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## LATE NIGHT MOVES



FERNANDO GARCIA/THE BEACON

**"SUPAH" COOL:** "Supah" Mario Toledo, a non-FIU student, break dances at night in the Graham Center Pit. For the full story, see pages five and six.



# Super Tuesday primaries unlike previous years

JESSICA ARISTE  
Staff Writer

With no endorsement from the president or vice-president, an inflated price tag and an earlier than normal schedule, this year's Super Tuesday is unlike any other.

States including California, New York, New Jersey and 21 others participated in the historic primaries and caucuses on Feb. 5.

"What sets this election apart from the rest is that it is the first in which a vice president does not run, and where neither the vice president nor the president endorsed a candidate," said Ezequiel Romero, a political science major.

Chris Daley, political science and international relations major, has his own views on how the election is unique this year, due to the amount of money spent on it.

"It's going to be the most expensive election ever,"

Daley said.

The price tag of the 2008 primaries seems excessive to students like Daley because of the extra time that has to be spent campaigning by candidates.

This primary is the first to be held in February, with prior elections always taking place in March.

The extra month of campaigning is the result of many states moving up their primaries to the earliest dates allowed by the Democratic and Republican National Committees in an attempt to be more influential in the elections process.

States that held unauthorized elections before Feb. 5, like Florida and Michigan, lost all of their democratic delegates and half of their republican delegates as a penalty.

Each state has their own way of counting citizens' votes, through either primaries or caucuses.

Caucuses, like those held

in Kansas and Colorado, are meetings where registered voters in attendance discuss which candidate they believe will best represent their party as presidential candidate.

Unlike the public forum that caucuses provide, primary elections allow registered voters to vote for their favorite candidate through secret ballots.

Florida, for example, has a closed primary election where registered voters cast ballots for presidential candidates in their registered party.

With so many states holding their primaries on the same day, 1,700 democratic delegates were up for grabs and more than 1,000 republican delegates were available for the taking.

"I'm confident that Hillary will be able to win the most delegates and become the democratic nominee, but with a race this close, we might not know the results

**PRIMARIES, page 2**

# Accomplished professor inspires current, future engineering students

DANIELLA BACIGALUPO  
Staff Writer

Banu Sizirici walked into the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department looking for enlightenment. Torn between graduate school at the University of Miami or at FIU, she came to the Engineering Campus with her dilemma two years ago.

Her problem was solved after one meeting with Environmental Engineering Professor Berrin Tansel.

"It was the first time I met her. She was the first professor I talked to, and after that, I decided to come to FIU," Sizirici said.

Anyone who comes to know Tansel would probably not be surprised

by the anecdote above. Tansel's passion for her career has led her to work at FIU for more than two decades, during which she has generated innovative

**"Berrin Tansel, environmental engineering professor**

I love the work I'm doing. I think I'm in the right profession. This is my calling. I feel like Oprah saying that.

programs in her department, collaborated in over 200 research projects and papers and helped develop many young engineers.

For all her efforts, Tansel has received constant recognition

and was most recently named a 2006 Kauffman Professor by FIU's Eugenio Pino & Family Global Entrepreneurship Center. In 2007, Tansel received the

Engineer of the Year award by the American Society of Civil Engineers Miami-Dade Branch.

"I'm in the perfect job for me . . . there is some degree of freedom [in my job]. I'm not confined—and

if I have an idea—I'm not limited in taking that idea to the next step. I love my job," Tansel said.

Innovation has marked Tansel's career. From choosing environmental engineering for her master's degree when it was developing in the 1970s, to initiating hazardous wastes as a division of the engineering department at FIU, Tansel has strived to be on the "cutting edge."

"Engineering is one of the professions that you have to be on the cutting edge. I always look for opportunities to make our program stand out," Tansel said.

This mindset led

**TANSEL, page 2**

# Students join sprint for Darfur

CHRIS TOWERS  
BEN F. BADGER JR.  
Beacon Staff

FIU students looking for a way to help the growing crisis in Darfur can do more besides join Facebook groups. The Miami Sprint For Darfur will take place Feb. 24 at 8:30 a.m. in front of Coral Gables City Hall and will feature a 5k run and 1-mile 'fun run'. High school seniors, led by Chloe Hans-Barrientos from Mast Academy, are helping to organize the event. IOS Partners, an international management consulting and financial services firm, is also involved with the sprint.

"The goal of the Miami 5K Sprint for Darfur is twofold: raising awareness and raising funds. The

awareness-raising portion is aimed at informing people about the ongoing genocide," said Robert S. Hans, Chloe's father and senior managing director of IOS Partners. "Awareness leads to action, and [students'] involvement will directly support the millions currently suffering on the ground in Darfur and in the refugee camps in Chad."

Hans-Barrientos got the idea for the event following a research paper on Darfur, where she first heard about the suffering people are going through there.

"I was in shock that this had been happening and I wanted to become active because people didn't know

**DARFUR, page 2**

# "Sprint for Darfur" brings aid, awareness for Sudan

**DARFUR, page 1**

about it," Barrientos said. Following this, she started a "Dollars for Darfur" campaign at Mast Academy and organized the Sprint for Darfur.

"The Genocide Intervention Network has a

toolkit on their Web site for starting a small relay, but I wanted to make mine big," Barrientos said.

Entrance fees range from \$15 for the 1-mile 'fun-run' to \$25 for the 5k itself. Donors can also contribute standalone donations of up to \$500 to go to one of two non-

governmental organizations, Africa Action or Genocide Intervention Network, who are also sponsoring the event.

"Over 300,000 innocent people have died in Western Sudan in the on-going Darfur Crisis, many of them women and children," Hans said.

According to an interview conducted by Isreal News with the Sudanese defense minister, the Sudanese government, who has been accused of backing and funding the militia groups being held responsible for the genocide, claim just 9,000 civilians have

been killed in the conflict. Other sources, such as the United Nation's Coalition for International Justice, cite figures from 200,000 to 400,000 dead in the conflict, which has also left more than 2.5 million in refugee camps in bordering territories. "We need to raise awareness

of this crisis and channel resources to the families of the victims," Hans said.

Many University of Miami students have already pledged their support for the event and registered. A similar reaction from FIU students is expected, according to Hans.

# Professor recognized for efforts in engineering

**TANSEL, page 1**

Tansel to teach a class in environmental entrepreneurship in 2006, a course which eventually culminated in her Kauffman Professor award.

Funded by the Kauffman Foundation and regarded as one of the ten hot spots for entrepreneurship, FIU's Global Entrepreneurship Center honors professors who have been tantamount to furthering entrepreneurship in their fields, explained Douglas Wartzok, FIU's Vice President of Academic Affairs.

"It is pretty prestigious to have a Kauffman Center [on campus]," Wartzok said. "And as [the Kauffman Foundation] only names one professor a year, it is pretty prestigious to be named a Kauffman professor."

Likewise, the ASCE Miami-Dade Branch President, Eduardo J. Canto, had nothing but praise for Tansel.

"I think she is the first professor we've given the award to," said Canto. "Typically, the award is given to an engineer in the private practice ... but we've noticed her work."

Tansel's work is extensive and diverse. Currently, she is a member of the Drinking Water Research Center, and is collaborating with the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department and the Florida Center for Solid and Hazardous Waste Management, respectively, in several projects.

However, she has also worked with middle school students in a NASA summer camp program and has advised numerous FIU students in her constant effort to transfer her love for engineering to future engineers.

"My ultimate goal is to put our students in the community and make them successful," Tansel said. "There is a lot of satisfaction [in] seeing [students become

professionals]."

For this reason, Tansel spearheaded a new B.S. degree program in Environmental Engineering at FIU and last December graduated her first 17 students in the program.

"I want to get students the best education that they deserve," Tansel said.

After 20 years as an engineer, professor and researcher, and after numerous accomplishments and recognition, Tansel insists she has to work hard to deserve the credit she has been given.

"You are happy for the recognition but winning is not everything. You have to keep moving and be deserving of the award," Tansel said.

Yet, working hard may come easy if you are in love with your career.

"I love the work I'm doing. I think I'm in the right profession. This is my calling. I feel like Oprah saying that," Tansel said.

# Young voters have big effect on primary results

**PRIMARIES, page 1**

for months to come," said Mario Semiglia, treasurer of the FIU College Democrats.

Republicans have a winner-take-all system, which means the candidate who wins the most votes, by any margin, wins all the delegates of that state.

For democrats, all of the Super Tuesday states award their delegates based on proportional representation, which means candidates get the percentage of delegates proportional to those who voted for them.

In this election, the democratic nominee needs 2,025 delegates to win at the National Convention.

The Democratic National Convention will be Aug. 25-28 and the Republican National Convention will take place Sept. 1-4.

In these, the delegates of each candidate are expected to vote for their candidate,

although they do have the right to change their vote.

Super Tuesday had a huge effect on what will happen at the convention since candidates fought for more than half of the total democratic delegates and about 40 percent of republican delegates.

neck-and-neck.

This change was due in part to the higher percentage of young voters participating in this election, 29 percent of which are Obama supporters.

Youth voter turnout also tripled in Florida, from four percent in 2000, to 13 per-

**Juan Carlos Robaina, FIU college Republicans**

I think the Democrats are going to be locked in a battle and McCain will wrap up the Republican election.

"I think the democrats are going to be locked in a battle and McCain will wrap up the republican election," said Juan Carlos Robaina, president of the FIU College Republicans.

Although Clinton was very strong in the polls a few weeks before Feb. 5, Obama caught up and two days before the Super Tuesday elections, they were

cent this year.

Over three million Floridian's voted, despite the penalties handed down by the Democratic and Republican National Parties.



**GO ONLINE TO SEE SUPER TUESDAY RESULTS**

## THE BEACON

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## Women's Center forum analyzes health, sex, love

**PAMELA DUQUE**  
Contributing Writer

The Women's Center held its first Wild Succulent Women forum this semester to discuss sexual fetishes, Jan. 31 at 9 p.m. in the Bay Vista housing community.

In collaboration with the Center for Leadership & Service, the Women's Center hosts the WSW forum on the last Thursday of each month to allow students to express opinions and learn about sensitive subjects.

"We try to make it a very safe environment so that people who do want to share, can, and those who just want to come in and soak it all in, can do that too," said Bronwen Bares, coordinator of the CLS and Women's

**Daniel Anzueto, student**

[The purpose] is to create awareness, and it's also fun because these topics are things most people don't normally talk about.

Center at the BBC.

These meetings also offer students an opportunity to interact with others who share similar interests.

"[The purpose] is to create awareness, and it's also fun because these topics are things most people don't normally talk about.

"So it's fun, educational, and it gets people to think about things that they usually don't think about," said Daniel Anzueto, a junior psychology major and work study student at the Women's Center.

The Women's Center does research on the topic chosen by the students and then provides information that will educate them.

"[These meetings] are for anyone, to let [students] know to be comfortable with who they are, to feel OK about certain parts of their sexuality, and also to be educated," said Anzueto.

The next meeting will take place on Feb. 28 and the topic is 'Love vs. Lust.'

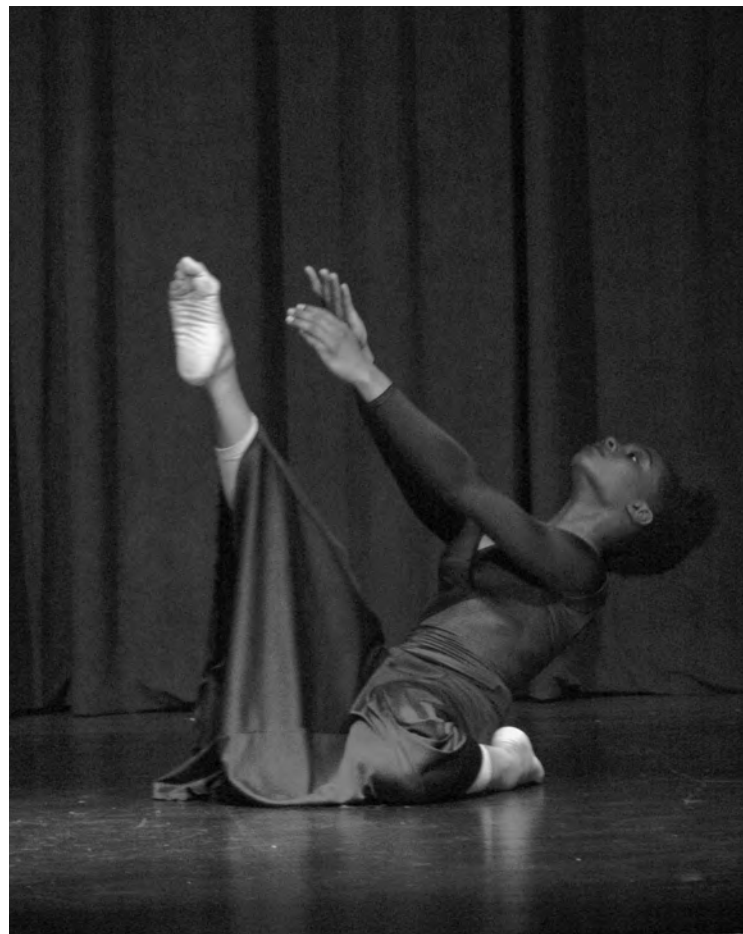
"Most of the time students talk about academics, or about choosing

a major, or something related to school.

"This is a free forum with interesting topics that students like to talk about that aren't often presented to students," said Betty Mathurin, a junior and psychology major who attends the meetings.

The CLS and Women's Center will also host "Take Back the Night" to spread rape awareness, April 10 in Panther Square from 7 to 9 p.m. at the BBC. For information, visit [www.women.fiu.edu](http://www.women.fiu.edu) or call (305) 919-5359.

### POETRY IN MOTION



SARIT WORK/THE BEACON

**A LYRICAL PERFORMANCE:** Amaya Lewis of Jubilee Dance Theatre performs during On Point Poetry's "Moments of Reflection", Feb. 5.

## Wishgivers club helps children with disabilities

**ASHLEY WOJNAR**  
Contributing Writer

"Making one wish come true at a time," is the motto of the Biscayne Bay Campus Wishgiver's club, a non-profit organization established in 2005 that aims to raise enough money to grant wishes to children with life threatening disabilities and raise awareness of the organization.

The money that the BBC Wishgivers club raises is donated to the Make a Wish Foundation of South Florida. The children chosen are usually referred by a doctor or hospital.

"I enjoy watching my members run an event and have fun, but succeed at the same time," said Zachary Trautenberg, the faculty advisor. "They not only grow as people, but are helping charity all at once."

Trautenberg got his own wish granted in 2001, when he was New York's youngest to ring the stock exchange bell.

Vanessa Robinson, an active member, feels the same way about helping children with life threatening disabilities.

"It brings joy to my life knowing that I am helping

make young children's wishes come true," Robinson said. "I feel this is my way of giving back to the community and I am honored to do so."

Last year, the South Florida Foundation granted 514 wishes. Some wishes children have asked for have been to meet movie stars, athletes and musicians. Other popular wishes are going to a favorite theme park or to see snow for the first time.

This month, the Make a Wish Foundation made it possible for a young girl to meet Incubus at their concert.

"My favorite thing about the club is knowing that we are able to make a difference in the lives of others," said President Sonia Perez.

In the spring, the BBC club usually raises 700.00 to 1,000.00 dollars to donate. This year the BBC club hopes to donate 3,000 to 5,000 dollars. Students can check out each month's wishes on the Web site [www.wish.org](http://www.wish.org).

The club has a wish of their own - to bring in more members so that the club remains active after current members graduate. The club's board consists of five members and ten

active members that generally meet in the Campus Life office around noon, on varying days.

Students at BBC can participate in several events that the Wishgivers organization sponsors. Past events have included game nights where club members have played Dominoes or Texas Hold'em to raise money. On these nights the organization needs students who act as casino dealers. This year's game night will be held on March 5 at 7 p.m. in the Ballrooms of the Wolf University Center.

"This not only raised money for a child's wish,

but it was a fun way in doing it," said Trautenberg.

Other examples of events have been auctions where students can donate their prom dresses and other eveningwear. Students are needed to model the dresses in order to encourage people to buy them.

To join the BBC Wishgivers club, visit Campus Life in WUC 141 or [www.bbcwishgivers.com](http://www.bbcwishgivers.com).

"Not only do students get to help a great cause, but they also get a chance at making some kids' wildest dreams come true," Trautenberg said.

### NEWSFLASH

#### Marriott Hotel Corp. to hold information session, interviews

Marriott Hotel Corporation representatives will host a company information session Feb. 7 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. in the Hospitality Management building's Beverage Management Center, room 175. Representatives will interview students Feb. 8 for internships and management-training positions. For reservations call 305-919-4502.

#### African-American Luncheon to feature actor

The African New World Studies Department will host an African-American Luncheon Feb. 8 from noon to 2:30 p.m. in the Wolfe University Center's ballroom. Actor and performer "Madafo" Lloyd Wilson and the Brazz Dance Theatre will be present. The cost is \$25 per person. Call 305-919-5521 for reservations.

Philosophy professor Meir Buzaglo of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem will be speaking on "How Mizrahi Music has Played a Role in Shaping Israel's Modern Identity" on Feb. 10 at 2 p.m. in BBC's Academic 1, 194. The event is free and open to the public.

#### Oscar Mayer Wienermobile in search of public relations representative

The Oscar Mayer Wienermobile will hold an information session Feb. 7, from noon to 1 p.m. in the WUC 255. Representatives will interview students for their public relations/communications position, open to all majors. This will be Oscar Mayer's first time recruiting at FIU.

- Compiled by Eddith Sevilla

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# WHO BELIEVES THIS STUFF?

## Let's face it: Religion is crazy to some degree, but who's the craziest of all?

**ROQUE CORONA**  
Staff Writer

Last week, after I learned that an online group called "Anonymous" was waging war on the Church of Scientology, I started thinking about whether the teachings of Scientology were really that much more absurd than other religions.

I'm not talking about whether or not any specific faith is any more malign than another, but if any one religion's teachings are truly more illogical than another's. Scientology, Buddhism, Mormonism, as well as the Abrahamic religions - Christianity, Islam and Judaism - are all equally as silly in what they define as truth.

Scientology, which was founded by L. Ron Hubbard in 1952 and counts Tom Cruise and John Travolta among its practitioners, believes that a human is an immortal spiritual being called a thetan, which is temporarily trapped on Earth in what they call a "meat body." But wait, where do these thetans come from?

Well, about 75 million years ago the ruler of the Galactic Confederacy, Xenu, brought billions of frozen aliens to Earth (then called Teegeack) in giant space crafts.

The aliens were then stacked around volcanoes and blown up with hydrogen bombs, creating swarms of alien souls known as Body Thetans, which were later captured and forced to watch brain-washing films on giant 3-D screens. Now these thetans live within our bodies.

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam all generally teach a similar creationist story, but on a scale of one to ten on the crazy meter, this rates at around a solid ten.

Apparently in the Abrahamic religions, we are to believe that an omnipotent being created the world in six days. As if that's

not crazy enough, then a talking snake convinces Eve to eat from the only tree that God forbade her from touching. As a wise man I know once said, "Science has already proven that snakes can't talk."

There are some slight disagreements between these three religions: Muslims and Jews, for example, reject the idea that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

All those stories about him turning water into wine, healing the sick, and walking across the sea, are just illogical and lack any sort of historical basis to use as fact.

Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, held a strong belief in Jesus Christ. He claimed that God and Jesus appeared before him at the age of 14 in a vision. Though I guess with all the sightings of Jesus and Mary on tortilla chips lately, this doesn't sound all that ridiculous.

Well, let's go down the list of the truly crazy things Mormons believe in. For starters, they believe that Native Americans are a lost tribe of Israel.

In the 1950s they said the only way for a black man to get into Heaven was as a slave. One of their early leaders said that race mixing should be punishable by death.

Mormons don't believe in deities with six limbs or elephant heads. Nor do they believe in reincarnation, or the sacredness of the cow. Those wacky beliefs are reserved for the Hindu religion.

Are you beginning to see a trend here? Thetans, talking snakes, Israeli Native Americans and pachyderm-human hybrids. That's right, they're all crazy. Every last one of them.

Even in the non-secular world of the atheists, they more or less have their explanation for the Universe set in stone; science, but they're not in the majority



PAUL WHITE/AP PHOTO

**RISKY BUSINESS:** Tom Cruise speaking at the church of Scientology in Madrid, Spain.

and that could mean any number of things. The basis for all religions are these inexplicable phenomena, but it seems like a lot of these beliefs are just for the sake of believing.

I think Trey Parker, co-creator of South Park, said it best while being interviewed on ABC's *Nightline*: "Basically ... out of

all the ridiculous religion stories - which are greatly, wonderfully ridiculous - the silliest one I've ever heard is, 'Yeah, there's this big giant universe and it's expanding, and it's all gonna collapse on itself and we're all just here just 'cause ... just cause.' That, to me, is the most ridiculous explanation ever."

# Obama, Paul open the window on their spending

**ERIC FELDMAN**  
Staff Writer

If you were running to be president of the United States and a voter asked you if you would give the public more information on how their tax dollars are being spent, what would you say?

It is hard to fathom that anyone would answer no, considering that continuing to hide such data wouldn't possibly appeal to any American who funds the federal government, yet has increasingly little oversight in how the funds are spent.

Only four candidates in this election have pledged to open up this information by signing the Oath of Presidential Transparency, a pledge designed by the not-for-profit Reason Foundation.

The oath compels presidential-elects to make the spending data of the executive branch of government available on the Internet, according to Newsmax magazine.

Only one of these signers is considered a "front runner" in the race, further demonstrating how candidates with a greater focus on government by the people are often overlooked in an age where we expect our federal government to be large and in charge.

“Sen. Obama told Fox News: “Every American has the right to know how the government spends their tax dollars,” in explaining why he signed the pledge.”

The four candidates who have made such a pledge are Sen. Barack Obama, Sen. Mike Gravel and recent election dropout, Rep. Dennis Kucinich all of whom are Democrats.

The Republicans were non-committal except Rep. Ron Paul.

Every Republican candidate has vowed to cut spending during televised debates, yet only one seems to

have the gust to publish information to prove that this is being done.

Democratic policies, which aim at using government programs to increase quality of life for Americans, make it difficult for them to call for decreased spending, which is fine, but it should still not be a

problem for leaders of the party to show that the money being spent is being done so wisely, by publishing it on a government search engine available to the public, especially in a time when terms such as "earmarks," "pork," and "pet projects" are becoming buzzwords for representing government waste.

While the pledge applies only to the potential future president and

only to the executive branch of the government. Such an action taken by the chief of state would send a powerful mandate to the legislative branch to do the same, especially considering that individual states, including Texas, Kansas, and Oklahoma already make such data easily available to their citizens on the Web, according to Newsmax.

Sen. Obama told Fox News: "Every American has the right to know how the government spends their tax dollars," in explaining why he signed the pledge. Rep. Paul agrees. "When the government spends the people's money, it must be done with the utmost transparency."

Paul has been a steadfast proponent of transparency and, according to the House of Representative's website, he has always made his district's financial information readily accessible to those who were curious where their tax dollars were going to. Similar actions, to a lesser degree, had been implemented by

Sen. Obama when he served in the Illinois State Congress.

In some capacity, all politicians tend to have a mystique regarding their policies that really just affects their image negatively.

The fact that two prominent presidential candidates are willing to open themselves up like that--provided only their they're elected--speaks volumes of the other non-committal candidates like Hillary Clinton, John McCain, and Mitt Romney. Paul and Obama should be commended for their openness, the likes of which are almost unprecedented in modern politics.

Seems like a concept all lawmakers should agree on, but one that few will pledge to.

Thanks are in order to the leaders of our country who have made accountability a priority.

Let's hope that issues such as these prevail over the mudslinging and fluff as we continue to pick not only our next President, but other leaders of our country.

# BREAKIN' AT FIU

## GC Pit becomes haven for b-boying

**CHARLE GRAU**  
Editor in Chief

At around 9 p.m. every evening, funk and old school hip-hop echo through the Graham Center. FIU students and non-FIU students gather in the GC "Pit" to showcase their best moves and battle through dance.

For the past four years, the "Pit" has been known as one of the prime locations for "b-boying", or break dancing as it is more commonly known. According to Mario "Supah Mario" Toledo and Jonathon "Exclu" Ramos, break dancing's true name is b-boy and the activity only got the name break dancing from the mainstream media. Ramos and Toledo refer to everyone who comes to practice as their b-boys and b-girls when they get together and practice their moves.

"Break dancers are all the same to me. They're more like universal. B-boys care more about the history of the dance," Toledo said.

The duo belongs to a group called the Ground Zero Crew, which competes in b-boy competitions across the country. Toledo said there are 13 members of Ground Zero, located in Miami, California and New York. Most of the b-boys and b-girls in the pit

don't belong to a crew, though.

"This dance is dynamic ... if anybody tells [you] it's just somebody throwing their body around, it's far from the truth. This is like soccer, but underground. You just have to find it in the right places," said Adrian Gonzalez, a Miami-Dade student who comes to the pit to practice his moves and battle other dancers.

B-boying is not as popular in Miami as it is in New York City and California. FIU is one of the few spots in Miami where practice and competition regularly happen.

Toledo said they first found out about the pit four years ago during a barbeque at University Park. Since then, they've come back night after night to battle and practice.

While practicing over the years at FIU, the b-boys and b-girls believe they have become a staple of GC. Students crowd around to watch them practice and, often times, it is their first time watching somebody b-boy.

For freshman Samantha Chen, whenever she is coming out of her lab late at night and walking through GC, she'll often watch them perform their head spins and flares before heading to her

dorm.

"I've been seeing them since the fall and it's something nice to look at and watch while I'm walking out of lab," she said. "It was my first time seeing anything like this when I saw them."

According to Ramos, the hip-hop trend which was at its height in the late 80s and early 90s is beginning to make a comeback.

B-boying is even appealing to others who never considered it. Rachel Barroso, a 20 year old Miami-Dade College student who teaches salsa classes for Salsa Kings got her first taste of b-boying while taking a sip of coffee in GC.

After teaching her salsa lesson, she would watch Toledo and the rest of the crew perform their acrobatic dance moves when Toledo asked her to give it a shot.

Now she partakes in the dance every night after class.



start doing anything. When you're going stick to a craft you got to love it, if you're not going to love it you're not going to get good at it. It might take time but you have to love what you do to advance your dance or like anything in life."

Others use b-boying as a means to stay in shape. Jason "Devater" Perez, 27, has been b-boying since

2003. Besides using it to stay in shape, it also helps him to relief his stress.

"It's more like stress relief. [After] driving on the 836 when there is a lot of traffic, it allows me to take my anger out on the floor," Perez said.

But like all the b-boys and b-girls in the Pit, they all say it's the music that speaks to them and tells them what to do.

"It's like a drug, it just gets you addicted. You fee like Goku," Perez said. "Music is what makes me move. Music allows you to become who you really are."

She's been at it for five months now and is even trying to incorporate b-boying into her salsa moves.

Many of the people who come to the pit to get their start in b-boying don't last too long, Toledo said. It often frustrates him when people flake out so quickly.

"They don't love it, they look at it more as a frustration. They do it as a trend," Toledo said. "You first need to know the history and you got to understand it before you

# "Cholos" run amok in adaptation of "Electra"

**CHRISTIN ERAZO**  
Contributing Writer

Greek mythology gets a Chicano twist in the upcoming production of "Electricidad" at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center Theatre.

"Electricidad," a play written by Luis Alfaro, is a modern take on Sophocles' "Electra," a story in which a daughter is grief-stricken by her father's murder and swears to avenge his death.

The play is set in crime-ridden East Los Angeles where gangs and violence are commonplace and peace and decency are hidden away in the shadows.

The "Cholos," as the main characters prefer to be called, live as vigilantes, taking matters into their own hands. In this nightmarish, dystopian Los Angeles, they know they can't trust the police.

The play opens with the demise of young Electricidad's father, "El Augie", head of the "Locos" gang.

Electricidad knows her mother is to blame for her father's death and stands by to protect his body.

Electricidad refuses to leave her father's side and goes against the advice of her grandmother and neighbors.

According to the play's director, Professor Wayne Robinson, the audience can still find humor alongside a dark world.

"Alfaro creates a world of dark humor where an audience can laugh despite the violent and dark themes," Robinson said. "This play is difficult to categorize. It covers serious subject matters and deals with this family's difficulties, yet in the end, all characters find humor."

As in any Greek tragedy, the chorus plays an important role in reciting the story.

The "vecinas," Electricidad's neighbors, humor the audience in a witty and infectious funny tone as they gossip about Electricidad's actions as well as those of the surrounding neighbors.

"A unique element of the play is the chorus," Robinson said. "Assistant Director Marina Pareja has done an excellent job working with them."

Natalie Alvarez, who plays Electricidad's grandmother, also



**"ELECTRA": MEXICAN STYLE:** Melissa Hubicsak plays Electricidad in the upcoming FIU theatre production of the same name.

evokes laughter from the audience with her colorful personality.

"I play the character of 'Abuela,' Alvarez said. "She's

a sexy *vieja* still stuck in the 'good ol' days, known to be the wisest chola around, still not too old to kick some *barrio* butt. She's too old to be young, but

too young to be old."

Alfaro, who himself is a Chicano (Mexican-American) and

**THIS WEEKEND**

THURSDAY • FEBRUARY 7

**What:** Chinese New Year Celebration  
**Where:** Mandarin Oriental Hotel  
 500 Brickell Key Drive  
 Miami, Fla. 33131  
**When:** 7 - 8 p.m.  
**How Much:** \$125

**What:** The Marriage Counselor  
**Where:** James L. Knight Center  
 400 S.E. 2nd Ave.  
 Miami, Fla. 33131  
**When:** 8 p.m.  
**How Much:** \$39.50

**What:** Sigma Alpha Mu: The Bachelor  
**Where:** Gracie's Grill at FIU  
**When:** 9:30 p.m.  
**How Much:** Presale: \$7, Door: \$10

FRIDAY • FEBRUARY 8

**What:** Charlie Murphy  
**Where:** Miami Improv  
 3390 Mary St. #182  
 Coconut Grove, Fla. 33133  
**When:** 8:30 p.m.  
**How Much:** \$32.10

**What:** Impromedy  
**Where:** Roxy Performing Arts Center  
 1645 S.W. 107th Ave.  
 Miami, Fla. 33165  
**When:** 9 p.m.  
**How Much:** \$10

**What:** The Go - Go's  
**Where:** Fillmore  
 1700 Washington Ave.  
 Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
**When:** 8 p.m.  
**How Much:** \$47.50 - \$55.50

SATURDAY • FEBRUARY 9

**What:** Lauhging Gas Improv  
**Where:** Main Street Playhouse  
 6766 Main St.  
 Miami Lakes, Fla. 33014  
**When:** 11 p.m.  
**How Much:** \$10

**What:** Acupuncture and Massage College  
**Where:** 10506 N. Kendall Drive  
 Miami, Fla.  
**When:** 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
**How Much:** Free

SUNDAY • FEBRUARY 10

**What:** Sultry Sundays  
**Where:** Van Dyke Cafe  
 846 Lincoln Road  
 Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
**When:** 8 p.m. - 12 a.m.  
**How Much:** Varies

**What:** Global Cuba Fest  
**Where:** Spiegelent Collins Park  
 23rd St. & Collins Ave.  
 Miami Beach, Fla. 33139  
**When:** 5 p.m.  
**How Much:** \$15

- Compiled by *Kassandra Pool***HOUSING KING AND QUEEN**

VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

**LORDS OF LAKEVIEW:** Lukas Bell and Stephanie Mathuria were chosen as the winners of Mr. & Ms. Lakeview South 2008

## “Electricidad:” a tale of revenge, gangsters set in urban Los Ange-

**ELECTRA, page 5**

was raised in Los Angeles, blends in “Spanglish” and other street lingo to give the play gritty and authentic dialogue.

The barrio (neighborhood) in which the play is set seems a world apart from the rest of sunny Los Angeles. In this barrio, Mexican traditions hold strong and tattoos and jail-time are a way of life.

These characters are so consumed in their own world that they are blind to the opportunities that lie before them outside the barrio.

Alfaro blends Hispanic elements into his adaptation of the traditional Greek tragedy, but its meaning and theme are not lost in translation.

“Electricidad” portrays life and violence in East LA, while representing how a family and a neighborhood struggle to discover themselves amongst American and Mexican influences.

Robinson warns that this play is not an actual portrayal of Mexican-American culture and the characters are not indicative of all Chicanos.

“Alfaro grabs certain



**Natalie Alvarez**, plays Electricidad's grandmother

Anyone raised in a passionate culture, like many Hispanics are, will love to see these larger than life characters come alive on stage

elements of this community to create a specific world surrounded by dark humor. This play would be too violent if it were real.”

“Anyone raised in a passionate culture, like many Hispanics are, will love to see these larger than life characters come alive on

stage,” said Alvarez.

As the first production of the year, the Theatre Department will be hosting Alfaro's “Electricidad” at the Wertheim Performing Arts Center Theatre Feb. 7 through Feb. 17.

To purchase tickets or request information, call (305)-348-3789.



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## WOMEN'S NOTEBOOK

# Road trip helps team gain momentum

**DARREN COLLETTE**  
Staff Writer

Sometimes when things are not going well at home, you just need to hit the road and try to take your mind off things. That old adage seemed to work for the women's basketball team (9-13, 5-6 Sun Belt).

The Golden Panthers seemed to be losing control after losing three games in a row, two of which came at home in games that were winnable.

However, it seems that trip to the Rocky Mountains and the badlands of Northern Texas turned FIU in the opposite direction. Most of the time, a basketball team on a losing streak will crumble in the face of a road trip that takes the team far away from their home court.

FIU managed to make the most of its road trip by first narrowly defeating the University of Denver 53-52, despite the fact that Denver is a city located at

a high altitude that can make breathing – let alone winning a basketball game – difficult. If playing on a losing streak in a city a mile higher than sea level is hard, following up a road win with another one can be even harder – especially against a team like North Texas.

The Mean Green came into the game having won four of its last five games. UNT is also a team with a lot of big players, which has been a problem for the Golden Panthers this season.

When the game ended, FIU had not only beaten North Texas but also had matched a season high with 77 points in the game. FIU should also be commended for apparently fixing some of its biggest problems during the road trip.

Things like rebounding, stopping opponent's momentum and going on big droughts were thankfully not negative factors for FIU in either game.

FIU's next challenge might just be tougher than winning back-to-back road games. The Golden Panthers will take on

Middle Tennessee (14-8, 9-2) on Feb. 9 at the Pharmed arena. The Blue Raiders are lead by senior forward Amber Holt, who was a pre-season All-Sun Belt first team selection and averages a very impressive 26.8 points per game, which currently is the highest scoring average by any woman in NCAA Division I basketball. MTSU is also the first Sun Belt team FIU will play for a second time this year.

In the first meeting this season, Holt led MTSU to a 77-64 win in Mufreesboro, Tenn., and scored a game-high 18 points to go along with 11 rebounds.

A win over Middle Tennessee could provide the team a huge boost in confidence and momentum. Stopping Holt is important, but the Blue Raiders have a strong supporting cast and over-focusing on Holt could lead to a loss.

To beat a team of the caliber of the Blue Raiders, FIU will need to play very sound, fundamental basketball and shoot at a high percentage.



VICTORIA LYNCH/BEACON FILE PHOTO

**ELEVATING:** Freshman Fanni Hutlassa scored a career-high 23 points against the University of Denver.



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## Quality of commercial in question

**TOWERS, page 8**

**BRIDGESTONE AVOIDING ALICE COOPER AND RICHARD SIMMONS**

Anytime you have Alice Cooper, bent over on a dark road picking up a snake with a deer-in-the-headlight's look in his face as a car narrowly avoids hitting him, you know you've got a pretty great commercial on your hands.

And then when the same car has to avoid a prancing Richard Simmons, you may well have just seen either the weirdest or the greatest thing of all time. This ad was probably both.

**WILL FERRELL RUINS BUD LIGHT AD**

In what was one part ad for Bud Light and one part ad for his upcoming 70s basketball comedy *Semi-Pro*, Will Ferrell over and over again botches his lines for Bud Light, similar to a scene from his NASCAR comedy *Talladega Nights*.

Ferrell's comedy has become completely predictable to anyone who has seen more than one of his movies.

He always seems to play an arrogant, boorish jerk who doesn't realize it, so it is a testament to his skills as a comedian when, at one point, he deadpans the line "Bud Light: It refreshes the palate and the loins!" and you find yourself incapable of not laughing.

**SALESGENIE.COM'S ANTIQUATED RACISM**

In this pair of spots, a stereotypical Indian telemarketer and a Panda with a completely ridiculous Chinese accent use Salesgenie.com to help themselves make sales.

Nobody else I watched the game with commented on them, but I found these two ads extremely offensive.

It seems like a pretty profound waste of time and money for a company to spend about \$6 million dollars on two ads that they had to know would make people angry. You have to question the company's decision-making here. There is little doubt in my mind that they will be issuing an apology within a few days.

## CLASSIFIEDS

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# SUPERB COMMERCIALS

## *Super Bowl ads not overshadowed by exciting game*



Commentary

Chris Towers  
Asst. News Director

Despite one of the most thrilling finishes of all time, a significant portion of the audience during the Super Bowl on Feb. 3 spent much of FOX's three and a half hour broadcast more focused on the advertisements than the actual play on the field.

Advertisers spent, on average, a staggering \$2.7 million for a 30-second spot during the game, which was watched by 97.5 million viewers, the second largest television audience of all time.

Unlike in recent years, these aficionados of unadulterated consumerism were rewarded for their dedication with some of the most imaginative and original ads in the game's history.

Sadly, there were also some ads that highlighted some of the worst qualities in modern American advertising, with most simply turning to sophomoric humor, but a select few resorting to stereotypes that, if not for their humorlessness, might have been mistaken for parody.

But before we get to those commercials, here are my 5 favorite commercials shown during the game. Although they might have seemed fresh the first time you see them, by the 100th time they are shown in the next few weeks, you'll be absolutely sick of them, so enjoy them while you can.

### AUDI UNVEILS NEW ROADSTER

Despite the fact that many people will not be able to afford its \$100,000 starting price tag, it is difficult to deny that this advertisement created a ton of hype for this new car.

It begins outside of a large mansion. The camera pans inside the house, showing a man waking up in bed, covered in oil, to find the hood of his car at his feet.

This parody of the classic film, *The Godfather*, proved to be a highly effective usage of the standard movie parody angle which many commercials try. The difference with this one



COURTESY PHOTOS

**MONEY SPENDERS:** This year's ads featured a slew of comedy mixed with unprecedented creativity.

was the execution, building up to the proverbial punch line when the man screams as the new Audi speeds away from his house.

### E-TRADE'S WEBCAM BABY

E-Trade has always been one of the better producers of ads during the Super Bowl and they struck gold with a pair of ads that featured a talking baby trading stocks online.

While the talking baby angle has been around forever (culminating in a truly awful CBS sitcom based around the concept, called *Baby Bob*), the E-Trade spots found a new

usage for it.

When, in the second of the two spots, the baby says, "I rented a clown. I really underestimated the creepiness," it was one of the funniest moments of the entire night.

### COCA COLA'S MACY'S PARADE

Coca Cola has always had some of the best commercials period (except for those obnoxious Polar Bears that come back every Christmas time) and they provided one of the more surreal ads when they featured *Underdog* and *Stewie Griffin's* parade floats fighting through

New York City for a Coke float.

This alone provided enough entertainment, but when Charlie Brown rises out of Central Park to claim the bottle for himself, you can't help but smile.

The kid's been through some rough times, so it's nice to see him come out on top for once.

Though I couldn't have been the only one secretly hoping Lucy would come and snatch the Coke from Charlie at the very end.

**TOWERS, page 7**

### MEN'S NOTEBOOK

## Golden Panthers face worst offense in conference at home

JONATHAN RAMOS  
Staff Writer

As odd as it may sound, the Golden Panthers will play somebody with fewer points than they do.

When FIU (6-15, 3-8 Sun Belt) hosts Middle Tennessee State (9-11, 7-4) on Feb. 9 at the Pharmed arena, it will be a match up of two of the three worst scoring offenses in the Sun Belt Conference. The Golden Panthers, who have a lowly 1366 total points on the season, are outscoring the Blue Raiders, who have 1335 points.

Despite a lack of depth, the Blue Raiders come in streaking and boast one of the hottest players in the conference. With three straight wins, including an overtime thriller against Arkansas State, MTSU is making a push in the conference, led by Desmond Yates.

The sophomore forward is averaging 19

points per contest over his last eight outings - six of which MTSU has won.

The Golden Panthers, on the other hand, have lost 12 of their last 15 contests on a nightmare stretch that has seen two veteran players leave the team. If FIU wants to get a rare victory, it will have to contain not only Yates, but point guard Kevin Kanaskie, who will give FIU's freshmen point guards Tremayne Russell and Nick Taylor a handful. Kanaskie, a junior, is fifth in the Sun Belt in assists and scores in double digits on a nightly basis.

The Golden Panthers, who fell behind by ten points against North Texas on Feb. 2 before rallying to come up short, will need to stop the Blue Raiders from jumping on them early.

### THE COOL

Energetic guard Erick Nsangou, who has often been a sparkplug for the Golden

Panthers this season, has seen his scoring production cool off considerably over his last three contests.

The sophomore has scored just four points in each of the last three games after scoring in double digits the three games before that. FIU will need the Cameroon native to produce off the bench down the stretch to provide as much of a scoring punch as possible to a stagnant offensive team.

### CLOSING IN

FIU is closer than ever this season to landing a spot in the last place row of the Sun Belt Conference.

The Golden Panthers have just one more conference victory than Louisiana-Monroe, who is 2-8 in conference play. FIU is just two losses away from last season's lowly 17 overall victories.



VICTORIA LYNCH/BEACON FILE PHOTO

**OBSTACLE:** Sophomore forward Nikola Gaseca's shot is contested.