

A LEGEND ENDS

Rascal House closes in April

AT THE BAY

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STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Candidates barred from UP election

BEN F. BADGER JR.
Asst. News Director

A year before campaigning was to begin for the Student Government Council positions at University Park, Johnny Betancourt and Rachel Olmedo were disqualified for election code violations. The two were planning to run for president and vice president.

According to a letter signed by Bill Buchanan, SGC-UP judicial chair and Carlos Ordoqui, SGC-UP elections commissioner, a Facebook page administered by the candidates was the source of the violations which ultimately resulted in the disqualification.

The Facebook page asked for donations in the form of purchasing tickets for a fund-raising dinner, as well as direct donations that could be made through Pay Pal.

“Soliciting monetary donations was one of the main problems,” Ordoqui said. “It’s clearly stated in the Elections code that donations are only to be in forms of goods or services rendered.”

No funds were directly collected, but that doesn’t matter to Buchanan.

“That’s like saying I went into your house with a gun, but didn’t shoot you, so I didn’t break any laws,” Buchanan said in a meeting with Betancourt.

The Facebook page was open for anyone to view, but the event advertised was private and required approval to attend, according to Betancourt.

ELECTIONS page 2

WAR AVERTED



Martin Mejia/AP Photo

RELIEF: Supporters of Ecuador’s President Rafael Correa shout slogans as they watch his speech during the Rio Group Summit in the Dominican Republic on a T.V. screen in Quito, Friday, March 7, 2008.

Venezuela stuns; community rejoices

JAMIE RODRIGUEZ
Staff Writer

As business major Andres Gomez tries to start studying for his midterm exam, he can’t help but constantly check his laptop for the latest news.

“We have to be updated, it seems too good to be true,” he speaks in between sips of his energy drink.

The headlines in the newspapers around the world say tensions between his home country of Colombia, Ecuador and

Venezuela finally subsided after Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez promised to pull back troops deployed along the border with Colombia.

“Having such a tense diplomatic situation in our countries affects us students tremendously,” said Venezuelan-born Marly Garcia. “Being students at FIU, but even more in Miami, we are always connected to what goes on in our countries.”

The newly found optimism for the Latin FIU community came after Chavez had deployed

10 army battalions to the Colombian border in the wake of Colombia’s March 1 raid on a rebel camp inside Ecuador which killed one of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia’s (FARC) most important officials, prompting Quito and Caracas to suspend relations with Bogotá.

The three countries resolved the dispute at a Latin American summit in Santo Domingo earlier this month, with Colombia promising never to repeat such a raid again.

Chavez, who only days earlier

had been feeding the fires, intervened during the summit to ease regional tensions and set himself up as the agent of peace.

The reconciliation dissolved tensions between not only students from Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela but from other nations as well.

“It is definitely bad. War and conflict are always bad. But Colombia is our main ally in Latin America and we must support them now,” said engineering

VENEZUELA, page 2

Students still waiting for repairs at BBC’s Aquatic Center

SAMIR AHMED
Staff Writer

Benny Michel Smeds has been wanting to use the Biscayne Bay Campus Aquatic Center pool but he won’t be making a splash anytime soon – it’s still closed for repairs.

“I feel very disappointed that the pool is closed and I’ve been getting wrong answers from faculty as to when it would be ready. I’ve been waiting for over two semesters and I feel like I don’t want to wait anymore,” said Smeds, a 24-year-old junior from Helsinki, Finland.

According to Student Government Association Vice Pres-

ident Cassandra S. Andrade, the pool was not built underground, exposing pipes to the South Florida weather and salt water from the bay. Thus, the pipe works have eroded.

Andrade and the rest of SGA have had meetings since the Fall of 2007 with Rosa Jones, vice president of Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education, to determine the future of the Aquatic Center.

“The engineers who were involved in looking at the pool decided that draining the pool and refilling it when needed would be like putting a band-aid on the situation. They came to the conclusion that two million dollars would be

needed to renovate the Aquatic Center,” Andrade said.

Current budget cuts to FIU have delayed the renovation progress to the Aquatic Center, but Andrade was quick to mention that she knew the importance of the Aquatic Center for FIU.

“SGA just had a budget meeting and one of the top priorities was to have a functioning pool because lots of people use the pool in the community,” Andrade said.

James Wassenaar, executive director of Student Affairs, said the pool is expected to reopen Spring 2009.

POOL, page 4



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

HIGH AND DRY: Due to the erosion of the above ground piping, the pool at BBC’s Aquatic Center has been closed for over two semesters.

Buchanan: candidates “shot themselves in the foot”

ELECTIONS, page 1

“The event was a fund raiser that we were going to have in support of our campaign,” Olmedo said. “We were going to invite alumni from my sorority and Johnny’s fraternity, and also volunteers and those who wanted to help out. We were hoping to accept donations.”

The event was scheduled to take place March 20 in the FIJI House but was canceled due to venue scheduling conflicts according to Juanky Robaina, Betancourt’s campaign manager.

The letter informing Betancourt and Olmedo of their disqualification was hand delivered to Olmedo on March 19 after Betancourt could not be reached. It also detailed how the Elections Board considered the Facebook page and event to be acts of campaigning.

“When we received this decision we were a bit shocked,” Betancourt said. “The charges brought against us are so far-fetched.”

According to section XV of the Elections code, “campaigning prior to the designated starting dates,” may result in immediate disqualification.

The fact so many people could have potentially viewed the page made it violate the subsection stating “multiple violations of posting policy, as deemed by the Student Elections Board,” as grounds for disqualification.

However, Betancourt said the page was vague and the information on the page was only understandable to people who knew they were running and already supported them.

“I would have loved to see them run. I would have loved to see more people involved with elections,” Buchanan said.

“There is still a free and fair election between two very qualified parties, I wish there were still three, but [Betancourt and Olmedo] shot themselves in the foot.”

According to Buchanan, the only thing the Facebook page did not list was that Betancourt and

Olmedo were actually running for president and vice president, since they are the only positions in the SGC-UP that run together.

The page is no longer available for viewing.

Betancourt has filed an official appeal of the decision, stating that proper procedure was not followed in issuing the disqualifica-

notice was not necessary, and the disqualification was within the authority of the elections commissioner and judicial chair.

Betancourt also filed a complaint against Ordoqui, citing that his being a PIKE fraternity member has made him partial toward AJ Meyer, who is also running for SGC-UP president and a PIKE member.

“The only thing keeping us from running is this decision,” Betancourt said. “We are going to do everything in our power to get elected.”

The appeal by Betancourt was still being considered by Lunsford at the time of publication.

Visit www.fiusm.com to view disqualification letter, Facebook page administered by Betancourt and Olmedo, and for continuing developments of this story.

Ben Badger can be reached at Ben.Badger@fiusm.com

“ Omer Bill Buchanan, SGC-UP Judicial Chair

I would have loved to see them run. I would have loved to see more people involved with elections. There is still a free and fair election between two very qualified parties.

Olmedo were actually running for president and vice president. However, Buchanan argues that given the information listed on the page, anyone viewing it could only conclude Betancourt and Olmedo were running for presi-

tion. A major point of the appeal is Betancourt was not given 24 hour notice or a hearing for the disqualification.

But according to Buchanan and Ordoqui, given the nature of the code violations, a 24 hour

Community feels mixed emotions after summit

VENEZUELA, page 1

major Michael Cases.

1600-Miles away, former FIU student and now architecture major at Bogotá’s Universidad De Los Andes, Natalia Reyes agreed the diplomatic crisis took a toll on students not only in Miami but all across different nations.

“Having talked to my FIU friends in Miami and now being in [Bogotá] seeing

it happen, I can truthfully say that every student could not fully concentrate on school and was actually very nervous and anxious for a resolution,” Reyes said.

Despite the optimism shown by South American leaders at the summit, there are still many students who say the regional tension triggered by the cross-border incursion is expected to linger much longer as conflicts between these countries are deep-rooted.

“It’s not going to go away in reality,”

said Ecuadorian FIU sophomore Julian Dominguez. “It’s all for the press and public to calm down.”

Colombian President Alvaro Uribe has taken a tough stance against the rebels of the FARC, since he took office in 2002, labeling it as a “terrorist organization.” Colombia has since accused Ecuador and Venezuela of having financial ties to FARC and providing it with safe havens.

Universidad de Los Andes Psychology professor and Harvard graduate Maria

Larusso believes that such diplomatic tensions can have an academic effect on students in these countries involved.

“During [their] college years students always seek out to make a difference in some unique way. When it comes to your homeland or your cultural ties, this urge is stronger than ever whether you are a student in Quito, Miami or Caracas and it can take your mind off the tasks at hand,” Larusso said.

CORRECTIONS

In the issue dated March 24, 2008, the story titled “Fifth year of Iraq war brings protestors out”, incorrectly refers to Rebecca Lubin as Rose Lubin in one instance.

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

If you have an interest in writing, photography, or even grammar, don't be shy!



Stop by one of offices located in GC 210 and WUC 124 and fill out an application.

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Historic plane brings art, awareness to FIU

EVELYN DIAZ
Staff Writer

Ana Margarita Martinez's story started with the hopes of a better life in the United States. It ended with spies, an artist and an airplane donated to FIU.

"It was a shocking experience to say the least," Martinez said. "I can't begin to tell you what a traumatizing experience this was."

Martinez came to the U.S. after fleeing Cuba in 1966 with her mother and grandmother in order to have a chance at a life of freedom from the Cuban government. Despite escaping to the U.S., the Cuban government caught up with Martinez 30 years later.

After living in the states most of her life, Martinez met Juan Pablo Roque at her local church and fell in love. In 1995, after two years of dating, the two got married.

A year after their marriage, the truth came out — Roque was a spy for the Cuban government.

"I would never have imagined espionage," Martinez said.

Martinez discovered her husband was actually a spy after he went missing for three days.

"He told me that he was going on a business trip that weekend. He left at

approximately 3 a.m. on February 23, 1996. He told me he would return that Sunday, the 25th, but of course he did not," Martinez said. "The [Brothers to the Rescue] airplanes were shot down on Saturday, the 24th. On Monday, the 26th, my home was surrounded by international media and the FBI arrived as well."

One of the reporters advised Martinez to turn on the television.

During the coverage of the Brothers to the Rescue planes being shot down by Cuban MiGs, Martinez saw her husband exiting a *Cubana de Aviación* airplane, Cuba's largest airline, in Havana.

"I was already distraught because my husband had not returned from his alleged business trip as promised. At the beginning, I was in total denial and refused to believe that he was a spy and that four years of my life had been a farce. I believed that he must have been forced to return; that maybe they had used his children as leverage. I even thought that his life was in danger. After all, he was a former Cuban Air Force Major and a MiG pilot who had defected. I thought he'd be jailed or even condemned to death for treason," Martinez said.

After her husband's unveiling as a spy and being left in debt by him, Martinez took her problems to court and sued the Cuban government.

After two different rulings, Judge Alan Postman ordered the Cuban government to pay Martinez \$27.17 million for her pain and anguish as a victim of Roque's plot and schemed marriage.

Martinez was never paid directly by the Cuban government, but as fate would have it, she would eventually be compensated.

The U.S. government seized an Antonov An-2 biplane, which was stolen by a family of eight in Cuba, after they landed in Key West.

The plane was presented to the Monroe County Sheriff's Office to be auctioned off.

The auctioning was made possible due to the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002. According to *The Miami Herald*, the act specifies that people with judgments against a designated terrorist party — such as Iran, Iraq or Cuba — may move to keep the assets of any agency or instrumentality of that terrorist party.

The original plan was to turn all of the earnings from the auction over to Martinez.

Because her anger toward Fidel Castro was so strong, Martinez decided to bid on the plane herself to ensure the plane would never have the chance to be sent back to Cuba. She won the plane for herself at \$7,500.

"Seizing the Cuban airplane was a moral victory and a statement," Martinez said.

She later sold it to her lawyer.

"The airplane was expensive to maintain, there was a monthly charge for keeping it at a hangar. After nearly a year, my attorney, Scott W. Leeds, offered me \$2,500 for it. He wanted to move it to Miami and it was expensive to move. Since he was going to pay for the expenses, he wanted to own it first. He later donated it to the Cuban Monument for Freedom.

"I am on the board of that organization and we have since been actively looking for a permanent exhibit location for the AN-2," said Martinez.

The lawyer eventually sold it to Miami artist Xavier Cortada, who turned the plane into a work of



ANDY NEWMAN/AP PHOTO

IT'S SOLD: Ana Margarita Martinez inspects the cockpit of a Cubana Airlines Antonov 24 turboprop plane in June 2003, prior to the auction in which she bought the plane. It has since been turned into a work of art and donated to FIU.

art. Cortada painted half of the plane and left the other half in its original form. He then donated the plane to FIU with the intentions of informing FIU students and staff of the struggles facing Cubans today.

"The airplane is a symbol of freedom on one side and of oppression on the other. I can only hope that its history will create awareness of the Cuban situation: A corrupt government's continuous abuse of basic human rights and the dissidents' and opposition leaders' struggle for the freedom of the Cuban

people," said Martinez.

Martinez is pleased with the plane's fate.

"FIU is an ideal location to exhibit the symbolic artwork of Xavier Cortada, as well as to tell its story and the story of the Cuban people who desire and deserve their freedom," said Martinez.

According to Madeline Baro, assistant director of the Office of Media Relations, there are no updates on when the plane will be installed on the ceiling of the Primera Casa building at University Park Campus.

BEACON

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Florida history said to become new gourmet market, condos



Commentary
Bianca Roja
Contributing Writer

This April, a South Florida staple will shut its doors for good. The Rascal House, a New York style deli restaurant located at 17190 Collins Avenue, in Sunny Isles, has been a neighborhood favorite since it first opened in 1954. One of my own favorites, actually.

Nothing could be more comforting when battling a flu, than a bowl of their homemade matzo ball soup or eating from the ever-flowing basket of bialys - small bread pockets filled with onions - smothered with butter while waiting for a meal.

In the past you couldn't miss the Rascal House because of its mascot, the gigantic laughing face of a devilish child. But, when the restaurant shuts down in April, it has been rumored it will be remodeled into a gourmet market, Epicure, with a condominium built on top.

It is sad to see such an essential piece of South Florida history destroyed for more real estate development on the beach.



COURTESY PHOTO

END OF AN ICON: The flickering neon sign of the Rascal House is worn and rundown, past its prime and about to yield to new downtown development.

When it closes its doors, it will take with it its retro decor and waitress uniforms that have not been updated since its mid-century opening.

Although it's sad to say goodbye to its comforting dishes, the Rascal House has not been the perfect establishment. Over the past few years, I've lost my love for it because it slowly became a typical beach front restaurant - slow service and high prices.

At the end of the day, it's just a deli and as many of you can agree, the Rascal House wasn't offering

college student prices - I couldn't justify spending \$16 on a sandwich.

But on a recent dinner - a goodbye dinner - my server Keo, was funny and hospitable, making the wait for food enjoyable. My table was swimming with their signature free appetizers, like the aforementioned bialys joined by fresh pickles and coleslaw. And the Matzo Ball Soup? Something I will definitely miss.

Like FIU Chef Instructor Michael Moran put it, "This marks the end of an era in South Florida."

This was a place where the snowbirds, visitors to South Florida trying to escape their cold weather abodes, could find a piece of home and a mile high corned beef sandwich.

If you want to have a taste of this classic beach hang out, the Rascal House staff haven't put a final date on the establishment but they know it will close sometime between April 2 and 17.

You have less than two weeks before yet another South Florida landmark is destroyed in the name of development.

Pool opening pushed back to Spring 2009

POOL, page 1

Among the scheduled refurbishments are a new pool lining system, pool deck, filtration system and fixtures.

"The BBC pool is essential to our Student Recreation Program. [It] provides the University and the community with valuable resource for recreational, instructional and competitive swimming and is critical to our FIU Athletics program where we host NCAA women's swimming events and training," Wassenaar said in an e-mail interview. "The BBC pool is a unique student recreation asset which must be maintained so that it can serve our University community for another 20 years."

Currently the University is awaiting design documents and a final budget estimate, according to Wassenaar.

Elie Bardawil, associate director of Campus Recreation, said the money used for the Aquatic Center comes from the Activities and Services fee that is built into student tuition at FIU - not through the Athletic's fee.

"Last year we were given about \$215,000. We are grossly underfunded and, as a result, we need to have camps throughout the year to generate revenues," said Bardawil.

The current state of the Aquatic Center has not only made it difficult to keep students such

as Smeds happy, but it has made it harder for FIU's swimming team. Swimming activities are now scheduled at Miami Shores or at the Tamiami Pool, adjacent to the south side of University Park campus.

"It's been real hard not to have a pool of our own where we can just decide to meet on a given day. Since we are using a pool that belongs to the county, we have to accommodate our schedules around the schedules of the city and the other people that use the pool," said Noemi Zaharia, Head Women's Swimming & Diving Coach.

The pool, which opened in April of 1985, took 15 months to complete at a cost of \$1.3 million, according to *The Miami Herald*. The pool holds roughly 461, 250 gallons of water, which is about enough water to flush all the standard size toilets at Dolphins Stadium an estimated 192 times.

"The pool is a huge asset to FIU with its recreational uses. We have after school programs and high schools that hold water polo meetings here. It really bolsters FIU's name in the community," Bardawil said.

Despite multiple attempts to contact Sylvia Berenguer, director of Minor Construction Projects at FIU, and Rosa Jones, vice president of Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education, both were unavailable for comment.

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UPSETTING MOTHER NATURE

Endangered Species Act is not enough anymore

JOSEPH MARHEE
Opinion Editor

In 2001, The Lake Sammamish kokanee, a type of salmon, went extinct. Later that year, Columbia's Basin Pygmy went extinct, both of these species were denied "emergency listing" on the endangered species list, which resulted in their extinction.

In the past seven years President George W. Bush has only added 59 species to the list of protected animals — his father, President George H.W. Bush, and President Bill Clinton averaged that many each year during their terms, according to MSNBC's report, "Guarding Species is Harder."

Bush's management, coupled with his appointment of the Dept. of the Interior Secretary, Dirk Kempthorne and Fish and Wildlife Service director, Dale Hall's guidance, the criteria for a Domestic Endangered Species has become even more stringent.

What's unsettling is that it seems like Bush and the Interior Department are trying to "cap" how many animals they have to protect.

MSNBC's report attested that interior officials had overruled agency scientists on a regular basis, as was the case with the Kokanee and the Basin Pygmy.

Some of the Interior's documents seem to suggest that bureaucratic obstacles were put in place specifically for the purposes of limiting the power of the Endangered Species Act itself.

Some independent agencies took it upon themselves to petition the protection of species that are at risk; prominent among them were WildEarth Guardians.

WildEarth filed a lawsuit on March 20 to pass a court order to protect 681 domestic species all at once.

The members of the group have been fighting to get hundreds of species on the list but these roadblocks typically protect the Interior from having to consider peti-



TOM MACKENZIE/FWS.GOV

ROAD BLOCKS: Dale Hall and Larry Selzter signing Memorandum of Agreement on guidelines for planting trees on Wildlife Refuges

tions; thus, a court order becomes necessary.

"It's an urgent situation and something has to be done," said Nicole Rosmarino, the group's conservation director, to MSNBC on Mar. 20. "This roadblock to listing under the Bush administration is criminal."

Lawsuits have consistently been filed against Fish and Wildlife Service — who approves listing decisions — since the early 90's, creating a quagmire that the service has slowly returned to the surface.

As a result of their dodging the listing recommendations, only 21 listings had

been considered per year, according to the Service Director, Dale Hall.

"Lawsuits, starting in the early '90s, have really driven things," Hall said, adding that the administration has tried to keep species from declining to the point where they need to be listed. "I'm feeling pretty good we're back on track to do the job the way it's supposed to be done."

It's reprehensible that government agencies can get away with roadblocking listings that could potentially result in a flourishing species quickly disappearing.

Furthermore, the practices currently used to distinguish how "at risk" a species is even more horrendous: Their current habitat is taken into account, not their previous habitat and why they had to relocate somewhere else, according to MSNBC's report.

This leaves loggers open to chopping out entire sections of unprotected forest without the consequence of endangering an animal species and all of the requisite federal retribution.

By far the most disgusting of the policies involved with the Act is the criteria for "threatened" species' removal from the list. The Bald Eagle was delisted with less than the 500 breeding pair requirement for "survival." It took a lawsuit for the Fish and Wildlife Service to relist the desert eagle.

It is indeed "criminal" for Bush not to intervene when there is obvious corruption in a federal agency. Is it right for these officials to disregard research and warnings from scientists incontrovertibly outlining which species needed to be listed?

In the past 35 years, the Endangered Species Act has saved thousands of species from extinction, why is it that this should end with George W. because of Hall's preference for trials to delist animals rather than list and protect them, which is, after all, his job.

Joseph Marhee can be contacted at joseph.marhee@fiusm.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Students should change behaviors to help environment

College students have traditionally been the most radical agents of social change. We have led movements that have changed our culture and are generally more conscientious than other members of society. So it is surprising to see so much apathy on campus when it comes to the environment.

FIU does not have a sufficient recycling program, there are very few vegan options in the food court, the buildings are made freezing cold by overusing the air conditioning, and the overall amount of waste is shocking. Institutional issues aside, individual students could be doing a lot more to help save our planet, and I'm not even talking about extreme measures.

There are small changes we can make every day that will make a difference. Turn off the lights and water when you aren't using them. Bring reusable bags when you shop. Turn down your air conditioning.

Take the stairs instead of the elevator, and turn off your computer overnight. Occasionally choose meals that are free of meat, dairy and eggs; not just to prevent animal cruelty, but also to reduce the energy and water waste, land degradation, and pollution associated with factory farming.

We can write letters to the administration to start a comprehensive recycling program on campus, and get the air conditioning turned down in the buildings. Even though these steps are small, they can have a significant impact. Hopefully small steps will inspire people to make bigger changes. The most important thing is to be aware of your actions and the repercussions they have on the environment. Our generation is facing a major crisis, and it is up to us to lead the movement for change.

Elizabeth Menard
Sophomore

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- Yes — Guns pose a more serious threat and are ultimately unnecessary with Public Safety on Campus.

42%

- No — Student's have a constitutional right to bear arms, and should be able to defend themselves.

58%

Total participants: 95

Cast your vote at www.fiusm.com

Serene Ceramics

Fledgling artists find their muse in Coconut Grove

JADE LLEONART
Staff Writer

A refuge that nurtures creativity awaits those ready for a new artistic experience. Anything is possible at Color Me Mine, where the seemingly mundane craft of ceramics takes on new life.

Located at 3411 Main Highway in Coconut Grove, Color Me Mine offers the chance to make your own personal ceramic creation. Whether in the company of friends at a birthday or a lazy afternoon, this franchise caters to a variety of events.

"You come in, you have a good time and you paint," said Alexander Juan, a Color Me Mine employee.

The Color Me Mine franchise began 14 years ago and has been a popular destination for tourists and locals alike.

"It's a very relaxing place," Juan said.

For those who feel like art is not and will never be their "thing," no need to worry - Color Me Mine is for everyone, not just the future Michelangelos out there.

"When I first walked through its doors, I felt the freedom of being able to paint whatever I wanted, even though I can't paint to save my life," said Geena Cesar, a Color Me Mine customer.

"I was able to express myself for the first time through art because of this store and I still have my first sculpture sitting in my living room," Cesar said.

The process is simple. First, you choose a ceramic piece. Color Me Mine has over 400 to choose from.

Second, you sketch a design on your piece or choose one of the 25,000 available ones on the design computer.

Finally, choose a color. Then you can paint it however you wish.

After this, an employee will place your piece in a kiln. While inside, the flames fuse the paint onto its surface.

In the end, you can take your piece home to show all your friends who were not there

to share the artistic experience with you.

Although no appointments are necessary to create a new work of art, you can easily plan get-togethers at Color Me Mine, which has become quite the party place.

Birthday parties for children include a private room, two hours of studio time, pizza, cake and more.

Parties for adults are also available. Bridal showers have become quite popular, considering brides-to-be can set up gift registries for their big days.

"It's a fabulous place. My favorite object that I painted was at my friend's birthday party. It was a flying piglet that is hanging from my closet door," said Color Me Mine customer Meggie Alea.

Color Me Mine is open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, as well as Sunday. On Saturday they are open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

How to paint ceramics at Color Me Mine!

Step One

Choose your ceramic piece.

Step Two

Sketch your original design with a pencil or choose graphics from the design computer.

Step Three

Select your underglazes. They have over 65 colors to choose from.

Step Four

Paint it however you like. Check out the Color Me Mine technique sheets for painting ideas.

Step Five

Fire in the kilns on premises.

www.colormemine.com

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CVS/pharmacy



Video games may be good for kids, study shows

AP WIRE

Contrary to common education wisdom, computer games and other technologies can foster community-building, a strong sense of identity and higher-level planning even in very young students, UC Davis researchers report.

"There is a lot of hemming and hawing among educators about the introduction of technology in the early grades," said Cynthia Carter Ching, associate professor of education at the University of California, Davis.

"But the worst-case scenarios just don't pan out.

Technology can facilitate creativity and social awareness, even when we don't design the use of it to do so.

And when we do design technology activities with these things in mind, the possibilities are endless," Ching said.

According to Ching, early childhood educators often argue that technology can squelch young children's creativity and social interaction in the classroom.

But in two recent studies of kinder-

“ Cynthia Carter Ching, Asst. professor of edu. at the University of California
There is a lot of hemming and hawing among educators about the introduction of technology in the early grades

garten and first-grade students, Ching has observed that children find ways to transform their experiences with technology into fun, highly organized group activities and functions.

She also found that technology-based activities can be explicitly designed to foster social reflection and advanced planning among young children.

Ching and her collaborator, X. Christine Wang from the University at Buffalo, SUNY, will present this research at 4:05 p.m. today at the annual meet-

ing of the American Association of Educational Researchers in New York City.

In their first study, Ching and Wang observed children who chose to play a computer game during their free time rather than engage in another activity such as performing sports.

Though only one child could play at a time, the children negotiated turns. They also gave each other advice about how to play the game.



COURTESY PHOTO

"Though this is hardly the ideal setting for social interaction and higher-level thinking, the children exhibited a great deal of executive planning skills and complex social negotiations without any guidance or interference from adults," Ching said.

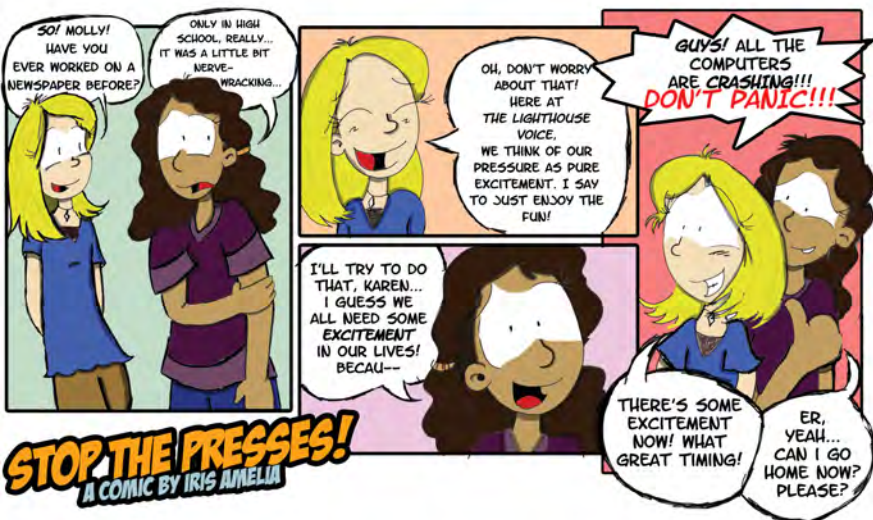
In the second study, children were given digital cameras and told to create digital photo journals with the pictures they took.

Ching found the students displayed creativity and engaged in complex planning at every stage of the assignment, from how they framed their shots to how they chose to organize them to tell a story.

"This study shows that rather than technology being something that children merely use, it can be a creative tool for increased reflection on social networks, friendships, relationships with teachers and a sense of self within the world of school," Ching said.

Ching and Wang received the Jan Hawkins Award for Early Career Contributions to Humanistic Research and Scholarship in Learning Technologies at last year's AERA meeting.

Diversions



HAIRY DAN AND ACTIVE DAVE #1 - THE DANGERS OF DRINKING

BY JONATHAN ROBERTS AND ANDREW SANTIAGO

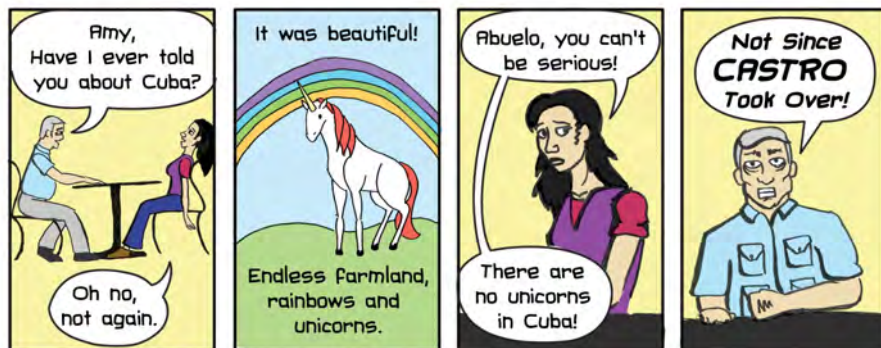


Beloved readers,

In conjunction with the new thrice-a-week publishing schedule, *The Beacon* is adding a new feature to the paper: Diversions, a section dedicated to cartoons and other "diversions." In the coming weeks, we'll be including Sudoku and other games to complement the comics. Expect this section to run weekly in our Wednesday issues. If you have an idea for a comic, please e-mail me at Geoffrey.Anderson@fiusm.com

- Geoffrey Anderson Jr., Life! Editor

MYAMY (MIAMI) BY LUIS NIN



Honest Abe by Michelle Diaz



Fraternity builds camaraderie, connections

CHRISTIN ERAZO
Staff Writer

Picture this: After semesters of papers and exams, the time to graduate has arrived. You're about to walk across the stage to accept your diploma and suddenly the thought of your future overwhelms you. Job placement and opportunities are struggles recent college graduates face. Being a novice in this world filled with businessmen and women can be daunting and students can benefit from the resources offered by the business fraternity, Beta Alpha Psi.

FIU's chapter of BAP, Eta Iota, was chartered on April 4, 1986 currently boasts 54 members. The fraternity is targeted toward students with majors such as accounting, finance and management information systems. The fraternity prides itself on building professional connections between its members and several prominent accounting firms, which provides students with an opportunity for employment and an advantage over the competition.

"Our organization identifies itself as the bridge to professionalism that helps students [overcome] the gap between student and professional life. We teach everything from interviewing, to resume writing, to behaving like a true professional," said Eta Iota chapter President Jonathan Morera.

This fraternity provides members with the opportunity to be introduced to various firms such as Deloitte, Price Waterhouse-Coopers, and Ernst & Young during weekly Friday meetings and such events as "Firms Night."

Firms Night is like "speed-dating with [corporate] firms," said Morera.

Five members are paired up with five

associates from many prestigious firms and switch to a new firm at a new table every 10 minutes.

"This semester we were happy to have held it in the new College of Business Complex, we had a tremendous turnout with 189 registered attendees," Morera said. "Employers use firms night as the primary source for candidate selection along with the FIU Career Fair put on by the FIU Career Services Office."

BAP is made up of different committees that serve a range of duties throughout the organization. The Public

R e l a t i o n s committee is in charge of recording and coordinating all events hosted and visited by the fraternity, to be included in their newsletters. Other committees include tutoring, fundraising and an H o n o r s c o u n c i l .

The committees encourage members to get involved and are varied to suit each member's strong suits.

BAP is not all work and no play. Last semester, the fraternity hosted a softball

tournament at Tropical Park where members and pledges played against leading accounting companies.

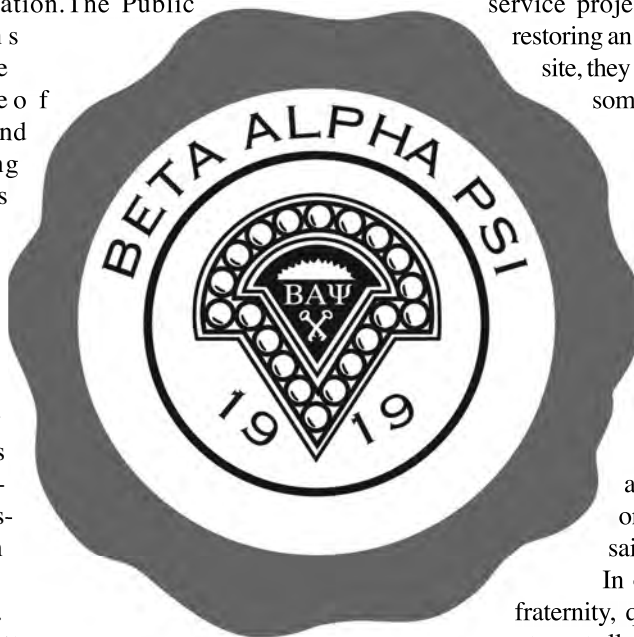
"These games allowed our members and pledges to interact with the firms in a social atmosphere where more casual and less professional conversation can be engaged giving students a peek into the real life of an accountant," Morera said.

The organization is also heavily involved with the charity Hands on Miami, whose goal is to beautify Miami communities. Last semester, BAP was in charge of a community service project that involved restoring an old school. At the site, they were surprised by some special guests.

"They had a DJ come over along with some of the Miami Heat dancers and Heat mascot Burnie. Unfortunately, I was the "lucky" one to end up dancing with Burnie and getting caught on video," Morera said.

In order to join this fraternity, qualified students must meet all academic requirements. According to the BAP Web site, pledges must have a 3.0 GPA or higher and state their area of concentration in any of the specified majors. Requirements vary between undergraduate and graduate applicants.

"I would have to say that the benefits of



Pledge Process:

To become a member of the Eta Iota Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi. The following must be completed:

1. Meet the academic requirements listed above.
2. Fill out the application.
3. Submit a copy of your SASS report or unofficial transcript.
4. Pay the appropriate Pledge or Membership fee.
5. Attend and participate at the weekly meetings.

WWW.FIU.EDU/~BAP

membership are endless," Morera said.

Morera goes on to explain how brotherhood within the fraternity extends beyond the organization. The camaraderie members form helps to build strong bonds, which helps promote teamwork.

BAP holds weekly meetings every Friday at 6 p.m. in GC 150. The BAP Web site can be accessed <http://www.fiu.edu/~bap/qa.html>.

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ARMY STRONG:

Member discusses life, music of Christian rock band

ROSALYN DELGADO
Contributing Writer

On March 11, rock band Emery performed at Ft. Lauderdale's Culture Room in support of their latest album "I'm Only a Man." *The Beacon* spoke with Josh Head, Emery's keyboardist, about tour pranks, song writing and the band's future.

The Beacon: Being in a Christian band, how do you guys approach the touring life differently from other bands?

Head: I don't know how it is different for us. We don't feel that if a band is Christian they should only tour churches or anything like that. For the most part the bands are pretty cool, we feel like we should be like a regular band...play clubs and bars and such. We are not a sex, drugs and rock n roll type of band, if that's what you mean and I know a lot of them are.

The Beacon: I know you guys have been touring for quite sometime now, are there any embarrassing moments from being on the road, or pranks that you've pulled on each other, that maybe you'd like to share?

Head: We play a lot of pranks on each other, we all sleep in one bus so we have this thing where if you wake up in the middle of the night and you are in the bunk area, you have to scream as loud as you can to try and scare everybody up, so we did that for quite a bit, then we got an air horn. (laughs) I know that scared the crap out of me for some time. Its funny when you wake up and your heart is racing and you don't know what's going on.

The Beacon: I know that you guys have toured practically everywhere. Do you at this point have a favorite city or venue where you like to play?

Head: I don't know. We used to have a favorite place to play in but now, I mean if we go to a city and the fans are awesome and it's fun and chill, then you enjoy playing there. I can't say it's a total favorite place, but we enjoy playing at home in Seattle, mainly because we have our friends and family who come out to see us, but I'd also

have to say playing in Texas is always fun, Florida (the Social, the very first time we played in Florida in our career was there, it's a pretty cool place). Philadelphia. Like I said, it's hard to say just one.

The Beacon: Did you write any of the songs on the new album?

Head: Well, Toby and Devin are the ones that write most of the lyrics, they are both the singers. I'll sometimes come up with a chorus idea or a guitar part and then we'll all sit down and throw in all our ideas, like "we should add this to that line," "this should be played like this" - it's all very collaborative, but Toby and Gavin do the majority of the writing and we just hash out the songs during practice. Someone will say "oh that sucks, lets take it out" but then someone else will say "no that doesn't suck, you suck" then we'll all get into a big fight or something.

The Beacon: Do you have a favorite song right now from the new album that you like to play live?

Head: I would say it has to be a song from the album that we actually don't play live, but I think it's awesome. My favorite song that we play live right now I would have to say it's "Don't bore us, get to the Chorus".

The Beacon: Do you guys have any preset rituals that you have as a band before going on stage? Anything that you do as a band or individually? How do you prepare before getting on stage?

Head: We don't really do much now, we use to do a lot more. When we first started out we use to do all kinds of weird and wacky things like warm ups and jumping jacks in a circle just to try and be funny. Now it's pretty much just vocal warm up before we play and that's about it, maybe stretch my back a little bit. Water...we drink a lot of water.

The Beacon: Being on tour for so long can get pretty stressful, I'm sure. Is there anything in particular that you do to blow off steam and relax?



WWW.EMERYMUSIC.COM

MUSIC MAKERS: Seattle band Emery is touring to support third album "I'm Only a Man." The band performed with As Cities Burn at the Culture Room on March 11.

Head: Well we all play a lot of Halo 3, that's pretty much our favorite past time, we also play sports sometimes, just the other day the guys were playing football randomly before a show; I play basketball a lot. Sometimes we'll just hang out in the front or back lounge yell at each other, talk trash and fight before or after shows, you know the usual.

The Beacon: How do you guys get into the mood for writing music?

Head: It happens all the time. For me at least it can happen in the middle of the night, where I'll have an idea for a song. I take care of mostly all the electronic stuff, when I'm writing songs on my keyboard I'll just think of some sound and I'll try to figure out how to make it come out of my head and

from my instrument, but yeah, it comes from all around; it could be something that you hear from another band, you get inspired and you think "hey that's cool" I'd like to create something like that.

The Beacon: Where do you see Emery in the next ten years?

Head: Well I don't know, that's a long time, I'll be so old by then. Hopefully I'm not a crusty old rock n roller. We do plan to make music as long as we can. At the very least, if we stop touring, we'll keep putting out records. I know a lot of us will probably start doing side projects, solos and such in the next year to to kind of try out our other musical ideas. We'll probably start five different bands that will probably take over the world.

Avoid digital disgrace through engine search



Wake up, sleepyheads - Big Brother is watching you.

In our age of online communications - where our every keystroke can be saved for analysis by friends and strangers - it's easy to forget the trail of digital dirt we leave in our wake.

From old forum posts to profile comments, ours is a world of public privacy where anyone can stumble upon our deepest darkest secrets: Transformers fan fiction, Match.com profiles and artistic nude self portraits.

Scared? Suck it up - roll up your sleeves because it's time to do some digital spring cleaning!

One of the easiest ways to start cutting down your online dirt is to clean up your digital paper trail.

Any web browser you use keeps a running tab of the pages you've seen, images you've seen and text you've typed.

Browsers temporarily store all this information in the computer's cache to easily recall it on later visits rather than exert the effort to load fresh data.

While this "thoughtful" effort may be welcomed from your personal computer, it's not something you want public computers - like those in the library you use for your overdue term paper - to do.

The next time you're about to log out after using a computer on campus, take a moment to click the browser's preferences or tools and clear your history.

You're the only one who needs to know how much time you've spent on www.perezhilton.com - not the person who logs in after you.

Another way to polish your image online is to Google yourself shamelessly.

Run a general search on your full name and see what the first page turns up, then step into the shoes of future employers and graduate school admissions committees that will do the same when you

submit an application: are you going to hire you or is your judgment on hold while you cringe at newly posted pictures of your 3 a.m. game face on www.lastnightsparty.com?

Don't sweat it - use these search results to dust your online tracks.

Sift through the finds and delete any orphaned accounts you forgot you signed up for and don't want to be associated with anymore (like, say, a Neopets Online membership you signed up for in middle school to satisfy your two hour a day, fairy-themed flash game habit).

Read through any old forum or blog posts that turn up and weigh them in too: do you stand by that six-year-old rant on pirates versus ninjas or realize now is the time to let go?

For those that are gung-ho on thoroughness, try running your search on a meta-engine like www.dogpile.com: it combines results from major engines such as Google, Yahoo and MSN Live Search so you can hunt yourself down across multiple engines from one site rather than having a desktop chock full of open windows.

If you're not happy with your Google ranking, or find it's non-existent, change it.

Establish yourself online by joining a social network site (aimed at the one person on the planet, besides myself, who doesn't have a myspace account), starting a blog or buying a domain to set up an online portfolio.

Though you don't have to go that far - signing up for a free www.flickr.com account to post photos online is more than enough to get search engines excited about you.

Make an effort to update on a weekly basis with new, deliberate information to boost your name's search results rank and ensure that those who are looking for you find the person you want them to see.

While this kind of digital sifting sounds tedious at best, remember that whatever is out there on the web is there for everyone and anyone to see - those who know you and those who don't.

Take control of your digital footprint and make sure you're making the first impression you want to, not the one the net does.

SUN BELT SOFTBALL STANDING

TEAM	CONF	OVERALL	PCT
Florida Atlantic	16-8	42-23	.646
Louisian-Lafayette	15-8	46-18	.719
Troy	15-9	42-20	.677
Middle Tennessee	14-9	30-30	.500
South Alabama	12-11	36-23	.610
Western Kentucky	11-13	30-32	.484
North Texas	10-14	22-36	.379
Florida international	9-14	22-35	.386
Louisiana-Monroe	4-20	24-38	.387

*All records up to date as of March 26

SUN BELT LEADERS

INDIVIDUAL BATTING

Min	2.0 AB	G	Avg	AB	R	H	RBI	2B	3B	HR	BB
Tankersley ULL	64	.403	191	59	77	60	10	0	18	36	
Donaldson USA	59	.401	177	19	71	47	15	0	5	21	
Fishback FAU	65	.368	201	45	74	40	15	4	7	18	
Boucher WKU	62	.351	194	28	68	15	9	1	0	15	
McGuire USA	54	.348	138	34	48	27	8	2	5	10	
Hanson ULM	56	.344	180	31	62	15	6	4	2	15	
Pare USA	59	.344	183	46	63	24	6	3	1	32	
Waters NT	56	.341	167	45	57	41	10	0	17	23	
White FIU	57	.337	169	35	57	41	6	3	14	14	
Johnson Troy	62	.335	209	40	70	45	13	1	9	14	

INDIVIDUAL PITCHING

Min	1.0 IP	App	ERA	W-L	Sv	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Musillo FAU	41	1.39	26-11	2	251.2	183	67	50	82	275	
Jones USA	37	1.68	19-11	1	195.1	135	52	47	48	232	
Cuevas ULL	46	1.97	31-11	0	292.0	223	102	82	92	303	
Kempf WKU	44	2.11	21-19	1	268.2	256	105	81	78	199	
Lopez Troy	38	2.19	21-9	2	179.1	146	66	56	56	169	
Pilgrim USA	29	2.36	10-8	0	130.2	129	64	44	27	107	
Tankersley ULL	19	2.70	12-5	0	93.1	77	49	36	38	93	
Rittenhouse ULM	48	2.70	15-19	2	233.0	238	131	90	76	229	
Vander Lugt MT	52	2.79	21-21	2	273.2	302	137	109	24	146	
Paige Troy	18	2.89	9-3	0	70.1	72	35	29	21	57	

Sports Replay

TROY 5 FIU 2

The FIU Golden Panthers sent their ace Kasey Barrett to the mound for the first game of the doubleheader against Troy on March 21.

She pitched well until the last inning doomed her and the Golden Panthers via a walk-off home run by Heidi Johnson.

Felicia Hammer led the seventh inning with a home run.

After two singles, the Trojans had runners on the corner.

Johnson would break the 2-2 ties with the walk-off.

The Golden Panthers scored two runs in the first inning and would not score the remainder of the game.

Barrett struck out nine batters through 6.1 innings of work.

FIU 6 TROY 5

For the second consecutive game, the Golden Panthers got on the board first with a three-run inning to open the game.

Th Golden Panthers scored their first run of the game after an illegal pitching motion with the bases loaded moved up all the runners one bases.

Then Kim Rodriguez hit a soft single to acore two more RBI.

The Trojans tied the game in the fourth inning due to an infield single and two wild pitches by starting pitcher Jessica Landau.

The Golden Panthers retaliated in the second inning with another three runs fueled by two Trojans errors.

The pevious game's hero, Heidi Johnson, tacked on a run in the fifth inning to begin the rally.

The Trojans were not done yet as they cut the lead to one run.

Kasey Barrett would redeem her loss she received a couple of hours before by coming into relief and killing the Trojans' rally and recording her first save of the season.

The win improved the Golden Panthers' record to 17-21 and 3-1 in conference play.

FIU 6 TROY 3

The long ball proved to be the Golden Panthers' friend in their rubber match against Troy on March 22 at Troy, Ala.

The team tied a program record by hitting four home runs in the game, and Kasey Barrett made her third consecutive appearance in

the series.

She would not be ousted in the seventh round as she pitched the complete game victory.

During the first three innings, the Golden Panthers could not record a hit.

The fourth inning changed that with a Kim Rodriguez home run. It was her team leading 13th home run of the season.

She is one home run away from tying FIU's single season home run record of 14 set last year by short-stop Monique White.

Rodriguez and White now both hold the record for the program's career home run record with 22.

A bases loaded single by the Trojans gave them a temporary lead.

That lead evaporated in the following inning as the Golden Panthers score four runs including a pinch-hit home run by Brook Ruiz.

Barrett improved to 14-10 and the Golden Panthers improved to 18-21 overall and 4-1 in Sun Belt Conference play.

The Golden Panthers return home as they host UCF on March 28.

- Compiled by Sergio Bonilla

THREE IN A ROW



PHOTO COURTESY FIU SPORTS

PICKING UP STEAM: Sophomore Priscilla Castillo has helped the women's team win three games in a row. They are FIU's lone ranked program.

Players and owners hope to modify drug test rules

RONALD BLUM
AP Writer

Lawyers for baseball players and owners hope to reach an agreement on changes in their drug agreement before most teams start the regular season, culminating talks that began following recommendations in December's Mitchell Report.

The sides planned to talk this week in Arizona during the final week of spring training. This would be the third time players and owners toughened drug rules since their initial agreement in August 2002.

The sides also made changes in January 2005, when sanctions for first offenders were instituted, and in November 2005, when the penalty for an initial positive

test was increased from 10 days to 50 games.

If they strike a deal, the 15-day suspensions imposed on Kansas City's Jose Guillen and Baltimore's Jay Gibbons in December after being linked to performance-enhancing drugs most likely would be rescinded as part of an overall amnesty for players mentioned in the report, two people familiar with the talks said Monday.

Mitchell, a Boston Red Sox director, recommended commissioner Bud Selig not punish players implicated in his report "except in those cases where he determines that the conduct is so serious that discipline is necessary to maintain the integrity of the game."

If there isn't an agreement, arbitrator Shyam Das prob-

ably would be asked to decide whether to stay Guillen's suspension pending a grievance hearing. The players' association filed a grievance on behalf of the outfielder, but no hearing dates have been scheduled.

Most teams start the season next Monday.

Commissioner Bud Selig adopted most of the recommendations made by former Senate majority leader George Mitchell but could not address those that were subject to collective bargaining.

Mitchell said the sides should have the ability to remove the independent program administrator only for "good cause," that there be "adequate year-round unannounced testing" and that regular aggregate data on the drug tests be made public.

FREE BOOK

"Hillary and Bill"

by Dr. Juan Justice
at juanjustice.com

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THREE TIMES A WEEK!

The BEACON is now coming out Monday, Wednesday and Friday starting this week! Receive more news, sports and entertainment every week and online at www.fiusm.com.

SUN BELT BASEBALL STANDING

TEAM	OVERALL	CONF	PCT
Florida Atlantic	16-6	6-1	.727
Troy	16-7	5-1	.696
Louisiana-Monroe	14-6	7-2	.700
Arkansas State	12-10	5-4	.545
Florida International	9-16	3-3	.360
Louisiana Lafayette	9-12	4-5	.429
New Orleans	12-8	3-5	.600
Middle Tennessee	10-7	3-5	.375
South Alabama	12-10	2-4	.545
Western Kentucky	10-9	3-6	.526
UALR	4-16	1-6	.200

*All records up to date as of March 24, 2008

SUN BELT LEADERS

HITS		DOUBLES	
Min 2.0 AB		Min 2.0 AB	
Castillo, FIU	42	Miller, Troy	14
McKenna, FAU	39	Jernigan, USA	11
Hines, MT	37	Hines, MT	10
Soignier, ULM	34	Castillo, FIU	9
3 tied with 32 hit(s)			
RBI		HOME RUNS	
Min 2.0 AB		Min 2.0 AB	
McKenna, FAU	43	McKenna, FAU	13
Jernigan, USA	31	7 tied with 6 home run(s)	
Castillo, FIU	30		
RUNS SCORED		Triples	
Min 2.0 AB		Min 2.0 AB	
Block, FAU	32	McGonigle, UNO	3
Kruml, USA	29	5 Tied with 2 triple(s)	

Sports Replay

UC IRVINE 5, FIU 2

The Golden Panthers (9-13) could not produce the same offense against one of the top pitchers in the nation, Scott Gorgen. No. 5 ranked UC Irvine (15-1) held the Golden Panthers to two runs, winning 5-2 March 21 at the Bob Schaefer Memorial Tournament in Tempe, Ariz.

Gorgen shut down the Golden Panthers through 7.1 innings of work.

FIU's Jorge Castillo and Rainy Fuentes both went 2-for-4, which accounted for four of the team's seven hits. Coming into the game, Gorgen had allowed seven hits in 30 innings this season.

After scoring in the first inning of the game, the Golden Panthers could not muster much more offensive production, scoring just one run for the remaining nine innings.

ARIZONA STATE 10, FIU 5

A day after facing the No. 5 team in the nation, the Golden Panthers (9-14) squared off against the No. 1 team, Arizona State (20-1). The

Golden Panthers' pitching could not hold off the ASU offense as the team fell 10-5 on March 22 in Tempe, Ariz.

Jorge Castillo extended his hitting streak to 19 games for the Golden Panthers with his fifth home run of the season.

The teams were tied headed into the seventh inning before the Golden Panthers' bullpen took the loss allowing five runs in the last two innings.

Each of Arizona State's first five batters had at least one, hit including Ike Davis, who had three RBI.

ARIZONA STATE 8, FIU 4

Arizona State (21-1) jumped to an early 7-0 lead in the second game of the double header and would go on to win 8-4 against the FIU Golden Panthers (9-15) on March 22 at Tempe, Ariz.

Arizona starter Josh Satow threw six innings, allowing two runs. The Golden Panthers managed to score two runs against the bullpen.

FIU starter Corey Polizzano (3-2) took the loss, allowing seven runs on seven hits.

NORTHERN COLORADO 13, FIU 9

The final day of the Bob Schaefer Memorial Tournament featured an offensive explosion and defensive miscues from both sides as the Golden Panthers (9-16) fell to Northern Colorado 13-9 on March 23 in Tempe, Ariz.

The game combined 22 runs, 25 hits and 10 errors. The Northern Colorado Bears (7-15) handed Arizona State its first loss the season.

Golden Panther starter Jorge Ramos pitched one plus inning of work, allowing five runs (three earned).

During the eighth inning, the Golden Panthers scored five runs to cut the lead to 13-9.

Jorge Castillo went 3-for-5 with two RBI and Lamar Guy went 2-for-4 with three RBI. Each team had five errors, which caused FIU to allow six unearned runs while the Bears allowed three unearned runs.

-Compiled by Sergio Bonilla

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SEASON REWOUND

Women's basketball advances past second round despite key injuries



Commentary
Darren Collette
Staff Writer

Picture a healthy Golden Panther. Now picture it missing an arm, a leg and an eye.

The healthy panther represented the women's basketball team early in the season, but by the end of the season, the women's team resembled the dismembered panther.

The team's leading scorer and pre-season all-conference first team selection was senior guard LaQuetta Ferguson.

She was not the only FIU player honored as junior point guard Iva Ciglar was named to the third team after leading the conference in assists last season.

FIU won their home opener over in-state foe Lynn University in the closing minutes of what was a surprisingly close game.

After the win, coach Cindy Russo stated that the team had "no chemistry." Next, FIU would take on DePaul, Florida State, Providence, South Carolina and South Florida.

Not only would FIU lose all those games, but sophomore forward Elisa Carey and junior forward Marquita Adley would both sustain season-ending injuries during that stretch. This was the Golden Panthers' first step towards their injury-riddled season.

With Carey and Adley out, FIU's inside game would need to look to senior forward Jasmine Jenkins, who had seen few minutes prior to this season.

Next up for FIU was backyard rival University of Miami. The Golden Panthers played an amazing game on UM's home court against the more athletic Hurricanes.

When UM's final shot rimmed out, FIU had captured a 60-58 win without their two best inside players.

Despite their biggest win of the season, the Golden Panthers would not carry their momentum very far.

The Golden Panthers would drop three of their next four games including their first two Sun Belt Conference games on the road against Middle Tennessee and Arkansas-Little Rock.

The team would seem to get back on track while hosting the FIU Sun & Fun tournament.

The Golden Panthers defeated Hofstra en route to a championship game meeting with then No. 7 Georgia, who was 10-0. FIU lost 70-56, but Ferguson managed to score a career and team season-high 32 points.

The Golden Panthers would go on to win home conference games against Troy and FAU.

That small streak would be snapped at Western Kentucky, but on the way back to Miami the Panthers grabbed a win at South Alabama.

Just when it seemed FIU had righted the ship, three straight narrow losses followed.

Having lost three games in a row, FIU headed out to Denver and North Texas for a pair of games that many figured would add to the losing streak.

However, FIU won both games in part thanks to freshman Fanni Hutlassa, who scored a total of 43 points during the trip.

FIU would come home and collect a third win against Louisiana-Lafayette.

Middle Tennessee came into the Pharmed Arena with a 9-3-conference record and took it to FIU early and gained a 20-10 lead.

Ferguson led the Golden Panthers back, but shortly after giving FIU their first lead, Ferguson would suffer a severe knee injury that would end her senior season - and career - at FIU.

Without Ferguson, sophomore guard Monika Bosilj stepped up and led FIU to a huge win over the three-time defending conference champions.

A fifth win was notched four days later as the Golden Panthers toppled Sun Belt West leaders Arkansas-Little Rock.

However, just when it seemed FIU had everything in control, a road matches

against FAU and Troy showed that the Golden Panthers still had a lot of work to do, especially with their leader sidelined.

Western Kentucky and South Alabama would beat FIU in their final two games.

Even though FIU had lost its final four games, it entered the Sun Belt tournament as the No. 7 seed, playing host to Denver in the first round. The Golden Panthers looked like the team that won five games in a row during the first half and went into halftime up by 12.

During the second half, the lead vanished thanks to a 14-0 Denver run, however Ciglar would take charge late and scored several key baskets.

FIU would pull off the win and punch their ticket to the second round in Mobile, Ala. against No. 2 seeded UALR.

FIU fought tooth and nail against UALR and kept the Trojans off the scoreboard for almost seven minutes at the start of the game.

UALR retaliated and edged out FIU during the final seconds of play.

Despite the loss, it was a great game for FIU as the team proved that it had really evolved over the course of the season no matter how much diversity it faced.

It is debatable who FIU's MVP was this season. Ferguson seems like the clear choice, but my vote would go to Bosilj.

This underclassman played half the season with a partially torn ligament in her shooting arm, while posting career numbers in scoring.

The team's 13-18 record was not indicative of how well the team played this season.

Had the team not lost its best player and interior presence, they could've taken the conference. Russo should return next season with a healthier squad and maturing players.

With their arm, leg and eye intact next season, they could be the most successful athletic program at FIU next season.



PHOTOS BY VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

RECAP: The Golden Panthers record was 13-18 with injuries to contributors on offense and defense.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PIVOTAL GAMES

FIU 70, LYNN 62

USF 84 FIU 56

FIU 60 UM 58

FIU 53 DENVER 52

FIU 68, DENVER 57

UALR 57, FIU 52

NOVEMBER 9

NOVEMBER 29

DECEMBER 4

JANUARY 31

MARCH 5

MARCH 8