws more interaction from the students, and brings students, faculty and staff together to educate and celebrate diversity," said Craig Cunningham, director of Campus Life, who helped plan the event.

Started nine years ago by Raul Moncarz, former vice provost of BBC, and with an estimated \$5000 in costs, Diversity Day

is hosted annually by the Student Government Association, according to Cunningham. It included a free breakfast, a keynote speaker, free lunch, a discussion about Amendment 2, a public speaking contest and a "diversity circle."

"Diversity Day is about informing students about different voting issues and the diversity FIU has to offer," said Debbie Brown, elections commissioner for SGC-BBC.

The opening continental breakfast included cheeses, salami, grapes, crackers, coffee and lemonade. There were also table displays highlighting different clubs and their objectives on campus, which were followed by an onstage presentation, "Incognito," performed in the WUC Ann Wolfe Theater by Michael Fosberg, a Chicago actor and playwright.

Fosberg's "Incognito" takes his audience on a journey of his life. In a one-hour, autobiographical, storytelling presentation, Fosberg tells his story of growing up believing he was white, then discovering early in his thirties he is

actually black, according to his Web site, www.incognitotheplay.com.

"I thought the play was excellent; I could relate to it 100 percent," said Tallent Clark, a senior majoring in hospitality. "My life story is fairly similar because I went through the same thing, having an African American father and a white mother."

After the play, the activities shifted to the WUC ballrooms for lunch and other events.

"The theme of the luncheon was also a part of Diversity Day," Cunningham said. "There was a variety of meals, including those of Asian,

Italian, Cuban and American cultures."

Baked chicken, pork, shrimp pasta, different styles of rice, meatballs, chips and dip, and ice cream, brownies and chocolate chip cookies are just a few examples of the food that was served.

After lunch, four students participated in a public speaking contest called "My Perception of My Reception," in which they shared their views and experiences at the University as part of diverse cultures.

The contestants, Anne Braseby, Barbara Quijano, Andrea Jackson and Kertus Toussaint, each presented three to four-minute speeches on how they have been received at FIU. Braseby won first place.

"Though there was one winner, all four contestants got a gift card to Barnes & Noble," said Dr. Diann Newman, chairperson, director of academic advising in the School of Hospitality Management and a member of the Diversity Day Committee

A 20-minute movie about diversity discussing workplace stereotypes about different ethnic groups was also shown. The diversity circle was the last event of the day. This was a game in which participants talked about stereotypes that their cultures face, and whether or not they fall into that stereotypes as individuals.

Diversity Day is about informing students about different voting issues and the diversity FIU has to offer.

Debbie Brown, Elections Commissioner
SGC-BBC

Lack of attendance raises SGC concerns

BARBARA QUIJANO
Staff Writer

Attendance has been a problem this year for the Student Government Council-Biscayne Bay Campus senators, who hold voting power in passing bills and resolutions for the benefit of BBC students.

The SGC-BBC Finance Committee has approved an allocation of \$800 to the Bay Vista Hall housing complex, but the bill will not pass until the committee gets quorum, said Sholom Neistien, speaker of the senate.

"Both an appropriations bill and resolutions bill have to be passed," said Neistien, in order for the allocation of \$800 to be given to housing.

The appropriations bill addresses the allocation of money toward a specific committee, while the resolutions are implemented in the bi-laws and constitution.

With 13 senators taking part in SGC-BBC and one application underway, only eight of the 13 senators have been attending the general meetings on Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m., according to Ana Maria Silva, president of SGC-BBC.

The senate meetings held on Monday afternoons have been attended by only four or five out of 13 senators for this year – less than the six required for quorum, according to Kenasha Paul, vice president of SGC-BBC.

"Even though it would be more pro-

fessional if their meetings had a quorum, senators can still have a meeting without reaching that quorum on Mondays," Silva said.

The senate meetings, separated from the general meetings where both the executive board and the senate meet, have started to take place this year to bring the senators together to discuss bills and resolutions and the budget, according to Paul.

"Since we didn't know about these meetings, we chose classes not in accordance with them, making sure for next year to have a set time," said Laura Torres, finance committee member and lower division senator.

General senator Simone Worsdale has resigned from SGC-BBC, and Honors College senator Barbara Hawkins is thinking of resigning too, Neistien said.

"Apathy, lack of experience and not enough time in their schedule," according to Neistien, are some of the reasons there has been poor attendance at the senate meetings.

"Some are kind of lost, while new ones are learning as they go along," Torres said.

"There are the overachievers and ones who need to be guided in what their position entails; they have to be guided through it," Silva said.

Students who don't fulfill their elected responsibilities are subject to disciplinary action, Neistien said. Consequences may include probation or being referred to a committee, chaired by Chief Justice Jessica Jacques, that will litigate the necessary course of action.

Resignation opens up SOC-BBC secretary spot

DAINELYS MARTINEZ
Staff Writer

The Student Organization Council-Biscayne Bay Campus announced an open position for secretary on its Executive Board after Mnar Muhareb, the previous secretary, resigned for personal reasons.

The main responsibilities of the secretary are to record the minutes of all SOC meetings, and establish and maintain all SOC files, according to Jessica Senorin, vice president of SOC-BBC.

"I loved working with SOC. It was a lot of fun, great teamwork and very productive," Muhareb said.

Any currently enrolled FIU student with at least a 2.0 GPA is eligible for the position, but candidates must take at least half of their classes at BBC.

Prior experience in an executive board position is a plus, according to Didier Georges, president of SOC-BBC.

The deadline to apply is Oct. 27 at 5 p.m. The application is available online at www.wuc.fiu.edu or at the SOC office in room 141 of the Wolfe University Center.

All SOC positions are elected, and terms last for one year. Elections are held at the last SOC meeting of the Spring semester. The salary is \$600 per semester.

The secretary will need to keep a minimum of five office hours per week.

The special secretary election will take place Oct. 29 at 2:30 p.m. in WUC 157 during the SOC meeting being held at that time.

After the candidates have a chance to speak to those in attendance, a vote will take place. All 40 active SOC-BBC clubs have one vote each.

"Some of the benefits of working in the Executive Board are networking, leadership experience and teamwork skills," Senorin said.

In addition, all Executive Board members help each other out with their respective duties, according to Didier.

The SOC-BBC Executive Board consists of the president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, marketing director and events coordinator. It is the governing body for all student organizations at BBC.

The SOC serves these organizations through funding and coordinating activities to promote the academic, social and athletic interests of FIU students at BBC, according to their Web site.

A 'TAXING' ISSUE

Provision could shift community college costs to individuals

LEE DAMESSOUS
Contributing Writer

Voters heading to the ballot box are hyped up for their presidential candidate. A few of these voters know which state senators, representatives, and judges are up for election, but it's just as important to know that there are amendments to the Florida constitution on the ballot.

The results of these amendments are such that can affect us all on a local level, and they are important to note and understand. Among these amendments, No. 8 is of special interest to the college community.

Amendment Eight, as stated on the ballot, "requires that the legislature authorize counties to levy a local option sales tax to supplement community college funding."

I must admit the amendment looks quite positive; it would allow local counties to help fund their community colleges by providing extra dollars to the state's 28 community colleges, including Miami-Dade College and Broward College, both of which are still legally considered community colleges, despite the dropping of the "C-word" from their names after offering 4-year degrees.

According to the League of Women Voters Web site, "Community colleges serve as a gateway to the university system and to greater employment opportunities; this amendment could increase their funding." The league

supports Amendment Eight.

One can surely recognize the underfunding and difficulty community colleges often face in order to offer higher education to students. Many community colleges in this state do support this initiative strongly, but the cons of this amendment merit examination.

Amendment Eight might open the door for a decrease in state funding for community colleges over time, since a portion of the burden will be shifted to the individual counties that house these colleges.

While it is certainly not a given that this would happen, it would be a shame to eventually see the state attempt to cut corners by decreasing state funding for community colleges because they know this amendment is keeping them funded at local levels.

Disparity would increase between community colleges in more affluent areas versus less affluent ones, due to the ability of more affluent areas to raise more funds. Unfortunately, sales taxes tend to impose a greater burden on lower-income families.

It is already hard enough for many families in Miami-Dade County to survive, and the passing of Amendment Eight would allow a future increase in the sales tax which would make it that much more difficult. Many of the people benefiting from the community colleges might also be the ones most affected by having a higher sales tax.

"I am avidly against raising the

sales tax because it affects citizens of all socio-economic backgrounds though they may not benefit from it," said Dalourny Demorin, a freshman studying political science.

Keep in mind the amendment itself does not raise taxes, but simply authorizes counties to do so with public support. According to a document MDC sent to *The Beacon*, Amendment Eight "generates no revenues and costs voters not one cent. It simply provides a process for community colleges to obtain local support via a future referendum. Amendment Eight is not a tax."

But it seems to me that though it is not a tax, Amendment Eight does provide counties the ability to levy a sales tax to benefit community colleges. This would be subject to voter approval, but is important to think through carefully despite opportunities to deny any such tax proposals in the future. To the 900,000 students who attend our state community colleges, I only desire the greatest amount of progress for the educational system so men and women can attain post-secondary educations.

It is estimated that earning an Associate's or Bachelor's Degree is worth \$400,000 and \$900,000 respectively in lifetime earnings beyond a high school diploma. This earning potential and the subsequent ability to attain a better standard of living are desired for all, and support must be given to the institutions which make this possible.

Amendments Made Easy

To see all the amendments explained, visit fiusm.com/opinion.

Amendment 1: A somewhat purely ceremonial amendment that would retract WWII-era language from the Constitution that authorizes the state to prevent Asians from owning property. This amendment would not actually have any affect on Florida law, since no legislation was ever enacted under the original amendment.

Amendment 2: Will change the language in Florida's constitution to define marriage as the legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, with no other legal union being valid or rec-

ognized. Gay marriage is already prohibited under state statute, but this amendment would make it more difficult to overturn the law.

Amendment 3: Would disallow certain home improvements from being assessed as property value for tax purposes, including changes which increase resistance to wind damage and the installation of renewable energy source devices. It essentially amounts to a tax break for those who install "green" improvements to their home.

- Information researched and compiled by Lee Damessous and Eric Feldman

However, even more important is that support be gained in a way that does not burden society any more than what is necessary. The MDC document mentions that "the largest community college systems in Texas, California, New York, Illinois, North Carolina and others receive some form of municipal or county support in addition to state funding." We

would not be the first state to make or adopt this constitutional measure.

As students, we must stay informed and remember that change begins at the local level. Though the presidential election is very important there are things on the ballot that will have just as great an effect on our everyday lives.

THE SOAPBOX: An Op-Ed Column

With over 180 groups available, on-campus involvement not as difficult as you think

JEAN ROSEME
Special to the Beacon

When I first enrolled at FIU, the only thing on my mind was classes. The notion that I would be the one choosing my classes and exactly what time they would be was different.

While trying to figure out the perfect 18-credit schedule, I had to attend freshman orientation, something I would have rather skipped; I wanted to dive right into my classes.

Thankfully, I did not skip out on the ceremony. Alex Prado and Christine Denton, the President and Vice President of SGA at the time, gave a speech that drastically changed my mind set. This speech inspired me to join SGA and generally get involved in student life on campus.

Before long I was heavily involved with SGA and other clubs on campus.



ROSEME

I would not be who I am today had I not gotten involved.

Because of my involvement I am in a position, as speaker of the SGA senate, where I can help my fellow students in many ways. However, it has become clear to me that while I am very involved, the vast majority of students on campus are not.

I've heard many reasons why students are not involved. A lot of people say it's because FIU is a commuter school and that students have to rush off to work right after classes. Another reason I've heard whispered around the halls is that FIU doesn't offer anything worth getting involved in.

To some extent the former reason is valid. It's hard to balance an average class schedule of 12 to 15 credits and 20 or more hours of work a week, not to mention one's personal life.

Everyone has a different set of circumstances that determines how involved they become, but it really is not as hard as some would make it seem. You don't have to be as involved as myself to still be involved. The trick is to do what you love.

I developed a flair for public service, which is why I'm in SGA and a Resident Assistant. Addressing the latter reason of student apathy; it's just not true. At FIU there are over 180 student groups just in the Council of Student Organizations. They range from social clubs, to honor societies, and graduate groups. That's just in CSO. The Student Programming Council, Athletics, Panther Rage, Campus Life and a host of other groups on campus are always offering students something.

Perhaps the real reason behind student apathy is that no one knows how much is being offered to them. At times the tasks of letting students

know what's going on has been challenging.

SGA has hosted forums for students to express their concerns, where the attendance doesn't correlate with the number of issues. And even though attendance hasn't been what SGA has expected, we do have faith that the last forum of the semester will be successful, which will be held in the Graham Center Pit Nov. 13.

But the forum's attendance isn't the real issue. It's getting students involved. For the most part, I've made it is clear that there are things to be involved with on campus. Simply, the reason to get involved is the perks of doing so, with the primary perk being able to make connections.

I have met a lot of interesting people in my circles, and those relationships will better me at some point in the future. Being involved adds another dimension to your college experience. This dimension could poten-

tially be as valuable as all your formal education put together.

It's all about balance.

Being involved will give you those experiences that will help you for the rest of your life. Plus, your own unique experiences and insights could help other students you are involved with. Formal education is important, but there are many things that you will only learn through mistakes or through involvement.

There is no real reason to pay to attend FIU and not take advantage of what it has to offer. Being involved is beneficial for so many reasons. I will always be grateful that my mind was changed right when I started at FIU. My hope is that I have now given you something to think if you are not involved or considering being involved do at FIU.

Jean Roseme is the Senate Speaker for SGC-UP.

REVIEWS (YOU CAN USE)

MOVIE

W. ★★★★★

A FILM MISUNDERESTIMATED

Nation's most influential father-son duo make it to big screen

STEVE MESA
Staff Writer

The subject for Academy Award-winning director Oliver Stone's new movie, "W.," is none other than the 43rd President of the United States, George W. Bush.

Coming off excellent roles in movies such as "American Gangster," "Planet Terror" and the Oscar-winning "No Country for Old Men," Josh Brolin is truly amazing as the current president.

When Brolin portrays W. in his fraternity days, Brolin barely resembles the Bush we know today. Later on, as Bush gets older, we see Brolin adapt to Bush's speech patterns and mannerisms and become more like him.

Aside from Brolin's performance, James Cromwell gives a great performance as George H.W. Bush.

In "W.," he commands the screen with his presence in every scene. Cromwell's interpretation of Bush Sr. does not come across as a parody of the former president like former "Saturday Night Live" alumnus Dana Carvey's impression of the elder Bush.

While the movie mainly focuses on the ups and downs of President Bush's life, the real heart of the movie comes from the turbulent

father-son relationship between Bush and his "poppy."

Brolin and Cromwell's portrayals of the two Bushes are tremendous, especially when the two actors share a scene together. Early on in the movie, Bush Sr. is disappointed with his son because he quits jobs his father sets him up with.

George H.W. Bush does not have faith in his eldest son's future ambitions. This causes a chain reaction of events in which George W. Bush begins to do everything in his power to prove to his dad that he is not worthless, whether it is running for governor of Texas or owning a major league baseball team.

The cast of "W." is outstanding.

Playing the vice president that oozes with charm and evil is Oscar-winner Richard Dreyfuss.

Jeffery Wright plays Colin Powell as a man asking for a legitimate reason for going to war with Iraq.

British actor Toby Jones plays the man who tells W. what to say, Karl Rove.

Finally, we have Elizabeth Banks playing Laura Bush, the loving and loyal wife of George W. Bush.

"W." is Oliver Stone's third presidential-era film, following "JFK" in 1991 and "Nixon" in

1995.

While "JFK" focuses more on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, "Nixon" was basically the biographical story of Richard Nixon from his days as a little boy to his disgraceful resignation.

There are two storylines covered in the film. One storyline focuses on Bush's partying days, his sobriety and decisions that will lead up to having a career as a politician.

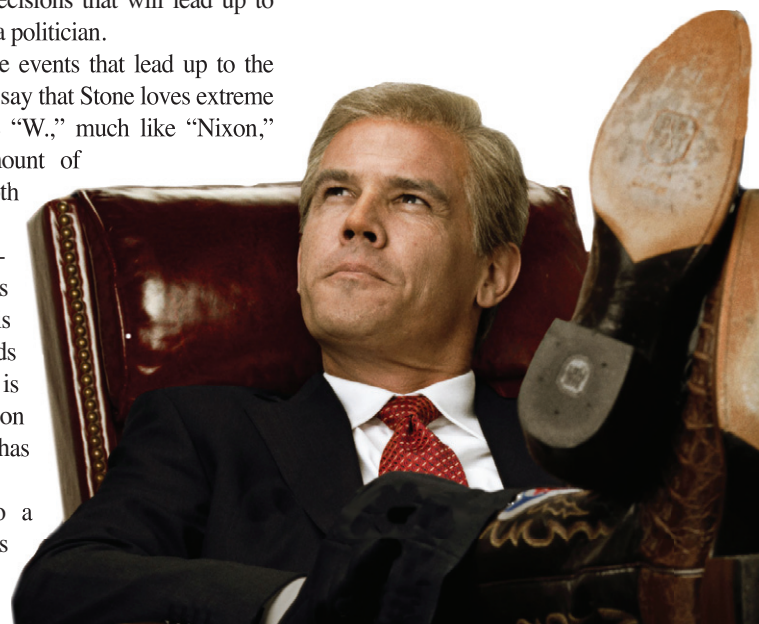
The other is the events that lead up to the Iraq War. I have to say that Stone loves extreme close-ups, because "W.," much like "Nixon," has a certain amount of those shots in both films.

One clear example of this in "W." is when Bush junior is jogging in the woods and the camera is mainly focused on his face before he has a breakdown.

There are also a couple of instances in which Stone plays with fantas-

tical elements such as the older Bush taking a swing at his oldest son in the Oval Office and our current president catching a home run ball in Yankee Stadium.

Brilliant performances from Josh Brolin and James Cromwell, outstanding ensemble and great direction from Oliver Stone make "W." one of the best movies of 2008.



CD

Ryan Adams - *Cardinology*

★★

Latest album amounts to nothing

CHRIS TOWERS
Asst. Life! Editor

Before this review begins in earnest, I am forced by critical law to mention that Ryan Adams has a history of drug and alcohol abuse and once released three albums in a single calendar year.

I have to mention this because, apparently, this gives him the credibility necessary to release country rock music in the current musical climate and still be taken seriously by critics.

The drugs and alcohol bit is a staple of the indie/country rock scene at this point, something you can't leave home without, and the three albums in one year thing harks back to the days before artists cared about stuff like releasing consistently good albums.

If it sounds like I'm hating on Ryan a bit too hard, I'm really not. It's more a criticism of the critical community's reaction to him than anything. For the most part, he makes entirely competent country rock music that

WEEKEND CALENDAR

FRIDAY • OCTOBER 24

WHAT: Frost Museum Film Screening "the Rising Tide"
WHERE: GL 100
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: Lambda Chi Alpha "Watermelon Bust - North Amer Food Drive"
WHERE: FIU GC Ballrooms
WHEN: 11 a.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: Panhellenic Council "Self-Defense Class"
WHERE: GC Pit
WHEN: Noon
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: Yoga Club Meditations
WHERE: GC 241
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: ENGAGE Workshop "Dollars and Sense"
WHERE: GC 314
WHEN: 12:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: Women's Empowerment Week "Celebration of feminism"
WHERE: GC pit
WHEN: Noon
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: SPC Presents: "Sex and the City" movie night
WHERE: GC 140
WHEN: 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

SATURDAY • OCTOBER 25

WHAT: FIU C.A.R.E.S. presents: Free LSAT, GRE, & GMAT exams
WHERE: GC 1200
WHEN: 10 a.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

WHAT: The Cheetah Girls
WHERE: American Airlines Arena 601 Biscayne Blvd.
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Varies

WHAT: Peter Frampton
WHERE: Kravis Center 701 Okeechobee Blvd., West Palm Beach, FL
WHEN: 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$ 55

WHAT: The Faint
WHERE: Culture Room, Ft Lauderdale, FL
WHEN: 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$25

WHAT: The Australian Pink Floyd Show
WHERE: The Fillmore Miami Beach at Jackie Gleason Theater Miami Beach, FL
WHEN: 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$ 45

WHAT: Halloween Spooktacular
WHERE: Jungle Island 1111 Parrot Jungle Trail Miami, FL
WHEN: Noon
HOW MUCH: \$25

WHAT: In the Park with Art
WHERE: Coral Reef Park 7955 SW 152 St Perrine, FL
WHEN: 10 a.m.
HOW MUCH: FREE

SUNDAY • OCTOBER 26

WHAT: Janelle's Wishing Well Foundation Kickball Tournament
WHERE: Chapman Field, 13610 Old Cutler Road
WHEN: 8 a.m.
HOW MUCH: \$ 20

WHAT: Harvest Day
WHERE: Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden 10901 Old Cutler Rd Pinecrest, FL
WHEN: 9:30 a.m.
HOW MUCH: \$ 15

WHAT: Miami Dolphins vs Buffalo Bills
WHERE: Dolphin Stadium 2267 Dan Marino Blvd Miami Gardens, FL
WHEN: 1 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$ 40

WHAT: Oktoberfest
WHERE: Bayfront Park 301 N Biscayne Blvd Miami, FL
WHEN: 7 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$ 15

WHAT: Festival Miami
WHERE: Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County 1300 Biscayne Blvd Miami, FL
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: Varies

WHAT: Scarefest
WHERE: CocoWalk 3015 Grand Ave Coconut Grove, FL
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$ 20

Compiled by: Rosalyn Delgado

CD

T.I. - *Paper Trail* ★★★★★

Maintaining the momentum with sixth studio album

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

The meaning of the word swagger, as written in the dictionary, is as follows: To conduct oneself in an arrogant or superciliously pompous manner; especially to walk with an air of overbearing self-confidence.

These days it is easy to associate that definition with T.I.

And an especially detailed description of the word can be heard on the Atlanta native's new album, *Paper Trail*.

T.I. delivers what is arguably the best, overall body of work in his six album discography and opens it with 56 hard bars in the introduction. With a backing from DJ Toomp on the boards, T.I. descriptively emphasizes that he is back, as good as ever,

and the swag is evident with the playful chuckling over the ad libs and an array of references to his self proclaimed untouchable swagger.

T.I. backs it up with his characteristic near flawless flow and an impressive vocabulary that is rarely seen in southern hip-hop artists. As a result of writing down his lyrics as opposed to memorizing and free-styling them on past albums, T.I.'s delivery goes to a level very few artists can reach.

Apparently, the controversial star felt the need to continue to stress how good he really is on "I'm Illy." After the impressive second offering, T.I. gets more personal, something he does often on the album. The third track, "Ready for Whatever," finds the 28-year-old describing the obstacles he has had to overcome in the past and in recent times. T.I., who faced turbulent times

during recent run-ins with the law, uses the song as an outlet to express his emotions.

The album gets lighter on its next three joints as it features radio-friendly sounds including bubble gum bumper "Whatever you Like," which made it to the top of the charts.

T.I. takes the time to take verbal jabs at opponents on the eleventh song, "What up, What's haapnin'." The man born Clifford Joseph Harris Jr. can certainly handle his beef over tracks and has proves again that he is capable of dismantling rivals on the mic.

The track is not directly aimed at fellow Atlanta counterpart Shawty Lo, but comments he made earlier in the year suggest it is.

The absolute highlight of the album is, "Swagger Like Us," in which T.I. hosts

some of the best and most popular emcees in the game on a ridiculous collaboration. Kanye West, Jay-Z and Lil Wayne jump into the booth and deliver good verses, only to see T.I. finish the track by slaying the West beat, arguably better than his counterparts. The track is sure to make a major impact on the airwaves, as it is also listed as part of Jay-Z's next album, *The Blueprint 3*.

Coincidentally, though it was T.I.'s first time on a song with the hip-hop legend, it seems not too long ago that star producer Pharell deemed the Atlanta artist "The Jay-Z of the South."

With *Paper Trail*, T.I. is leaving a trail of his own, not only in the southern music world, but the whole industry. And a worthy swag as well.

Cardinals lift Adams' latest effort, *Cardinology*

ADAMS, page 5

sounds authentic enough to cover up for a lack of original melodies or moods. And this is no different on his newest album, *Cardinology*.

It might be fair to assume that given the title, his backing band The Cardinals might play a bigger part on this album, and in some ways they do. They do an admirable job of prettying up some substandard melodies

with sighing slide guitars and well placed backing vocals.

And on the occasions that Ryan does drop a legitimately great song ("Let Us Down Easy," "Go Easy," "Sink Ships") they are more than ready to take it to the next level. On "Sink Ships," as Adams ratchets up the intensity and cries "The war is over, the war is over," the band matches him note for note building on his intensity before crashing back down as he

exclaims "And I'm waiting in a sinking ship!" It is truly the album's best moment. Unfortunately, the album's great moments are too few and far apart for this to qualify as anything other than another scattershot effort.

Adams is a guy who obviously has a ton of talent, and when he does write a great song, they are as good as anyone's. But in his quest to release as much music as possible, some stuff that is just terrible ends up

seeing the light of day, bringing his albums down (I'm looking at you, "Majick").

Sure, quality is totally subjective, but there can't be many people out there who would disagree with the assertion that Adams needs a good editor.

When he inevitably releases another album in March or April of '09, feel free to snag the best songs from that one and this one and make yourself a killer "Best of" album.

STOP THE PRESSES! UGGHHH... **A COMIC BY IRIS AMELIA**

HONEST ABE ...and the magical hat. **by michelle diaz**

My Cousin Tony by Alex Ferrer # 1

diversions

EASY

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7			4		9		1	5
	9			2			4	
4	8		3		6			9
1	2						3	
		8		4	3	1		7
	7		6		5	4		

HARD

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3		2		7		6	
6			2		4		
		3		6	5		4
	4					7	
9			8	4		1	
		8			7		5
	1			9		2	3
		9			2		

HAIRY DAN AND ACTIVE DAVE
BY JONATHAN ROBERTS AND ANDREW SANTIAGO
ACTIVE DAVE IS A CHICK MAGNET

For Sudoku answers, go to FIUSM.com/sudoku. If you are interested in having a comic in our paper, send an e-mail to Life@Fiusm.com.

Martinez credits parents for faith instilled in him

MARTINEZ, page 8

for who I am today."

The Martinez family originally hails from Teaneck, New Jersey, so religion was one of the only things he could bring with him.

"My parents are from Trinidad, they came here in the mid-80s and settled into the Queens, New York area," he said. "Religion from there parents also played a major role in their lives and they brought it on to me."

Aside from his contribution to the area, Martinez helps his local church as well, La Viña on Bird Road.

Besides regularly attending, he reached out to young adults through the Kids Excel program.

As part of it, Martinez helped children through the summer program and helped manage a sports league for them.

MORE THAN FOOTBALL

During a Sept. 20 game against the University of South Florida, a Bulls player was hurt on the field in what appeared to be a serious injury.

The linebacker needed his faith at the awkward moment during the contest.

"I mean, you forget about football aspects and put them out the window. You pray for him as a person; that he will get better because the last thing we do against opponents is wish them injury," he said. "We look to compete [but] we always pray for the other team not to get injured."

"I prayed to God that everything was stable. Individually that night, me and my girl friend said a prayer just to keep head over water and make sure he was alright. Luckily, X-rays came out negative."

Whether Martinez is at church mentoring young people, or if he is on the field getting tackles for the Golden Panthers, nothing really changes for him. There is always one constant.

"When I wake up [and] until I go to bed, I know that if you keep faith it does give you hope. Hope just to believe that every day, even if it's not a good day, a positive outcome could come out of it," Martinez said.

"That's how you have to carry every day."

Second breath of waiver pickups have upside; Bryant makes leap into elite

Year after year, you look at the roster of the team that won your fantasy football league and you start beating yourself up.

You see how different the team that finished the season was from the one that started it, and you beat yourself up because you passed over some of the fantasy Cinderella stories that propelled the champion into a year of pride and showing off, while driving you to a year of sulking and second guessing. As fantasy football general managers, we are not much different from NFL general managers.

Except Joe Schmoe GM goes back to his cubicle after a terrible season and recovers next year, as opposed to NFL general managers who's livelihood depends on every decision made. In order to win your league, you sometimes have to think like a real general manager: draft solid players, take calculated risks, decide whether you're holding onto a veteran for too long and scour the waiver wire to find the next superstar, your diamond in the ruff.

Who will be your waiver wire hero? Running backs never stay healthy, and often are the most consistent point scorers in fantasy football.

If you drafted Brian Westbrook, the smart thing to have done in the beginning of the year is take an insurance policy out on Westbrook, and reserve a spot for Correl Buckhalter. Same for Joseph Addai owners, who should also own Dominic Rhodes.

For Willie Parker owners, rookie Rashard Mendenhall was the obvious

handcuff (process of matching up a starting running back and his backup), but when he got hurt owners should have jumped on Mewelde Moore. If you missed out on the run on backup running backs, your team probably suffered big time.

The final third of the fantasy football season brings a second wave of waiver wire heroes, maybe not as good or prolific as the first wave, but if injuries have hindered your team or bye weeks limiting your options, here are a few players to watch with a lot of upside.

Pierre Thomas/Aaron Stecker- Running Backs, New Orleans Saints- With Reggie Bush injured for up to four weeks, the Saints will do their best to make up for his absence with an efficient ground game. Deuce McAllister's knees can't take the beating they used to, and even though he is a good start keep an eye on Thomas and Stecker.

Thomas could get more goal line looks, as he did earlier in the season when McAllister was hurt, and Stecker could fit right in as a poor mans Reggie Bush because he is a versatile speedy scat back who happens to be an above average receiver as well.

Antonio Bryant- Wide Receiver, Tampa Bay Buccaneers- With Joey Galloway hurt, Bryant has solidified himself as the number one pass catcher, even with Galloway coming back this week.

He is a top 25 receiver and available in most leagues. Snatch him up and start him if you need the help. However, he is a higher risk than most receivers because

of the style of play the Bucs use.

They will not blow anyone out and probably won't score more than two or three times in a game. But odds are Bryant will catch a lot of balls, he is quickly becoming one of Jeff Garcia's favorite targets, and might find his way into the end zone.

Donnie Avery- Wide Receiver, St. Louis Rams- The Rams were killed when they made Avery the first receiver taken in this year's draft.

The offense has become prolific since new head coach Jim Haslett took over and the light bulb has come on for Avery. He might have the most upside out of any player still out there, and if you can afford it, make room for Avery, especially if you play in a keeper league.

Ryan Torian- Running Back, Denver Broncos- Its hard to rely on a Denver Bronco's running back, especially if he hasn't played a down this year yet.

However, Selvin Young, Andre Hall, and Michael Pittman have been ineffective and it's starting to hurt Jay Cutler and the passing game.

Head Coach Mike Shanahan says Torian reminds him of Terrell Davis, only stronger and faster, and could feature Torian to throw off some teams on their way to making a playoff run. Teams have no film on Torian, and he could be a hot commodity come the next few weeks.

Good luck finding your waiver wire hero.

If you have any questions of comments, email Jonathan at Jonathan.Alpert@fiusm.com and listen to Panther Sports Talk Live Tuesdays and Thursdays noon-1pm on Radiate FM, streaming live on fiusm.com.

COMMENTARY



JONATHAN ALPERT

Golden Panthers sweep again

JONATHAN ALPERT
Asst. Sports Director

The volleyball team notched its 11th sweep of the season, taking care of FAU (25-15, 25-16, 26-24). Freshman Andrea Lakovic led the Golden Panthers with a season high 16 kills to help propel FIU to victory.

She did not commit an error and hit respectable .696. Outside Hitter Yarimar Rosa had 15 kills. Sophomore setter Natalia Valentin had 42 assists, eight digs and three aces. FIU improved to 18-4 overall, and 8-1 in the conference, good for the lead in the Sun Belt Eastern Division.

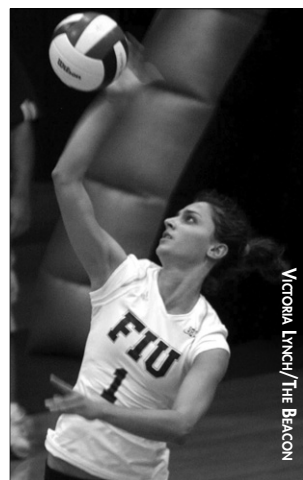
In the first set, after being tied at 11, the Golden Panthers pulled away going on a 14-4

run to take the set 25-15.

In the second set, FIU pulled away after the score was tied at 7 a piece. FIU took the set 25-16.

The third set provided a scare for the Golden Panthers. Down 5-2, they fought back to tie the set at 7. FIU started to pull away, taking an 18-13 lead, but FAU responded with a 9-3 run of their own to even the set at 22.

After trading a pair of points each the set was tied at 24 until a serving error by FAU gave FIU the lead. Fittingly, Lakovic contributed the winning kill to give FIU the sweep. The Golden Panthers have dominated the rivalry recently winning the last 5 matches with FAU, with the last four being sweeps.



HARD HITTING: Andrea Lakovic hits the ball vs. FAU.

FIU will travel to Arkansas for a match with Arkansas-Little Rock on Oct. 24 at 8 p.m. and then take on Arkansas State on Oct. 25 at 6 p.m.



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PROGRESS REPORT

Middle blocker Sabrina Gonzalez emerges as key player

JONATHAN ALPERT
Asst. Sports Director

Sabrina Gonzalez has contributed greatly to the success of the women's volleyball team this season and will factor greatly in the future success of the program.

Fairly new to the game of volleyball, Gonzalez arrived at FIU without hype or high expectations, but has worked her way into the rotation of players head coach Danijela Tomic relies on.

"Sabrina is a kid who only played for three years before coming to us, and she is one of two freshmen playing crucial positions for us," said Tomic. "Sabrina is our biggest [pleasant] surprise. She has learned so much in the preseason, she is very coachable, has great athletic abilities, there are a lot of good things ahead for Sabrina."

The freshmen has been efficient on offense, struggling at times, as freshman always do, but averages a modest 1.45 kills a set, good for 3rd on the team.

Gonzalez's role on defense has expanded as the season has progressed, and she leads the team in blocks with 67 on the season and .91 per set. She has amassed more than twice the blocks of anyone else on the team.

Earlier in the season, *The Beacon* sat down with the freshman sensation.

JA: How did the late start in Volleyball come about?

SG: I started playing volleyball my sophomore year in high school, I was actually a basketball player, and I only started playing volleyball to help with my vert and jumping ability; I didn't realize I would

enjoy the game as much as I did.

As time went on, I ended up straying away from basketball and focusing more on volleyball.

JA: Have you spoken to any of the basketball players about playing volleyball, and visa versa?

SG: I haven't convinced the basketball players yet.

But they are two totally different sports. Some girls can jump, but can't shoot, dribble, or be aggressive.

JA: Do the upperclassmen have their fun with the freshman; having you carry their things, sing songs, etc?

SG: Nothing that entertaining, just boring equipment duties, snagging balls, grabbing towels, those kinds of simple duties.

JA: Being new to the game, as well as a freshman, you have to make the most of your time in the game. Do you enjoy learning from the sidelines as much as learning on the fly in the game?

SG: I don't have much experience playing this game, so every moment I get to step away and observe and learn from bench, it helps a lot.

I'm in a situation now where I have to learn and progress as I play, so every chance I get to take a step back, I enjoy it.

JA: Your Head Coach, Danijela Tomic, is usually calm on the sideline, sitting down. In practice has she ever done anything memorable to motivate the team?

SG: When we aren't having a great practice, not focusing like we should be, she gets on us and yells a bit.

When she yells it motivates us because we know were not

performing the way we should be, and it wouldn't be a successful practice.

JA: What goes through your mind when FIU is on the brink of a defeat, down 2 sets to 1, 2 sets to none, Does the team legitimately think it can win the match, are you just trying to salvage the set and not be embarrassed, how does this team react to being down.

SG: We obviously know we need to win the next set, but it all has to do with being focused.

We play set-by-set, match-by-match, and game-by-game. We don't look ahead, to the next point, set, or match.

JA: The hardest thing about being a student athlete is what?

SG: Managing time.

As a freshman, I'm still getting used to the making time for family, school, and volleyball. Right now, I'm really focusing on school and volleyball, everything else is secondary.

JA: Being a local (Miami Sunset High School), is it cool playing in front of friends and family all the time?

SG: Its fun for them to see me play, I always tell them to come, they usually do. It's different for them because it's a different atmosphere than high school and club.

JA: What has to happen to propel FIU women's volleyball to a Sunbelt title?

SG: We have to take each team seriously, and focus.

We have to win the games we're supposed to win, and once we're approached by a more challenging opponent, perform the best we possibly can.



PHOTO COURTESY SAM LEWIS

BIG SURPRISE: First year volleyball player Sabrina Gonzalez has emerged as one of the most important players for the Golden Panthers. Gonzalez averages 1.45 kills per set.



FERNANDO GARCIA/THE BEACON

CELEBRATION: Senior linebacker Ryan Martinez waves his arms after a play vs. USF on Sept. 20.

Linebacker's impact felt off the field

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

Linebacker Ryan Martinez isn't sure if he will be playing football on Sundays, but if he were to one day play in the NFL, it might interfere with his routine.

The senior is often busy on Sunday mornings, and it's not likely to change; in fact, he can scarcely remember the last time he missed a church service.

"Only probably one," he said as he looked up trying to recall the instance. "And that was because of scheduling complications with weather."

When asked about how many he has missed in his time at FIU he didn't have to think.

"I cannot remember the last time I missed a [service] in my tenure here [FIU]," he said. "Maybe it's been a few but I try to attend the most I can."

Martinez has maintained a strong faith since he arrived at FIU from Nassau Community College, and has used it as a platform to extend his reach beyond the football field for FIU.

"It's not just something unseen, it's something that is spoken through his actions," coach Mario Cristobal said. "The team looks up to it and

several members of the community have seen it in person and know what type of person he is."

SERVING

Aside from football training, Martinez has found a niche right across the street from FIU during the offseason. With the help of a few teammates, Martinez contributed to various local programs.

"We spoke to some kids at the Doral camp optimist program, where me, Paul McCall, Scotty Bryant, and a few of us talked to kids and let them know how college can help and how to better yourself not

only as a student athlete but as a person," he said. "Just to let them know motives of respect. Aspects of life. Its amazing because they look up to you no matter what."

Martinez gives them reason to.

The 6-foot defender credits his upbringing as the reason his faith has remained strong.

"Its from my parents, my faith is number one, then my religion, then my family, school, and football," he said. "They all play a major role in my life but religion is very big to me because it sets a standard

MARTINEZ, page 7