

BABY BLUES

BBC child care plans on hold

FUNDING TERRORISM

War on Chiquita bananas

FREE RUNNERS

Strange new sport comes to FIU

COMING UP

Softball team turns it around

AT THE BAY PAGE 4

OPINION PAGE 5

LIFE! PAGE 6

SPORTS PAGE 12

Painting a cooler globe is possible

DANIELLA BACIGALUPO
Staff Writer

Students for Environmental Action is known for protests against the University's recycling program, but now they can also be recognized as budding artists.

Participating in an innovative project called "Cool - Planet - Earth" and inspired by environmental problems, 15 students have spent a week painting images on crystal glass globes in hopes their brush strokes will depict their impressions of the negative impact of global warming on Earth.

"I'm going to do the typical Earth and chip the paint off so that the ocean is blue and paint bones on the continent to symbolize how the Earth is drying out and dying, sort of like exposed bones," said Tony Brown, a sophomore.

"Cool - Planet - Earth" is an environmental art contest that aims to bring awareness of environmental issues through an artistic medium. Students attend



FERNANDO GARCIA/THE BEACON

WORLD OF COLOR: Tony Brown, sophomore political science major paints his globe for the "Cool - Planet - Earth" competition during Earth week.

a class where they are informed about global warming and then asked to express their ideas by painting on crystal globes. SEA is participating in the pilot project.

However, like Brown, many students involved in the project are

neither part of the Environmental Studies Department, nor are they professional artists.

On Friday morning, junior Ali Dutton was huddled on top of her globe, spraying transparent paint-primer that covered it in a

milky-white liquid.

"It's hard. I'm not an artist," she said.

The students will be judged on three criteria: relevance to the global warming topic, artistic ability and the information

reflected on the globe.

Still, Dutton should not worry that her globe might not be ready for an art gallery. The main point of the project is to attract

SEA, page 3

Rally tries to prove Labor Center is worth preserving

CHARLIE GRAU
Editor in Chief

FIU is already beginning to feel the heat of a tightened budget in the middle of one of most strenuous budget deficits in Florida's history.

Faculty and students are worried about whether or not their program, college, institute or center will get the ax as the University tries to figure out the best way to deal with the lack of funding from the Legislature.

In a weekly e-mail update about the budget crisis, University President Modesto A. Maidique announced a University-wide town hall meeting will take place on April 14, where recommendations will be made to help the University survive these budget cuts. The meeting will take place in the Graham Center Ballrooms and will simulcast to Biscayne Bay Campus with an

exact location to be announced.

One center that is especially worried about the state of FIU's budget is the Labor Center.

On April 2, about 100 students, faculty and members of the community attended a rally outside of the Labor Center to oppose the possible closing of the Center.

The Center, which first opened in 1971, works in the South Florida community and local programs that help low-income communities. The Center also publishes work about the changing nature of workers and organizations in Florida.

The Student's Coalition to Save the Labor Center organized the rally. Members of the coalitions said they believe the University doesn't understand the value of the center.

"If we're such a public university, then are why are centers like this being closed that build bridges into the community?" said Cynthia

Hernandez, a research assistant on Social and Economic Policy at the Research Institute. "We don't see any other center at FIU doing the work that we do. We work with low income and minority families."

Students and faculty believe institutes and centers are at a disadvantage during this time of economic uncertainty because they don't have the ability to bring in big donors.

"It's a good thing to be evaluated because these are tax dollars and we should be held accountable for what we do with tax payers' money," said Labor Center Director Dawn Addy. "But the problem is in these tough budget times, if all we're going to be judged on the amount of money we can bring in, then we're gone. We don't have the ability to bring in

SEA, page 3

CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS

Party welcomes stargazers, students

BEN F. BADGER JR.
LAUREN AGOSTO
Beacon Staff

On a clear night sky, stargazers can look up and see thousands of sparkling lights, the remnants of stars billions of miles away.

Physics professor James R. Webb aims to give stargazers a much closer look with his end of semester Star Party on April 11 at the FIU Astronomy Observatory in front of the Chemistry and Physics building.

"The purpose for the event is to let everyone enjoy astronomy, science and even music," Webb said. "Every event is educational and fun."

In addition to stargazing, Webb usually hosts some form

of musical entertainment, which has often included him playing a few bars on his guitar.

"If the weather is lousy we try to provide things inside," said Georgiana Hall, astronomy lab manager.

The special guest for this party will be guitarist Muriel Anderson, who was the first woman to win the National Fingerpicking Guitar Championship in September 2007 and has performed throughout Europe.

Anderson will start of the star party at 8 p.m. with a free half hour concert.

"We have had numerous musical guests, from folk singers

STAR PARTY, page 2

THE BEACON

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The Beacon is published on Mondays and Thursdays during the Fall and Spring semesters and once a week during Summer B. One copy per person. Additional copies are 25 cents. *The Beacon* is not responsible for the content of ads. Ad content is the sole responsibility of the company or vendor. *The Beacon* is an editorially independent newspaper partially funded by student and services fees that are appropriated by Student Government.

An astral affair returns with Saturn, music

STAR PARTY, page 1

to me. We have looked at Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, binary stars, Venus, galaxies, nebula, you name it," Webb said.

Besides music, this Star Party will focus on the planet Saturn. According to associate professor Caroline Simpson, the ringed planet is a sight to behold.

"Saturn is spectacular though a telescope," Simpson said. "If you have never seen Saturn through a telescope, you should make an effort to do so."

Simpson also said in the past, when Saturn was seen through telescopes at the Star Party, viewers accused party hosts of placing a picture of Saturn in front of the lenses.

Everyone who attends the party will have a chance to use 12-inch telescopes and view the gas giant and its famous rings, weather permitting.

Hall commented that Saturn is usually within a good view every two years, but every so often, it will be out of sight for longer periods of time due to its positions behind the Sun.

Telescopes will also be pointed toward the planet Mars, star formation regions and star clusters.

Webb has been hosting two parties on campus every semester since 1995.

"Star parties came about when people got together to look at the stars and planets through telescopes, and just have a great time," Webb said.

Refreshments for the party will be



COURTESY OF MURIELANDERSON.COM

STAR-STUDED EVENING: Artist Muriel Anderson will perform during the Star Party April 11 in the Chemistry and Physics building, room 145.

served in CP 145 where Webb will also be making a brief presentation.

Raffles for various astronomy-related material and Anderson's music CDs will also be held in CP 145.

The Star Party is open to anyone, according to Webb.

"[Webb] tries to make each Star Party different," Hall said. "We get a lot of people from the local astronomy clubs."

For more information on Anderson you can visit her Web site at www.murielanderson.com.

James Webb can be reached webbj@fiu.edu.

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THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • APRIL 7

Panther Rage General Meeting:
4 p.m., GC 140

SPC UProar - Listening Party:
6 p.m., GC Pit

Greek Week - Brain Bowl:
8 p.m., Lakeview North Lounge

TUESDAY • APRIL 8

Greek Week - Take Back the Night:
7 p.m., GC Ballrooms

SPC UProar - Movie on the Lawn: National Treasurer:
8 p.m., Housing Quad

WEDNESDAY • APRIL 9

Greek Week - Luau Party:
7 p.m., Housing Quad Pool

GSA Scholarly Forum:
8 p.m. - 9 p.m., GC Ballrooms

SGA General Meeting:
3:30p.m. - 5 p.m., WUC 155 (BBC)

SGA General Meeting:
4 p.m. GC 140

THURSDAY • APRIL 10

SPC UProar Concert Blowout: OneRepublic & Fabulous:
8 p.m., Soccer Field

FRIDAY • APRIL 11

Activism Awareness Weekend - Discussion:
3 p.m., GC 140

Greek Week- Greek Olympic:
4 p.m., Baseball Stadium

SAGE Silent Auction & Reception:
6 p.m. - 10 p.m., WUC Ballrooms (BBC)

SPC Movie- "The Great Debaters":
7 & 10 p.m., GC 140

Activism Awareness Weekend - Concert:
8 p.m., Gracie's Grill

Compiled by Cassandra Pool

CORRECTIONS

In the issue dated April 4 2008, the graph titled "BBC Lower Division Rep" misspelled Laura Torres' name.

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



GIO GUADARRAMA/THE BEACON

LUNCH WITH 'MOTHER JONES': A puppet representing child rights activist Mary Harris Jones on display at the Labor Center rally.

Total budget cuts still an uncertainty

BUDGET, page 1

huge sums of money."

On the same day of the rally, University Park's Student Government Council passed a resolution to make the reviewing process for deciding what areas of the University will be affected by the budget cuts more transparent and allow more student input.

"There is a need for transparency, uniformity and student feedback in the decision making process," said Johnny Betancourt, Arts and Sci-

ences house representative and sponsor of the bill.

During the Faculty Senate Meeting on March 31, a proposed process for evaluating centers and institutes was explained. The proposal didn't pass, but is still being deliberated.

- Graduate student support and graduate student productivity
- Average per capita faculty scholarly productivity rates
- Revenue production
- Return on investment as a ratio of external funds

to E&G funds, if E&G funds are provided

- Demonstrated interdisciplinary activities
- The degree of congruence of the mission of the center or institute with the University's strategic themes

The further a center or institute is from full congruence with FIU's stated missions, the higher the expectation that the center or institute will fulfill the quantitative indices listed above.

The uncertainty that is looming over administra-

tion and faculty is creating a nervous atmosphere as many wonder what areas of the University will be affected.

"I must get a rumor a day that such and such is closing, but we're not going to know just how much we're going to have to cut yet," Hauptli said.

The University won't know how much it will have to cut from its budget until the end of Legislative session in May. As of March 27, the University may have to cut anywhere from 4 to 7 percent of its budget.

Art competition helps shed some light on global warming

SEA, page 1

the attention of students on campus, said Mildred Real, CEO of Common Ground for Conservation, the non-profit organization that developed the project and who sponsors the event.

"Students will ask themselves questions and that's enough, because for one moment in their lives they'll be occupied with global warming and the fact that other people are doing something about it," Real said.

Student attention will be piqued on April 7 when a midday launch into

the Green Library lake will present the colorful globes to the University. There, they will bob up and down for the rest of the day. The ceremony will also serve to kick off Earth Week.

At the ceremony, the judging panel will be present, which includes a mix-match of panelists - Regina Bailey, the Wolfsonian's Special Projects Coordinator; Joe Martinez, Miami-Dade County's District 11 Commissioner and Nancy Maidique, University President Modesto Maidique's wife, among others.

Karen Pannocchia, co-president of

SEA, hopes to donate the globes to the exhibit section at GL to continue to generate attention after the globes are removed from the lake.

She thinks the diversity reflected by the students participating and their globes is what makes this SEA project unique.

"It's not only environmental students, its all students. We have students from physics, environmental studies, international relations, business, architecture school - they are all involved and painting a globe," she said. "It's beautiful."



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Online survey puts plans for campus child care on hold

PAMELA DUQUE
Staff Writer

Day care at Biscayne Bay Campus has been a need for students who struggle to manage their time between classes and children.

In Jan. 2007, the Student Government Council at BBC took the first step to provide a solution for these parents.

SGC-BBC, with the help of the vice-provost's office and Student Affairs, created an online survey at the beginning of the Spring 2007 semester.

The survey targeted parents in need of a day care service in order to attend classes.

This was the first step to find out what the demand for a day care was, according to Camilo Silva, former SGC-BBC's president.

"The survey was extremely successful. It was performed online with a third-party company which computed the results," Silva said.

Because the results showed that there was not enough need for day care services, plans were put on hold.

However, those who depend on child care to be able to attend

class still have hope, according to Silva.

"In a future time, if there is a need for the service, SGA will have the opportunity to bring back the initiative and perform another survey and evaluate if a stable demand is present for the service to be implemented," said Silva, who ended his SGC-BBC presidency in 2007.

Current SGC-BBC president Katiana Saintable agrees there is a need for a day care.

"In my class yesterday, one of the students had to leave immediately to go pick up her children because they are on spring break, and my professor had to come in with her baby. The problem needs to be taken care of now," Saintable said.

Rachel Badilla, a returning student pursuing her degree in International Relations, is a mother of two who has no choice but to miss class when she can't find anyone to care for her children.

"It is not just a need while you are in class, but sometimes a parent does not have support or a place to leave their kids when they need quiet time to study.

"[If] I had a day care on campus that I could resort to

when my children are not in school for me to attend class or study, I would gladly use it and pay for it, if needed," Badilla said.

Faculty and staff also are affected.

Dr. Juliet Pinto, assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, is a mother of two who would love to have a campus daycare to be closer to her children in case of an emergency, or even to visit them whenever possible.

"I would be very open to [using it] if they started offering child care at BBC. We would certainly consider it," Pinto said.

While students, faculty and staff who have children would benefit from the use of a day care service at BBC, these parents don't have time to express their needs, according to Saintable.

Targeting parents directly is the key, according to Saintable.

"The students and faculty who really need the day care are not on campus enough to let people know that it would make their lives easier to have a day care on campus because they are running somewhere to class, and from class to pick up their kids," Saintable said.

WINDOW DECORATIONS



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

PHOTOCOPIED: The Biscayne Bay Campus' Disability Resource Center got creative with their windows last week. "We started with feet and went crazy with it," said Melinda Souffrant, occupational therapy major.

Kayak Club expands adventure to 'Beer Can Island'



My Life Experience
Nathan Valentine

The salty backyard lagoon of the Biscayne Bay Campus has much more to offer than a scenic view.

Kayaking provides students with an alternate workout and a sense of camaraderie.

"Think about this: you had a stressful day at work, so you get to relax and kayak, and spend time with your friends," said Kayak Club President Matheus Moraes. "It's a good physical activity and it's fun."

In conjunction with the Recreation department at BBC, the FIU Kayak Club held a meeting last month at the boat ramp behind BBC's dried up pool.

I arrived late and without a partner, but Moraes was happy to accommodate me.

I sat in a kayak and waited for my new partner Alex Sergov, a lifeguard for the BBC Recreation department, to get on board. After our departure,

we paddled toward Oleta State Park and took a short break once we reached the mangrove-lined kayak trail.

This allowed enough time to bask in the sunny atmosphere, where the surrounding water was clear and unaffected by the wind.

Jonathan Torrey, recreation specialist for BBC, led the winded kayakers through the narrow trail, instructing them to leave space between one another to minimize collisions.

However, Torrey later revealed the upside of such disasters: "That's the fun part of it. You get to crash."

One team of kayakers kept colliding with trees and went through the trail's tunnel bridge backward; they laughed it off.

"When we're inside the mangrove trail of Oleta Park, I think that's where students have the most fun," Torrey said. "They get to bump into the shore and each other, and explore and learn the different fundamentals of kayaking like steering."

The group moved

quickly through the short, snake-like path and enjoyed observing wildlife such as iguanas, herons and fish. Experiencing the mangrove canopies in this atmosphere imparted a lasting memory of the park's natural beauty.

At the trail's end, Torrey halted us for another break and since we had extra time, suggested extending our trip to "Beer Can Island"- something that neither Torrey nor Moraes had done before with the group.

"We wanted to try something new since the trail gets repetitive so we said, 'Hey, let's take them to the island,'" Moraes noted.

So for the first time in FIU's Kayak Club history, Torrey led the kayakers to a small barrier island notorious for being riddled with beer cans.

Throughout the 15-minute paddle to the island we battled sporadic headwinds. This was the hardest part of the trek and made for a great workout.

When we arrived at "Beer Can Island," it was not littered with beer cans, as its name suggested, but

rather with kayaks.

At this point, we beached our kayaks and took a 20-minute break to enjoy nature and wade in the surrounding water.

We even saw a few fish become lunch for a voracious predator as others jumped out of the water to



flee their foe.

"That was the first time I deviated from the original trail to Oleta. I think I'm going to incorporate that into my program because I had a lot of positive feedback," Torrey said.

Leaving the island felt bittersweet as our relaxing trip and upper-body workout came to an end.

Our journey back to campus, though, was



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

BRINGING UP THE REAR: Student kayakers navigate the Oleta Park trail during an outing last month. The Kayakers departed from the Biscayne Bay ultimately arriving at "Beer Can Island."

much easier with the wind at our backs and well worth our sunburns. Torrey, with two years experience leading the kayak expeditions, noted, "Today was awesome. Out of ten people, four to five have never kayaked before so they come away with the positive experience."

The next Kayak Club event will take place at noon on April 11. The club will set another benchmark

by kayaking to the Historic Blue Marlin Fish House, an outdoor restaurant in Oleta Park.

Those attending should bring drinking water, sunscreen, shorts and sandals, and especially their sense of adventure.

"We're surrounded by the beautiful Biscayne Bay and not every school has the pleasure of being able to kayak at any time of the day," said Torrey.

THE BEACON | Editorial

Financial hardship poses unique challenge for new administrations

After a week of heavy, and sometimes contentious campaigning, the SGA elections finally came to a close last week with the crowning of Arthur “A.J.” Meyer and Ana Silva as SGC-UP and SGC-BBC president respectively.

The current administrations from both campuses leave with a record of several notable accomplishments. The outgoing SGC-UP council, headed by Marbely Hernandez and Meyer, can boast that they were the architects of a new SGC-UP constitution which passed with overwhelming student support. They successfully implemented the Panther Tram service, though it was a significantly scaled back version than the one they had initially proposed.

The Hernandez administration, Meyer especially, was also a strong advocate for the partnership with Athletics which included the use of several athletic venues for on-campus events, but also a controversial skybox. Hernandez and her staff also helped implement on-line voting for SGA elections, a move which no doubt increased voter turnout.

These initiatives, constitutional changes in particular, are significant and will have lasting effects on both the structure of SGA and future generations of FIU students. For this, President Hernandez and her surrogates can take much pride.

Across the county, the SGC-BBC administration of Katiana Saintable was marked by several environmental initiatives aimed at the “greening” of the campus. Saintable was instrumental in pushing for the installation of water conserving shower heads at the Bay Vista Housing as well as spearheading the “Day at the Bay” initiative in which students volunteered to clean up the campus.

SGC-BBC was also steadfast in their opposition to the SGC-BBC skybox, an aspect of the athletics partnership that *The Beacon* strongly opposed. However, the Saintable administration did fail to live up to one campaign promise: the opening of a new entrance to the campus on N.E. 135 St

which previous administrations also failed to accomplish.

Both Saintable and Hernandez leave their respective governing councils with a number of challenges. The 2008-2009 year is shaping up to be a year of steep budget cuts as the state government seems poised to cut around \$2 billion from the education budget. These cuts are likely to hit FIU hard. The A&S fees that comprise the SGA budget will be affected directly along with most departments will have to sacrifice many resources, possibly even faculty.

The budget cuts will create new areas of need and SGA will be forced to address those needs. It is for this reason that both administrations must take great care to ensure that students’ fee money is spent wisely.

Meyer and LaPointe have proposed many new, exciting programs; an FIU television station and the expansion of the Panther Tram service among them. However, in this time of unprecedented financial turmoil, perhaps a more modest approach is best. Meyer and LaPointe should focus on maintaining and improving the current programs to help better suit the needs of students during this difficult time.

They should also pay particular attention to funding scholarship programs for students, as they will need them now more than ever. They has expressed a desire to expand such programs and *The Beacon* hopes he follows through.

At the Bay, the new SGC-BBC council should continue their eco-friendly efforts. Silva must also make it a priority to improve student involvement as well as continue to sponsoring lecture series’ featuring prominent guests to increase the campus’ visibility.

This year, as in every year, SGA faces unique challenges, which it must overcome. *The Beacon* wishes the new leadership the best in their attempts to meet those challenges and hopes that this time next year the school, and the overall college experience at FIU, will have improved due to their efforts.

RIPENED WARFARE



COURTESY/WWW.MOOSEJAWCOOP.COM

TERROR FOR SALE: Bananas bought at supermarket produce sections may be supporting guerilla war.

Bananas paying for protection

MATTHEW RUCKMAN
Contributing Writer

Unscrupulous banana merchandising is killing people, albeit indirectly.

Chiquita Brands International, the leading producer of banana and banana related products, was recently fined \$25 million for “protection payments” given to a Columbian right-wing paramilitary group.

The bananas that helped to pay off this group are the same bananas students happily use for many reasons, including use as potassium supplements.

In mid-March Chiquita, formerly United Fruits, admitted to paying \$1.7 million between 1997 and 2004, according to *The Associated Press*, on March 15 to the United Self-Defense Forces of Columbia – more widely known by the acronym AUC, in exchange for the group’s assurance of stability in the heavily contested area surrounding its most productive banana fields.

The maxim “fair is foul, and foul is fair,” holds true for companies like Chiquita because “protection payments” are usually just considered another business expense by multinationals operating in these less-than-stable countries.

Chiquita’s problem lies in the fact that the AUC has been recognized as a “terrorist organization” since September 2001 by the United States government; not exactly an endearing quality in the global climate we live in.

For those not familiar with the practices of the AUC, according to the Columbian National Police, in the first 10 months of 2000, the AUC conducted 804 assassinations, 203 kidnappings

and 75 massacres with 507 victims, in documents obtained on the United States Department of Justice Web site: www.usdoj.gov/

The AUC claims the victims were mostly guerrillas or their sympathizers.

Based on this, it’s not easy to relate with Chiquita’s argument that it was just protecting its assets in hiring the AUC, mainly because if you do, you’ll probably be assassinated or kidnapped.

It is not easy to understand why supermarkets, including Florida-based Publix – a primary local food dispensary – and other distributors, would sell such a

zones.

If Chiquita imitated this system it would be able to assure its consumers that the bananas they are peeling are not ‘blood bananas.’

To make this happen, Chiquita would obviously need to vacate the contentious zones of Columbia where paramilitaries, guerrillas and hungry gorillas threaten the banana crop.

Until something like this happens, I see no reason why retailers and consumers should continue sponsoring terrorism via delicious bananas.

There are many alternatives, even if they are more expen-

“ Protection payments are usually just considered another business expense by multinationals operating in less-than-stable countries. ”

company’s produce, given the large Columbian population in the state.

The implicit criminality of it all should also raise moral concerns for the companies profiting from the sale of the main ingredient of banana splits.

There are few ways that I see that Chiquita can restore the trust placed in its product.

Put in place a process similar to the Kimberly Process in West Africa for conflict diamonds.

This proces functions through a series of industry intermediaries that check, at specific intervals, for tampering, ensuring that diamonds passed from supplier to retailer are not from conflict

sive.

Companies like Dole or Del Monte, relatively speaking, have clean hands compared to Chiquita, along with more comical mascots – Bobby Banana, anyone?

Chiquita Brands International, pushed by falling profits and freshly emerged from bankruptcy, lowered itself to employing known terrorists to make up the difference as they have been profitless since 2005.

So Chiquita is already paying the price for its arrant selection of banana henchmen and maybe we, as consumers, just need to watch as it continually regurgitates on its own banana issue.

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor can be sent to eric.feldman@fiusm.com. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words and include the writer’s full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. *The Beacon* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints.

RUNNING FREE

K-Swiss sponsors event showcasing new sport

CHARLIE GRAU
Editor in Chief

Students at University Park had a chance to display their vertical leaps through a Free Running and Parkour obstacle course March 31 on the lawn behind the Graham Center Atrium.

As part of its nationwide college tour, footwear company K-Swiss set up a 60 feet by 60 feet obstacle course interlaced with 18 feet of scaffolding that allowed students to learn some Free Running and *Parkour* moves.

Those who participated in the event also got to try a pair of K-Swiss Ariake sneakers that are designed for the sport.

Parkour, which was first developed in the late 1980s in France by David

Belle, is the art of moving through one's environment using only the body and your surroundings to propel yourself.

Free Running is more expressive and creative, with moves such as acrobatics, flips and spins added for flair and creativity.

Mark "M2" Toorock, who owns Primal Fitness, a Free Running gym, in Washington D.C. brought his crew, The Tribe, to show students some moves.

"Everyone is hearing about [Running and *Parkour*] but nobody is showing it to them," Tribe member Michael "Frosti" Zernow said.

"We're trying to show a positive image of Running and *Parkour* and not just the big tricks.

We want to show people that they need to work their way up with this just like anything else."

HOW THEY GOT STARTED

Toorock became hooked on *Parkour* in London five years ago when he saw Belle in action.

"I saw someone who was really pushing the edge of human potential and I was like, look at what this person can do, and it's amazing. It's unbelievable yet he's still human. I knew there was some path I can get on to learn these movements," Toorock said.

Now Toorock has been credited with helping popularize the sport in the United States.

In Miami, Noah Gonzalez, Derek Klein

and Adrian Gonzalez formed their own crew, MiaPK.

"We're trying to train and show people how to exercise

their mind and body," said Gonzalez, an FIU alum. "We also want to train people what not to do and how to move, and train their body."

Gonzalez and the rest of the MiaPK crew train where ever they can and can even be seen at University Park scaling the Gold and Blue Garage or jumping off walls.

"We train mainly at FIU, but we train wherever else we can. The environment is our training ground," MiaPK member and FIU alum Cheng Padilla said.

THE BENEFITS

For many of the free runners, the sport is more than an adrenaline rush for them; it allows them to see everyday things in a new light - or jump.

"Every day, they're building new buildings and making new stairways

FREE RUNNING, page 8



PHOTOS BY: VICTORIA LYNCH / THE BEACON



Fabulous speaks out about college tour, future plans

RYAN ABBEY
Staff Writer

University Park is currently in UProar, an exciting week to help students de-stress from the coming of finals, put together by the Student Programming Council. To cap the weeks of events off is a concert featuring alternative rock band OneRepublic teaming up with multiplatinum rap artist Fabolous on April 10. *The Beacon* had an exclusive interview with Fabolous to discuss the concert tour and his future:

The Beacon: Fab, with all the new acts coming up, how do you stay relevant?

Fabulous: What I try to do is keep an open vibe [and] switch up the records I do. At the same time, I know what records work for me also. I don't stray from the tracks that have worked for me. I stay true to myself.

The Beacon: What is it about a track that makes you say, "I need to be on that?"

Fabulous: It's the music, really. I'm a big fan of the music and I know what sounds great to me, and I try to work with that. That's how I find direction with the track. The reaction from my friends or other people that listen to the music helps me too.

The Beacon: You know, I've been talking to a lot of people about this concert and FIU is pretty hyped about it. How did it come together?

Fabulous: It came to me and I thought it was a pretty good thing because it has a different feel than the average tour, being a college tour toward the end of the year.

Also, the fusion of OneRepublic and myself where I'm rap and they're more of an alternative rock, or pop-rock, whatever you want to call it, I think that's cool. It brings together different listeners who might not be familiar with the other's work and gives them a chance to enjoy both.

The Beacon: About that fusion - do you think you and OneRepublic might do a set together?

Fabulous: That would actually be hot. I haven't met the guys as of yet, but it should be interesting.

The Beacon: The name of the tour is the "Crocs Next Step Tour." Fab, do you own a pair of Crocs?

Fabulous: I do not own a pair of Crocs. It's the funniest thing, though. I was playing poker and one of the guys next to me had a pair on and it said Crocs, and I was like 'Oh s---.' They're bigger than I thought they were. Now everywhere I go, I can't walk without seeing a pair of Crocs.

The Beacon: Yeah, they're everywhere, man. After this, what's next for Fabolous?

Fabulous: I'm going to be working on the album and my clothing line will be having a big launch in the fall. Also, we're working on a compilation album with my crew, so that should be out by the end of this year or 2009.

The Beacon: What do you think of what's going on with Britney Spears?

Fabulous: Of course I haven't lived in Britney's shoes but I would just let her know that people are praying for her, supporting her. I'm coming from that same space, knowing the pressures of being in the public eye- maybe not at the level of a Britney Spears, but sometimes that support is enough to help somebody out.

The Beacon: Well Fab, I just want to give you an opportunity to give a message to the Golden

Panthers.

Fabulous: I definitely appreciate that support, thank you. Keep looking out for that new material and hopefully everyone will enjoy the show.

The Beacon: I know finals are coming soon so everyone is going to want to get off of that for a minute.

Fabulous: Oh yeah man, we're going to get some of that stress out.

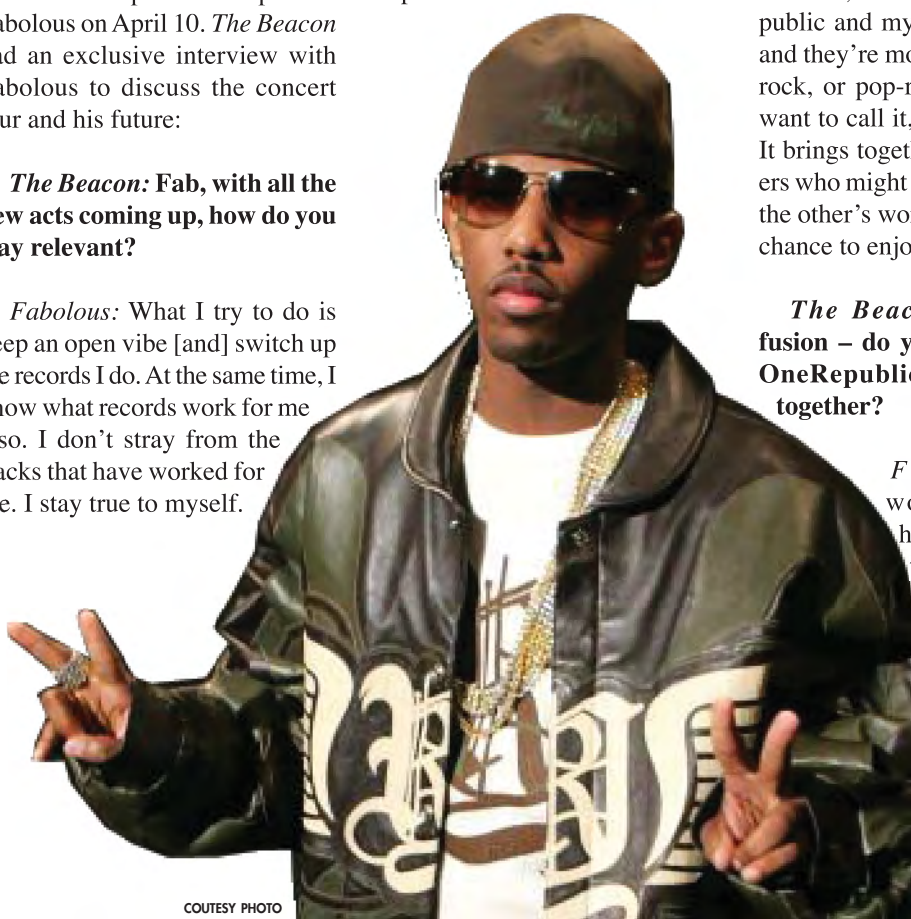
F.A.B.O.L.O.U.S

Fabulous will be performing with OneRepublic at University Park

When:
April 10 at 8 p.m

Where:
Soccer Field

Tickets can be picked up in GC 2240 in the Campus Life office



COURTESY PHOTO

REVIEWS (YOU CAN USE)

MUSIC

R.E.M.

Band fails to return to past levels of greatness

CHRIS TOWERS

Asst. News Director

R.E.M. has reached a very interesting place. Following a critically panned album, "Around the Sun," the band has reached a place that is generally reserved for aging rockers and songwriters: praise when they release an album that isn't terrible.

It isn't quite the return to form it will likely be labeled as by most critics, but it is at least a conscious attempt by the band to return to the sound that made them one of the most important and popular bands of their time.

Take the opening track, "Living Well is the Best Revenge." It features that same driving bass and punchy guitar tones that made songs like "What's the Frequency, Kenneth?" and "Stand" some of the most popular rock singles of the '90s.

What is interesting about R.E.M.'s critical reputation is that it usually takes a lot longer for bands to reach the point R.E.M. has.

Paul McCartney and Bob Dylan spent most of the '80s being panned by critics before finally regaining their reputations in their '50s and '60s.

While R.E.M. isn't a young band, contemporaries U2 are still making music that is relevant and popular.



COURTESY PHOTO

All aside, the operative phrase when discussing this album has to be "not terrible."

It is doubtful R.E.M. will ever be able to match the critical or commercial success of late '80s and '90s output, but it is nice a return to making the pop-rock they are best at.

Lead single "Supernatural Superserious" is classic R.E.M., with lead singer Michael Stipe's vocals right up front in the mix and Mike Mills' familiar backing vocals echoing Stipe during the chorus.

R.E.M., page 7

GAME

Alchemy

Puzzle addicts should enjoy PopCap Games' fix



F.R.E.E

For Ridiculously Exciting Entertainment

ASHLYN TOLEDO

Playing with your chemistry set wasn't always fun. After a while, you start to see grass and tree bark for what they really are – boring. Here to breathe new life into the chemist in all of us is PopCap Games' "Alchemy," a game that embraces humanity's love of science, magic and gold.

"Alchemy" is a free online puzzle/board game in which the player must turn each square on the board into gold.

To do this, the player must place a "rune" in each square. Runes come up at random and must be placed before you can go to the next. To place a rune, it must be touching a square with a rune in it that is of the same color or shape.

Complete a line to clear the runes from it, thus leaving empty gold squares that can be filled with new runes for the completion of more rows. Once every square is gold, the level is

completed and you are ranked and sent to the next.

If you get stuck and can't place a rune, you can discard it, but three discarded runes in a row is game over.

You can select a skill level between one and three with each degree adding more shapes and colors for those who want a bit more challenge.

On the downside, the free version of this game is plagued with advertisements between levels.

If you really enjoy "Alchemy," you can purchase the full version of the game for \$14.95 and play offline with full screen viewing, more levels, better graphics and, best of all, no advertisements. Also, the full version enables you to save your high score and adds mystery gems to the mix.

"Alchemy" is a dangerously addictive puzzle game that can keep you entertained for hours.

It's a game that's all about science and magic without actually incorporating either of the two - a wonderful showcase of irony at its best.

If you love puzzle games and are longing for something besides the "Tetris" rip-offs, give "Alchemy" a try. Brew up a storm at www.popcap.com/games/free/alchemy.

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Free Running conditions body

FREE RUNNING, page 6

and railways,” Zernow said.

“Instead of seeing it as something else I need to deal with or something that’s going to get in your way, this is something I can try and experience in a new way that no one else can.”

Zernow said that the sport doesn’t just help people learn how to get through their environment quickly, but it also helps people understand their body and control it better.

The Chicago native said that before he got into free running, he was really clumsy.

“The other day I was walking down the stairs and there was some garbage and I slipped. Instead of falling on my face, I was able to catch myself,” Zernow said.

Others use the sport as a way of staying in shape. Often, people don’t even realize the muscles they are working out when they are jumping over buildings and walls.

“It’s like play. People were meant to run, jump, climb and run.

“Mark “M2” Toorock, owner of Primal Fitness, a Free Running gym.

It’s like play. People were meant to run jump climb and run. It’s only in today’s world of office buildings of chairs and desk that people don’t get exercise

It’s only in today’s world of office buildings, chairs and desks that people don’t get exercise,” Toorock said.

“Three hundred years ago before there were cars and all that stuff, people would walk everywhere, climb up things, people would hold and carry heavy things.

Nobody would think of that as exercise. Exercise is just the stuff you’re suppose to do in a regular day.”

THE SAFETY

One of the major points that The Tribe and MiaPK made during demonstrations was the need for many people to learn the basics before they attempt some of the major jumps that can

be seen on YouTube.

“You see a lot of YouTube videos and some of those people are doing stuff because they’re really good and some people are doing stuff because they’re really stupid.

And you never know which you’re watching so you have to be careful what you watch,” Toorock said.

For more information on the sport of Free Running and Parkour, visit www.americanparkour.com or www.miapk.com

Charlie Grau can be reached at charlie.grau@fiusm.com



New R.E.M. album gains acclaim for not being terrible

R.E.M., page 7

This could have been a single in the early ‘90s. It would be easy to call this a return to form, but a more accurate thing to say is that it represents a band realizing that they did something really well, and there isn’t a lot of shame in retracing those footsteps. It also has to be said that where these songs truly shine is in a live format, as R.E.M. still remains one of the best live bands in

the country.

During the band’s Langerado performance in March, they were able to seamlessly integrate new songs with old ones without the usual awkwardness that comes with playing new songs in a live setting.

One of the songs played live was “Houston,” a song about those displaced by Hurricane Katrina and the government’s response to their displacement. It opens up with the strong condemnation, “If the storm doesn’t

kill me, the government will,” and moves on to the narrator attempting to make the best of his new surroundings. This is, unsurprisingly, one of the more somber songs on the record, with a burst of sonic squall adding an urgency to the song.

There are those who might say this is an “easy” record for REM to make, and that may be so, but only because they are finally getting back to what they did so well originally.

It might be sonically easy, but there’s something to be said for a band swallowing their pride and recognizing both the limitations of their sound and what makes that sound great.

If for no other reason than this, “Accelerate” deserves praise. It is the sound of a band well into their third decade becoming comfortable with both their legacy and future.

Activism Awareness weekend teaches how to make a difference

KASSANDRA POOL
Staff Writer

There won’t be any picket signs or angry students protesting when the first annual Activism Awareness weekend comes rolling around.

The Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. will be hosting a series of events over the course of three days, taking place from April 11-13

Veronica Bernace, academic chair and president of Students United for Palestinian Rights (SUPER), is the overall director for the Activism Awareness weekend and wants to get more students involved to fight for what they believe is wrong.

“I would like to see the activism community grow and mature at FIU and open peoples’ eyes to show that they can make a difference,” Bernace said.

With the intention of dispelling myths, the first event will begin with a discussion forum in Graham Center room 140 at 3 p.m.

Upperclassman Nathaly Charria and graduate student Muhammed Malik will be defining activism and what it entails.

“An activist is not somebody who fits a particular physical appearance, but activism is something that each individual does as an act against social injustice,” Charria said.

“Nathaly Charria, upperclassman

An activist is not somebody who fits a particular physical appearance, but activism is something that each individual does as an act against social injustice.

“An activist is an academic, a regular member of a community, an organizer; everybody is depending on your position and what you bring up.”

Joining them will be Adjunct Professor of Sociology Abdolrahim Javadzadeh, whose goal is to convey the message that “I am not interested in politics” is the same as saying “I don’t care if I lose my democratic rights.”

The discussion’s purpose is to allow students to ask questions and to stress the importance of minorities’ involvement in community affairs.

“I feel that events such as this one are a necessary part of university life,” Javadzadeh said. “I believe that people who have an opportunity to get a higher education owe it to the rest of their community to bring awareness, in the same way Prometheus brought fire to the people.”

Following the discussion forum will be a concert featuring hip-hop bands Parable and Highrise at 8 p.m. in Gracie’s Grill.

The bands are local artists and

activists as well.

On April 12, LTA will host a “Stepping” exhibition in the Green Library, room 100 at 7 p.m. Although entrance is free, donations are welcome.

All proceeds from every event will be donated to the Save Darfur Coalition, a non-profit organization working to end genocide and violence against civilians.

The weekend will close on Sunday with the screening of the film “Walk out,” the 2007 winner of the American Latino Media Arts Awards.

The film was released in 2006 and is based on the true story of student activist and Mexican-American Paula Crisostomo. Crisostomo, along with 10,000 other students in east Los Angeles, fought for better educational conditions and protested against anti-Mexican educational bias. The film will be shown at 7 p.m. in GC 140.

All events are free and open to students. For more information, contact Bernace at vbern001@fiu.edu.



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COURTESY PHOTO/FIU SPORTS

OVERLOOKED: Freshman Trudi Maree broke two school records in her FIU debut.

Many hidden gems, stories throughout sports season



With every Spring sport more than halfway through its respective season, each team still has a chapter left to complete the 2007-08 storybook.

Three chapters of the 2008 Spring semester have been stapled together and unread by FIU fans.

These hidden chapters chronicle FIU Athletics' untold stories, including the most skilled, unheralded athletes of 2008.

Here are the best kept secrets of the 2008 spring semester:

TRACK STAR

If fans were asked who the best athlete was so far this year, they would probably search the football or baseball depth charts.

In order to find the year's best athlete would have to search the names of players on a much less recognized team: the men's track and field team.

Senior Ronald Forbes became FIU's only All-American Athlete this semester.

He holds the school record of 7.28 seconds in the 55-meter hurdle and has finished among the leaders of every Sun Belt Conference meet all season.

He received third place at the NCAA finals in the 60-meter hurdle with a time of 7.74 seconds. He was also commemorated with a plaque for his All-American honors at the FIU baseball game against the University of Miami on April 3.

Sadly enough, more

people have seen him at the baseball game receiving and holding a plaque than blazing past the finish line and setting school records.

It'd be interesting to see how Forbes would fare in a football uniform as a wide receiver; he'd most likely get more recognition as a football player on a losing team than as an All-American track and field athlete.

TEAM EFFORT

Although a 9-6 record pales in comparison to the volleyball team's 19-8 season, the women's tennis team has faced stiffer competition than its volleyball counterparts.

This team has faced five top-20 teams this season and is currently ranked No. 39 in the nation. The women's tennis team takes the spot as the best program in 2007-08.

The one-win football team obviously can't claim this honor, nor can the below .500 baseball and softball teams.

The team also has ranked singles players, No. 91 Liset Brito and No. 112 Egle Petrauskaitė.

Together, however, the duo was ranked the No. 17 in the country.

It wasn't a smooth ride to start off the season, as the team lost its first two games for a combined score of 13-1.

Since then, the team has gone 9-4, and they've defeated the No. 34 and No. 38 ranked teams.

The tennis team is the lone-ranked team in FIU Athletics and is currently on a four-game winning streak.

Despite being statistically the best team at FIU, the tennis team is on the same

boat as Ronald Forbes.

They are not widely known around the University, just in the circle of athletics department.

SWIMMING RECORDS

The trials for the 2008 South African Olympic team featured an FIU representative, freshman swimmer Trudi Maree.

She was already a member of the 2007 South African National Team when she helped propel the team to a gold medal at the All-Africa Games.

She transferred that experience to FIU and it didn't take long for Maree to get used to competing for the FIU swimming team.

The freshman set school records during her FIU debut in the 500 and 100-yard freestyle competition.

One month later, she outdid herself by breaking her own school record in the 50-yard freestyle.

Throughout the course of the season, Maree has set the 100-yard freestyle record four times.

Maree has more accolades than any other athlete, even more than Ronald Forbes, but she is not the best athlete at FIU yet due to the national competition she needs to keep up to par with.

However, she has more potential than any other FIU athlete, because she has more accolades and records this year, and she is only a freshman. It is baffling how such a high-caliber student-athlete could be so concealed so well.

There is one common denominator the unknown athletes and teams share: they come from college sports that are not football, basketball or baseball.

SERVED



JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON FILE PHOTO

HONORED: Egle Petrauskaitė has been named the Sun Belt Conference's Women's Player of the Week in voting of the league's coaches and information directors.

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SOFTBALL NOTEBOOK

Momentum carries team into conference show-down

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Editor

Coming off a pair of walk-off, emotional victories against Florida Gulf Coast, the Golden Panthers (22-23) will begin a three-game series against Florida Atlantic (25-8) on April 5th at University Park.

As much as coach Beth McClendon would like to let her team regroup, they cannot avoid the challenge the Owls will be.

“We would like to take a day off, but we just can’t,” McClendon said. FIU will be facing an FAU team with the most overall wins in the Sun Belt Conference and also the best conference record.

Against FAU, the Golden Panthers will have to prep for a balanced offensive attack that is in the middle of the conference statistically, but has scored timely runs when

it has been needed.

The Owls hit .254 on the season but are second in the conference in stolen bases as they have robbed a base 44 times in 48 chances.

FAU has managed to score the third most runs in the Sun Belt due to a consistent effort all season long.

The Golden Panthers have a team earned run average of 3.82, which is last in the conference, and the Owls will look to feast on it.

The talented Owls also get it done on the mound as they are third in the conference in team ERA.

The well-rounded FAU has a team ERA of 2.66, despite tossing a league-leading 302.1 innings in the year.

The Owls will try to cool FIU’s bats, who are not far behind Louisiana-Lafayette for second in the Sun Belt, hitting .291.

With a series win, FIU



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON FILE PHOTO

MAKING A PLAY: Monique White looks to get an out during a recent game. The team has won seven of its last ten.

can get comfortable down the stretch knowing that they can defeat a top-tier conference foe.

LANDAU’S BIG DAY

Junior Jessica Landau had two game-winning hits in the series against FGCU. With all of the hits she has had on the season, none were as important as those two, which have

given the team new life.

Landau had nine RBI over the two-game series and two home runs to lift her team.

It was the first time this season that a Golden Panther had walk-off hits on back-to-back nights. If the team continues to win more consistently, Landau’s big series will be looked at as a turning point.

SUN BELT SOFTBALL STANDING

TEAM	CONF	OVERALL	PCT
Florida Atlantic	7-2	25-18	.581
FIU	6-2	22-23	.488
Troy	8-4	23-15	.605
ULL	3-2	23-10	.697
North Texas	7-5	17-21	.447
Middle Tennessee	5-6	12-17	.414
South Alabama	3-6	17-17	.500
ULM	2-7	10-22	.312
Western Kentucky	2-9	14-20	.412

*All records up to date as of April 3

SUN BELT LEADERS

INDIVIDUAL BATTING

Min	2.0	AB	G	Avg	AB	R	H	RBI	2B	3B	HR	BB
Tankersley	ULL	31	.434	99	28	43	36	5	2	11	16	
Smith	ULL	29	.420	69	22	29	3	1	0	0	10	
White	FIU	43	.409	132	35	54	32	12	0	10	18	
Cantler	NT	37	.387	119	15	46	30	12	1	3	12	



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SECOND CHANCE



FERNANDO GARCIA/THE BEACON FILE PHOTO

CALLED UP: Freshman Steven Cabas has been selected to the US U-20 Men's National Team for the second time. Cabas scored five goals last season for FIU.

Defense has to keep up with powerful offense

SOFTBALL, page 12

standout catcher Tabitha Embry.

Third baseman Jessica Landau tied a program record with six RBI against FGCU.

In the second game against the Eagles, she wrapped up the game with a walk-off three run home run.

Basically, opposing

Defensively, however, they need to get some things together.

Consider the formidable .291 team batting average. It can be compromised when opponents are allowed to hit .300.

White is great offensively, but she can be just as helpful to the other team when she takes her position out on the field.

She is the only player

are against Sun Belt Conference opponents.

Solid defense throughout is the only way these Golden Panthers can create some separation between them and the other teams in this highly competitive conference.

Not even spectacular defense is necessary, just enough to take pressure off pitchers Kasey Barrett and Holly Satterfield.

“ The offensive identity for the Golden Panthers is pretty clear. They can and will out-hit you, and they also have the players that will continuously drive in runs, that's why they have a team batting average of .291. ”

pitchers have to pick their poison when facing the heart of the order.

If outfielder Kim Rodriguez doesn't deliver, short-stop Monique White will.

If for some reason she doesn't come through, don't sleep on Landau, Falk or first baseman Carolina Rojas.

in the Sun Belt Conference to lead her team in both batting average (.403) and errors (21).

There is more than enough time for the team to address its defensive issues, but time is of the essence.

The team's 12 remaining regular season games

The offense will take care of the rest since they are showing no signs of slowing down.

This sports writer is not an expert but he can see that once the kinks are effectively worked out, the women's softball team can and will be a power in the Sun Belt Conference.



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VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON



SENIOR MONIQUE WHITE
.403 SEASON AVERAGE

JUNIOR JESSICA LANDAU
SIX HOME RUNS

JUNIOR KIM RODRIGUEZ
14 HOME RUNS

SOPHOMORE KASEY BARRETT
LEADS TEAM IN ERA

CATCHING FIRE

Offensive prowess puts team near top of conference

RYAN ABBEY
Staff Writer

For FIU, losing five out of the first six games of the season with four shutouts thrown in the mix could be a discouraging way to start a season.

An offensive surge and winning seven of their last 10 games has those same Golden Panthers fighting for the top spot in the Sun Belt Conference.

The team that showed up against the Mean Green of North Texas on March 29 was not one that was moping over one of its worst outings of the season against UCF; it was a team that was resilient throughout the first game and infielder Jasmine Parra came within about five feet

from tying the game.

No matter what happened, FIU gave North Texas a fight.

In the second game, they took the fight to them coming from behind to score 11 runs.

It was the sixth time the Golden Panthers scored 10 or more runs in a game this season.

After picking up two more wins against Florida Gulf Coast, it became official, the team had picked up some steam.

They had also become a viable alternative to the baseball team, who embarrassed themselves by getting pounded 13-2 by the University of Miami.

That match reminded me of a scene in "Austin Powers: Goldmember" when

henchmen tried to attack Austin's father.

One of them ran up to him, and he said, "You haven't got a chance. Why don't you just lie down?"

That would have made perfect sense for them.

Besides the loss, what got to me more was that there were 1,786 people at the most one-sided home baseball match of the season, while not too far away the softball team was slugging it out against FGCU to a crowd no bigger than 150.

Is there something wrong with this picture? This sports writer thinks so.

Now, I am not saying no one should attend a home baseball game, but there should be adequate support from the FIU faithful for the softball team.

There is nothing better than watching a team bring everything together as they find their identity.

The offensive identity for the Golden Panthers is pretty clear.

They can and will out-hit you, and they also have the players that will continuously drive in runs.

That's why they have a team batting average of .291.

That's also why the top five hitters based on average have been walked a combined 72 times this season.

Outfielder Ashley Falk recently moved into a tie for third place on the program all-time home run list with former

BASEBALL NOTEBOOK

Team finds bright spot in bullpen; starting pitcher's struggles continue

LUCA MESSINA
Staff Writer

With the FIU bullpen in a state of flux, and the starting pitching mediocre at best, senior Eric Horstmann's impressive relief duties have opened the eyes of both the coaching staff and the fans of the program.

Horstmann's two most memorable performances this season came in relief against Jacksonville University on March 18 and last March 31 against the University of Louisiana-Lafayette.

Against Jacksonville, Eric came in relief for freshman starter Jared Schlehuber in the first

inning and pitched a career-high eight innings.

He retired 24 of the final 26 batters he faced and notched a career-high seven strikeouts.

It was the first win of the season for him, as his only mistake was an RBI triple in the second inning.

He replaced senior starter Steven Stewart on March 30 at ULL during the 3rd inning and won his second decision after pitching 6.2 innings of scoreless baseball.

He allowed only four hits, struck out one batter and walked none. "I've come into situations where we've been losing, but when you come in, you just come in to attack,"

Horstmann said. "I just try to minimize the damage and I don't know ... It's just that every time I go out there I try my best."

Horstmann currently has a 2.89 ERA, the lowest of any Golden Panther pitcher. He has pitched 28 innings, allowed 32 hits and 15 runs. He has struck out 15 batters and walked eight.

More importantly, with senior starter Steven Stewart struggling with an 0-3 record and a 7.58 ERA, Horstmann realistically could be a regular weekend starter if he keeps it up.

"My goal since it's my last year is to go out there and make the best of everything. I try to

enjoy every moment I get out there," Horstmann said. "If I make it to the rotation, I make it to the rotation. That's fine. I just love playing the game." He hopes to have more of an impact for the remaining games of the season. "I enjoy starting and I enjoy the atmosphere at the beginning of the game, but I also enjoy coming in when the game is real intense," Horstmann said. "I like having the ball in my hand when the game is on the line."

Up next, FIU takes its 5-4 conference record to Florida Gulf Coast on April 9. FIU lost to Florida Gulf Coast 13-1 on February 27.



COURTESY PHOTO/FIU SPORTS

HEAT: Senior pitcher Eric Horstmann leads the Golden Panthers in ERA at 2.89.