

Is Aronofsky's Wrestler worth all the hype?

PAGE 5



Struggling bunch: Women's hoops loses sixth straight

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SPOTLIGHT

AT THE BAY PAGE 3

SGC-BBC president Ana Maria Silva has dedicated her college career to serving students.

LIFE! PAGE 5



REVIEW: Back when P. Diddy was just Puff Daddy, Biggie Smalls ruled the world. Take a look at how his biopic, *Notorious*, measures up to our critics standards.

AT THE BAY PAGE 3

FIU student to attend historic presidential inauguration.

SPORTS PAGE 8



Women's team not in sync; losses starting to pile up.

OPINION PAGE 4

The great outdoors is a great place for the greatest freedom of all: speech. Even if it is hate-filled.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sex and the City, Today, Jan. 16, 6 p.m.: As if 6 seasons chronicling their risky sex lives and terrible credit scores wasn't enough, now there's a movie. Check it out at GC 140.

Billy Joel, Today, Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m.: Sure, he hasn't written a pop song in over a decade, he's still the piano man selling out 5 nights and counting at the Hard Rock. Good luck scoring a ticket.

Hey Willpower, Today, Jan. 16, 11 p.m.: Tired of business men in suits telling you what music to hear? Open up your mind and ears, join your local hipsters at Vagabond. (Let's just hope the roof doesn't cave in again.)

A Jew Grows in Brooklyn, Jan. 17, 8 p.m.: Do you really need another reason to go to this play other than its name? Enjoy it at the Alper JCC Theatre and pretend you're in New York for a night.

War Pigs, Jan. 17, 8 p.m.: Join the Generals, gathered en masse like witches at black masses and let your inner Prince of Darkness out with this Black Sabbath cover band. Dio sold separately.

For the complete calendar, please see page 6 or visit FIUSM.com.

WEATHER



FRIDAY
Showers/wind
LOW: 53 HIGH: 71



SATURDAY
Scattered showers
LOW: 52 HIGH: 73



WEEKDAY
Partly cloudy
LOW: 58 HIGH: 73

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MR. PRESIDENT

Meyer's life a balancing act of responsibilities, students' voices

DAVID BARRIOS
Senior Staff Writer

Inside a small area on the second floor of the Graham Center is the Student Government Council office, heavy with traffic as interns, senators and members of the executive branch of the organization discuss plans to bring musician John Legend to perform and lecture at the U.S. Century Bank Arena, all while making plans for lunch at Einstein Brothers.

In a room at the end of the office sits Arthur J. Meyer, president of SGC at University Park, with a Barack Obama poster on his door and a Blackberry phone in hand while taking a multivitamin to keep him alert and on task.

Representing a student body of more than 38,000 is a time-consuming task, explains Meyer, a native of Long Island, New York.

Serving as student government vice president from 2007-2008 and president from 2008-2009, Meyer has become an important force throughout the University.

"Well, I've also got several other responsibilities outside of the University. I'm the Chair of the Florida Students Association and the only student

member on the State University Systems Board of Governors. And I also work at the Brooks Brothers store," he said.

Meyer's main job at the University is to represent the students to the administration while holding a seat on the Board of Trustees – entitled to him since he sits on the BOG.

Meyer deals with University administration constantly.

"The way we try to work with the administration is so that, if we're expected to give something to them, they'll at least concede something for the student body," he said. "When the athletic fee was increased again this year, there was somewhat of an uproar but there was a trade off for this: Small venues in the stadium are open for free [to student organizations]."

The Student Government Association, which is composed by both SGC-UP and SGC at Biscayne Bay Campus and Pines Center, had a \$9.5 million budget for the 2008-2009 fiscal year, as determined by Student Affairs according to enrollment in the University.

The distribution of these funds is determined by the SGA Senate.

"It's time consuming but I've got two tools that really make it all possible: my Blackberry and Microsoft Outlook," Meyer said. "It helps me on every aspect of my time management skills. [But] it gets annoying getting an e-mail

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MEDICAL SCHOOL

New faculty expected to attract grant money

ELSIE PUIG
Staff Writer

Boxes of unopened laboratory equipment still stack Rita Mukhopadhyay's office in the Health and Life Sciences building and, in her first month at the University, she has focused on acquiring the necessary approvals and federal regulation standards to conduct research with human pathogens.

Mukhopadhyay is part of a group of qualified researchers in the field of reproductive endocrinology and environmental toxicology who act as mentors and educators in the new College of Medicine.

"When we were reviewing the applicant pool, we aimed on recruiting independent scientists who not only held national and international recognition, but who had a track record of attracting grant money so they would be bringing in dollars to the campus," said Joe Leigh Simpson, executive associate dean of Academic Affairs, who was largely involved in the recruitment process.

Others selected include Dr. Georg Petrpianu, Dr. Barry Rosen, Dr. C.V Rao, according to Simpson.

Established medical schools with experienced researchers on staff often hire young scientists, but according to Simpson, the College of Medicine sought out seasoned individuals that could act as the founding faculty.

Mukhopadhyay, who has been at the University since the beginning of December, explained that one of her reasons for pursuing research in FIU was the economy.

"These days, because the economic situation is really bad, in a lot of medical schools emphasis on funding research is going down, but FIU [made] research [a] priority," Mukhopadhyay said.

She agrees that extramural funding for research is crucial for medical schools.

Amid a swelling budget crisis, a steady track record of attracting grant money means that funding for research and supplies will not come from the University's pocket but from the scientists themselves. These grants provide some sort of relief in tough economic times.

"Research is really expensive. Not only do we already come with the necessary equipment, but part of our salary is supported by this grant money, which

Experts to discuss elderly care

MICHELLE MULLER
Contributing Writer

In collaboration with United HomeCare Services, the University will be hosting an expert panel discussion entitled "Preparing to Care for Your Aging Parents," moderated by Dr. Sean Kenniff on Jan. 21.

The panel, which will include Dr. Rafael Mas, chief medical director of Leon Medical Centers, Dr. Jeffrey Horstmyer, chair of the Department of Neurology at the College of Medicine and Marina Bravo, a certified geriatric care manager for United HomeCare Services, as well

as Iveris Martinez, also from the College of Medicine, will be focusing its attention on the issues surrounding elderly care as well as discussing most efficient ways the "sandwich" generation can take care of their aging parents.

"The panel was chosen by looking at all the subject areas and creating a 'whole list,' a comprehensive approach to the issues surrounding elder care. Then, from there, we went to the partners and experts of our University," said Elina Perez-Stable from the College of Medicine. "It's a reflection of a partnership."

Topics presented will include preventing caregiver burnout, promoting healthy aging, the role of geriatric research, education in preparing for the aging population, recognizing early signs of dementia and physical decline, as well as cultural issues surrounding long term care in South Florida, according to a press release.

Another topic that the panel will delve into is the importance of creating an understanding and compassion for the elderly as well as the people that care for them.

"Whatever career path, for

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RESEARCHERS, page 2

NEWS FLASH

LOCAL

Mothers of Miami-Dade students go on hunger strike

Fed-up from the budget cuts that are creating difficulties for Miami-Dade schools, two mothers, whose kids go to Ronald Reagan Doral Senior High School, staged a hunger strike outside of the school.

This year, the district cut \$289 million from its budget, with a further \$80 million cut expected by the end of 2009. Among their demands, pay raises for teachers and keeping elective courses for students are priorities on their list.

LOCAL

Miami, Washington keeping a close eye on Castro's health

Cuban observers from Miami and Washington are on high alert since Tuesday after learning that Fidel Castro's health has taken a serious turn for the worse.

Castro's continued absence from the public eye and his inability to meet with foreign leaders who come to visit has prompted U.S. officials to investigate the fate of Cuba's former leader. U.S. authorities on Cuban relations are not taking the current situation lightly, despite the periodic rumors that have surfaced about Castro's health, most recently in August of 2007.

NATIONAL

House passes children's health insurance

Congressional democrats flexed their new political muscle Wednesday as the House of Representatives passed legislation expanding the State Children's Health Insurance Program by more than \$32 billion over five years. The SCHIP bill, which will be taken up by the Senate next week, passed by a vote of 289-139. House democrats provided almost unanimous support; a strong majority of House republicans were opposed.

The bill's supporters say the legislation would extend the program to an estimated 4 million additional children, paying for it with a 61 cent per-pack increase in the federal tax on cigarettes.

– Compiled by Paulo O'Swath

WOLFSONIAN-FIU

The grants just keep on comin'

PAULO O'SWATH
Asst. News Director

A week after being given one of the most prestigious grants in the nation, the Wolfsonian-FIU Museum has been awarded yet another grant.

According to a recent press release, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has awarded the Wolfsonian with a \$45,000 grant that will go toward the support of the funds used to conduct research in the digital field.

The MacArthur Foundation was founded to support creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just and peaceful world, according to

the press release. The foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places and understand how technology is affecting children and society.

The grant will also go toward the museum's role in the 2009 WebWise Conference that will, "Share research and ideas related to the impact of technology among museums and libraries — content holders — and researchers from the field," as stated in the press release.

"I think that is it great that the Wolfsonian is getting all these grants and awards from these different foundations," said Ana Nunez, a

graduate student. "It goes to show what a great job they are doing in association with the University."

The 2009 WebWise Conference's theme for this year is called Digital Debates and it will address issues such as institutional control, collaboration and copyright during its sessions.

WebWise is a leading initiative of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Every year it brings together representatives of museums, libraries, archives and other fields interested in the future of high-quality online content for inquiry and education.

This grant follows a series of other grants that have

recently given the Wolfsonian prestige and recognition throughout the academic world.

On Jan. 12, the museum was given the Andrew Mellon Foundation grant worth \$500,000 for its work with the academic community.

"This is something that we've been working on for years," said Cathy Leff, director of the Wolfsonian in a previous interview with *The Beacon*.

The conference will be held on Feb. 26 and 27, and a pre-conference workshop will be held Feb. 25.

For more information on the WebWise Conference visit webwise2009.fcla.edu.

SGC-UP optimistic on meeting goals

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near midnight; it's just not for everyone."

As president of SGC-UP, Meyer is head of the executive branch, which also consists of the vice president, comptroller, chief of staff and a presidential cabinet.

"Overall, I would say that our government is set up much like the U.S. government: with an executive branch, a legislative branch and a judicial branch, though there's only one house: the senate," said Paige LaPointe, SGC-UP vice president.

Meyer, according to the SGA constitution, is entitled veto power over the legisla-

tive branch although the senate is able to override the president's veto with a two-thirds majority.

Meyer admits travelling a lot and delegating many of his tasks to Paige.

"In the past, my job would have me working closely with A.J. and helping him run things," LaPointe said. "But he's travelling often, so I hold down the fort and keep things running smoothly from small tasks to attending meetings."

Elected in April 2008, Meyer's campaign ran on several major platforms, including the expansion of the PantherTram system into a point-to-point system to alleviate traffic; the development

of PantherTV, a television station for the campus; and the implementation of a comprehensive Environmental Action Plan.

"One of the things I'm most proud of is my letter to Marty Margulies, the creator of Marty's Cube. I wanted to secure that we keep Marty's Cube at this University, a university without many traditions at all, and so I sent a letter through President Maidique," Meyer said. "Mr. Margulies just responded to us and told us that it was ours."

It has been noted among several members of the Senate, however, that there is still much work left to be done during this semester. In a Jan. 2 Senate

meeting, Senate Speaker Jean Roseme said, "We only have three months left. We have many of the goals we set out to achieve this year that haven't been completed. We still need to work hard to try and push to complete what we set out to do."

Meyer acknowledges that there is still a lot to discuss and get done. He is proud of what he has accomplished and said he will work hard to complete the goals he set during his campaign.

"I'm very open to the idea of running again for the presidency, but it all depends if I'm able to graduate at the end of the year or not. That's something left to see," Meyer said.

THE BEACON

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Home health care issues addressed

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example anybody who is in the health profession, or social work, students in one way or another will interface with elder care issues, either specifically by the work that they're in, or in work environments where many people are dealing with elderly relatives that are ill," Perez-Stable said.

United Homecare Services is a public charitable organization founded in 1974 by the United Way in response to the growing need that existed in Florida's community for affordable home care services, according to UHS's Web site.

With the costs of nursing homes averaging \$50,000 a year, home care is a service that averages \$85 per visit, with elderly residents receiving in-home care.

"The forum will give us

information that we then can share with others that will create a domino effect on a prevalent issue in our community," Perez-Stable said.

She will assist UHS in keeping with its mission that is, according to their Web site: "To make a difference in the lives of individuals by offering home health and community care solutions that promote independence and wellness as well as for the people that care for them."

The event will be from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Management and Advanced Research Center building. There will be a reception at 6:30 p.m. and the panel discussion will begin at 7:30 p.m. The last day to make a reservation is Jan. 16 and it is free for the public.

For more information contact United Homecare Services at (305) 716-0710.

Research focus lures scientists

RESEARCHERS, page 1

means you are helping the school which can use that money for something else," Mukhopadhyay said.

Mukhopadhyay, who joined the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Infectious Disease after 13 years of research in Wayne State University School of Medicine, is an experienced parasitologist who works with leishmania, a human pathogen common in the Middle East often infecting American military personnel stationed there.

In order to start her experiments with leishmania, Mukhopadhyay needs to get clearance for her laboratory with approval by the Institutional BioSafety Committee.

"In a post 9/11 era,

there are lots of issues regarding experimenting with a human pathogen and, since my incubators are there, anyone can potentially take a flask and run," Mukhopadhyay said. "It is one of the things that I think comes from joining a new college of medicine, I had about 200 people who have access to my laboratory facilities which I need to restrict access to."

Even though Mukhopadhyay has spent the beginning of her work at the University taking care of protocol, she is happy to be here and ready to start settling herself into the halls of a new College of Medicine.

"I think these researchers are excited to be part of a process," Simpson said. "In older schools, work would not be as exciting."



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SGA president has high hopes, dreams

BARBARA QUIJANO
Staff Writer

She is a student trying to balance academics, work, family and personal life, but also the president of the Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus.

Ana Maria Silva, a junior majoring in international business and marketing, and minoring in mass communication, was elected SGC-BBC president during the Spring term of 2008.

Silva is responsible for presiding over SGC-BBC meetings, authorizing disbursements of funds in the absence of comptroller Carlos Becerra-Pineda and representing the interests of SGC-BBC, as established by the Student Government Association constitution.

Her other responsibilities include voting to break a tie, serving on and appointing individual students to serve on campus governing bodies and maintaining a minimum of 20 weekly office hours. She also has the power to convene special SGC-BBC meetings.

Silva joined SGC-BBC during the 2007 Spring semester as the Campus Life director.

"As Campus Life director, I was the liaison between the Student Programming Council, Student Organizations Council and SGA, where my goal was to have a connection between all three committees. I let each president know what was going on within each council and made sure there was help, participation and support

from each other," Silva said.

Silva then served as internship coordinator in the summer of 2007.

"Once I got appointed as internship coordinator, with the help of the executive board, I started the intern program through marketing and handing out applications," Silva said. "Most of the interns chosen that semester are now part of this year's council."

Silva continued her rise through the ranks when she was elected president of SGC-BBC, noting that the key to her election was also marketing and word of mouth.

"With the help of [Vice President] Kenasha Paul, we met with each applicant personally and made a packet for each individual listing the requirements and duties of the position being applied for," said Silva. "In the Fall semester, we met monthly with each council member to follow up on their work."

On the council, there was organization and commitment from some, but not all council members made SGA a priority, according to Silva.

"Overall, I think we've progressed in many aspects of SGA. [We have a] more organized council, council members know their duties and [there is] an increase in the amount of student participation, whereas years before, it was hard to have a full council at meetings," Silva said.

As president, Silva continued events such as SGA Day, which had been done in past years but

COME AND GET IT!



CHRIS ADAMS/THE BEACON

OK, GO!: Students and faculty, after posing for a celebratory picture to honor the re-opening of the Aquatic Center, rush to get in line for free pizza and soft drinks Jan. 14 outside the Recreation Center. The renovated pool will officially be open to students on Jan. 22.

"each year you try to give a creative touch," Silva said. Some other events that occurred this year included Day on the Bay, Rock the Vote and a Thanksgiving canned food drive which donated canned goods to Food for Families, a nonprofit organization.

"One of our goals in the Fall semester was to look over parking and transportation. We were able to talk to that office [Department of Parking & Transportation] and they are now looking to change faculty parking spaces into student parking spaces," Silva said. "Most likely it will happen near the library."

As for the future, Silva, along

with SGA, will be conducting a town hall meeting where President Modesto Maidique will be discussing the 3.0 Strategic Plan, which addresses the budget cuts and how BBC will be affected. This meeting will also allow students to voice any concerns with the campus.

"My personal goal is to market well for elections next year, to bring it up a notch and open positions for students. I want to work with the elections commissioner and hopefully have a full council for next year," Silva said.

Born in Colombia, Silva came to the United States on Valentine's

Day in 1999 and graduated with honors from A Beka Academy, an internet-based private academy, located in Pensacola.

She plans to attend graduate school and earn her master's degree at Harvard University.

"I was very excited when she was running for president because I knew that she would do a profound job," said Sholom Neistein, speaker of the SGC-BBC Senate. "People have been taking what SGA really is more seriously because of Silva. The fact that our infrastructure has not collapsed is remarkable on her part."

Student to be witness to history

PARADISE AFSHAR
BBC Life! Editor

Sholom Neistein can recall with ease that Andrew Jackson was the first president to survive an assassination attempt.

The junior majoring in biology will become a part of one of the biggest events in modern American history — the inauguration of President-elect Barack Obama. That's definitely something for him to commit to memory.

"I'm excited," said Neistein. "[I never saw myself] going there — it's history."

Although he said that the reality of going to the inauguration has yet to hit him, Neistein will be one of an estimated 1.5 million people who will be standing on the National Mall to watch Obama's swearing-in, according to White House and Washington D.C. officials.

Neistein is the only FIU student attending the inauguration as a

part of the University Presidential Inaugural Conference, a four-day event that honors future leaders.

Neistein says he feels honored to represent FIU.

The UPIC, according to its Web site, offers alumni of select honor societies the opportunity to take part in such historic events.

The site also states that the invitation to attend this event is extended to students with academic excellence and members of select honor societies, such as the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, of which Neistein is a member.

Various organizations and departments, such as the Office of the Vice Provost, provided Neistein with nearly \$3,000 to attend the inauguration.

"This office is pleased to be a part of the trip," said Rebecca Dinar, Office of the Vice Provost outreach coordinator.

According to the UPIC Web site, the conference is comprised of private events and activities which

will feature keynote speakers and political experts, as well as public ceremonial events.

Neistein will also be attending the Inaugural Parade and the Inaugural Ball.

"If I were to speak to [Obama] I would wish him much luck and success," Neistein said. "To me, this would be the worst time to be president."

Neistein is also politically involved at the University serving as a senator in Student Government Council-Biscayne Bay Campus representing the College of Arts and Sciences.

He said he will make sure to tell the next president that "education should be a number one [priority]."

After the inauguration, Neistein is planning on running for SGC-BBC president.

As a member of student government, Neistein is not allowed to divulge his political opinions.

"[So far it has been] a great transition," said Neistein. "I believe that better change will come."

Student body unites to celebrate 44th president

PAMELA DUQUE
BBC Managing Editor

Classes and other academic obligations are no excuse for students missing the chance to watch the swearing-in of the first african-american president in American history.

The Office of Campus Life and Orientation will host the Inauguration Day Watch Party at the Wolfe University Center's Panther Square on Jan. 20 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The event, which is co-sponsored by Student Government Council at Biscayne Bay Campus, the Office of Campus Life and Orientation, the Black Student Union and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, will be open to all students, faculty and staff, according

to Craig Cunningham, director of CLO.

"We want to offer an opportunity for the FIU community to gather together to watch and celebrate this historic occasion for our country," Cunningham said.

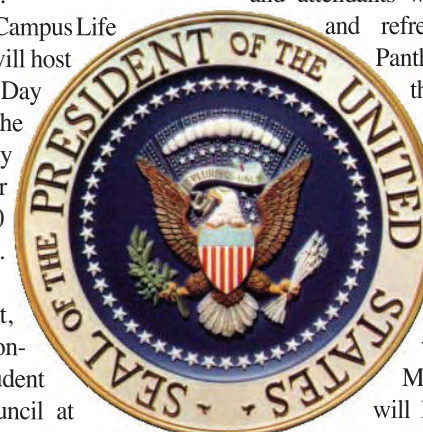
A live disc jockey will be present and attendants will receive free food and refreshments with their Panther IDs and will have the chance to watch the inauguration live beginning at 11:30 a.m. in the Mary Ann Wolfe Theater in Wolfe University Center.

Following the watch party, the BBC Multi-Faith Council will host a prayer for the new president in WUC 157 at 2 p.m.

For more information, contact the Office of Campus Life and Orientation at (305) 919-5804.



NEISTEIN



FIRST AMENDMENT

Campus preachers necessary, evil

MATTHEW RUCKMAN
Staff Writer

“You’re going to hell!”

You might have heard this if you have ever made the mistake of frequenting the fountain behind Graham Center during the daylight hours the past couple of weeks. A crazy man, sometimes clad in leather, quoting scriptures and squawking at unfortunate passersby, has taken up residence outside of Graham Center.

This man, who invades our fair campus every semester, is what is called an “open-air preacher.” The man pulling the trigger on damnation in our courtyard is Preacher JK, persona non grata No. 1.

A new term for most, an open-air preacher is somewhat different from a bag lady, once removed from the common charlatan and a small step away from the grand wizard. Their mission seems simple: to damn sinners and save Christians while being as rude as possible. The crazy man despoiling our lunch area, however, is not alone.

There exists a much larger network of open-air preachers and it seems to be the new trend in Christian evangelism, one the author H.L. Mencken labeled so aptly: “Puritanism: the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.”

Preachers, like JK, permeate many campuses along the East Coast and Midwest. For instance, Brother Micah regularly plants himself at the University of Central Florida, heckling undergrads. Another spends summers in Pennsylvania and wintry months in the Carolinas’ universities.

There even exists Web sites like *openairpreaching.com* and *streetpreaching.com* that act as a how-to manual explaining who to contact and what to do if you are ever arrested while preaching.

They go even further and explain how to deal with common questions and how to draw crowds. The preachers, apart from targeting college students, regularly position themselves outside of bars, car shows and

beaches, where they attempt to convert those not seeking redemption by scolding pedestrians on the sinfulness of masturbation, premarital sex and homosexuality.

Their speech, designed to be provocative and generate a response, seems to be more about their soapbox than any real contribution to their audience. The preachers seem to need this, like the cow yearns for the milkman.

It’s as if something very substantial is missing from their lives and in its place is grand-standing, not to

There exists a much larger network of open-air preachers and it seems to be the new trend in Christian evangelism.

any particular effect, but just for its own sake.

The preachers’ actions beg the question on how protected the freedom of speech should be. In public places, can a lone man ramble on about everyone around him being sinners and Satan worshippers? Can he enjoy our freedoms while at the same time cry for our eternal torture?

I think so; I believe the freedom of speech is absolute. He can express his views as long as no one is hurt and his speeches do not lead to violence. They do have a seat in our collective consciousness, even if they have no value because maybe these sad men’s lives and views can act as a warning for others of what not to become. Or maybe we can just laugh.

So while these crazy men may be annoying, they do have their place.

Some may say these open-air preachers are divisive and bigoted.

I don’t say that. I don’t think they are divisive at all. In

the end, the crazy man calling condoms, evolution and gays sinful may be the most unifying force the campus has.

It shows the common thread that tie us all together. I’m not talking about the diatribe, the histrionics, the shouting down of a minority, but that quality that is ingrained in mostly everyone – respect.

As Hemingway said, we will be “strong in the broken places.”



ENDLESS WAR

Deeply rooted traditions get in way of Gaza peace process

KATIA PINEDA
Contributing Writer

It’s been mind-boggling, to say the least, to define my stance on the current crisis in the Middle East. Last week, I spent the day at a pro-Israel rally in Miami Beach, then watched CNN’s coverage of the conflict and proceeded to mourn over the death of innocent men, women and children that reside in Gaza and have been mercilessly killed.

Despite my tendency to show disdain toward warfare, I can’t help but vindicate Israel for its actions. It is inevitable that, at some point, every country will have to defend itself. Although both sides are, without a doubt, to blame, it seems abominable for anyone, especially the United Nations, to expect Israel to cease-fire for more than the three-hour period it has accepted to allow the exchange of supplies and aid.

I recently had an epiphany: although I mostly attended Catholic schools, I felt hypocritical following any form of organized religion.

Even my 11-year-old brother

Although both sides are to blame, it is inevitable that, at some point, every country will have to defend itself.

and 10-year-old sister have it figured out. When the verbal argument escalates to violence, it’s time to call a truce. After so many times of having that very same argument and setting those ephemeral “truces,” I’ve noted that my siblings eventually call it quits and come to some sort of set-in-stone agreement. If children can compromise, why haven’t adults figured it out?

It’s easy to let the constant images of war sink in and tug at our heart strings, a catalyst to letting empathy take over and make judgments for us.

We sit in our comfy couches and watch as little boys with missing limbs get carried into ambulances by their frantically horrified mothers. How can you



ELIZABETH PERALTA / SPECIAL TO THE BEACON

WE’RE WITH YOU, ISRAEL: Individuals protest at a pro-Israel rally in Miami Beach in response to the Gaza crisis.

not expect the less informed – which I hate to say could very well be the vast majority of us – to not gasp in horror and immediately condemn Israel to damnation?

Dexter Filkins, a brilliant journalist from *The New York Times*, whom I believe to be the greatest war correspondent of our era, suggested during his visit to FIU last Fall that one couldn’t avoid the feeling of having warped back to Biblical times when traveling to the Middle East.

He further reinforces this in his book, *The Forever War*, among other reasons, to shed light on the juxtaposition of beauty and pain encompassed by the Middle East and Islamic fundamentalism. This simple statement seemed to resonate in my head for the remainder of the evening after listening to Filkins, causing deep frustration as I came to the epiphany that this was it; I found the ultimate solution for ending the ongoing wars in the Middle East.

Obsession is, without a doubt, the predominant factor for conflict between Israel and its neighbors. Both sides are stuck in Biblical times, gripping the thread of tradition so tightly that logic and reason have completely slipped out of the minds of leaders who have no limit or regard for human life when seeking to carry out the missions ordained in their holy books. How does an entire region become so absentminded and selfish that it should deem it fair to dismiss the notion that this is no “holy war,” this is a “foolish war.”

People hate to think because it requires effort. It is much easier

to simply follow along with traditions, beliefs and ideologies carried out by our ancestors, even if time has tainted them and rendered them flawed. This entire conflict would end if Muslims and Jews take all of their ideals rooted in religion and just put them on the back burner. Jews need to forget this pompous notion that God reserved for them a special land and Muslims should reciprocate by embracing the neighboring territories they’re already a majority in. This by no means suggests that the parties involved should lose their faith. On the contrary, both Muslims and Jews, descendants of Abraham’s sons, Isaac (Jews) and Ishmael (Muslims), should embrace their conflicting views and use it to evolve as a people and reinvent that portion of their religion.

Who cares about what was given to whom, when and where? The world has come such a long way since the days that prophets roamed the earth that we should all just try to live by an international treaty that explicitly prohibits any form of religious war. Holy books, like the Bible, are full of stories and allegories passed on mainly through word of mouth and interpreted after centuries. There may be some scientific proof of some of the events that transpired, but I’ve never met anyone that believed that the original message passed on during a game of telephone made it intact until it made it to the last set of ears.

SMACK DOWN

Aronofsky, Tomei take on Globe-winning *Wrestler*

STEVE MESA
The Cinematic

The Wrestler, recent recipient of two Golden Globe awards including Best Actor in a Drama (Mickey Rourke) and Best Original Song (Bruce Springsteen), is about Randy "The Ram" Robinson, a has-been professional wrestler (Rourke) who retires from the sport after a severe heart attack.

Feeling like his life is worthless, he looks to reconcile with his estranged daughter (Evan Rachel Wood) and begins an enticing romance with a stripper (Marisa Tomei).

I had the opportunity to talk the film's director Darren Aronofsky (*Requiem for a Dream*) and Oscar-winner Marisa Tomei, who were on hand for interviews at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

Though the screenplay for *The Wrestler* was written by Robert D. Siegel, the idea was one Aronofsky had been playing with since he graduated film school.

"I wrote down the idea and wondered how come no one has done a wrestling picture in a serious way," Aronofsky said. "People think that wrestling is a joke, but when we started meeting these wrestlers in their 40s and 50s, a lot of them could not even tie their own shoelaces."

When it came to casting the lead actor in the film, Aronofsky chose to cast Mickey Rourke in the role.

"I felt in my gut that he was the right guy for the part," he said.

Tomei got involved in *The Wrestler* in "the boring usual way," she heard that Aronofsky was directing a new project with an interesting story.

"I met with him again a couple of months later and got the part a month before shooting began," Tomei said.

Aronofsky said that casting Tomei in the role of Cassidy was an interesting and unexpected choice.

Both Aronofsky and Tomei had their own difficulties when it came

to the shooting. For Aronofsky, it was trying to get his lead actor to be comfortable performing the supermarket scenes where Randy works.

"The supermarket scenes were tough because Mickey connected to the shame of working at the supermarket," he said. "Mickey can feel the embarrassment and it was hard for him to get in the mood."

It took Aronofsky a while to understand what Rourke was doing with the character. Rourke said that it was great because the change he was aiming for as an actor poured a little bit into the character.

For Tomei, the most difficult part was auditioning for a play while *The Wrestler* was in its last week of filming.

"I was auditioning for this intelligent English play with tattoos covering my body and my hair a mess," she said.

When it came to preparing for filming the movie, Aronofsky told *The Beacon* that even though Rourke had a boxing background,

he had two months to unlearn everything he knew about boxing and take up the theatrics of wrestling. Tomei prepared for the role by talking to Aronofsky and going through her scenes line by line.

"I went to a bunch of strip clubs, talked to a lot of dancers and watched a lot of 'Rock of Love,'" Tomei said with a laugh.

Both Aronofsky and Tomei had good things to say about each other after working on the movie.

"Marisa is very sexy and has a lot going for her," Aronofsky said.

"I was so lucky to work with Darren, an incredible genius," Tomei said.

Reel 2 Reel flips movies, reviews and previews every Friday. Email Steve at steve.mesa@fiusm.com.



REVIEWS (YOU CAN USE)

MOVIE

Notorious ★★★★★

Biggie Smalls biopic blends film, music in solid tribute

His name is Christopher Wallace. He has been known as Biggie Smalls, the corner freestyle rap king. The Notorious BIG is what he called himself when he became a music superstar and now the biggest name known to the hip-hop/rap world finally gets the silver screen treatment in *Notorious*.

The film begins in 1983 where the young Wallace – played by Wallace's real-life son Christopher Jordan Wallace – is a Catholic school honor student and his mother, Voletta (Oscar-nominee Angela Bassett) does everything she can to keep him away from the world of drugs.

Feeling he does not get enough respect, Wallace begins dealing drugs in order to buy himself some spoils such as Izod and Le Tigre shirts and jewelry.

Years later, an adult Wallace (newcomer Jamal Woolard) becomes a freestyle rapper with the gift to spit out rhymes that reflect on his life and his surroundings. One day, he makes a demo tape of his rhymes in a basement for fun.

The tape finds its way to young, upcoming record producer Sean "Puffy" Combs (Derek Luke), who signs Biggie to his newly formed company, Bad Boy Records. Just as Biggie starts to solidify his musical legacy as the creator of one of hip-hop's greatest bodies of work with his vivid rhymes, fate has other plans.

The acting in *Notorious* is better than

expected with the exception of Angela Bassett's portrayal of Voletta Wallace. While the real

THE CINEMATIC



STEVE MESA

Voletta Wallace has a Jamaican accent, the accent Bassett uses slips in and out through the movie. At one point, Bassett sounds like she is channeling a leprechaun. Despite this problem, she does her best to become the only woman Biggie will never stop loving.

Luke might not look exactly like Combs, but his portrayal recreates the ambition and determination that showed Combs how to cement his first client's legacy as a hip-hop artist.

Anthony Mackie has an eerie resemblance to the late West Coast rapper Tupac Shakur and embodies his arrogant and sometimes paranoid personality. Ironically, Mackie has played Tupac before in an off-Broadway play called *Up Against The Wind*, which was also produced by Mackie at Juilliard earlier in his career.

The actor that really shines in the movie is newcomer and Brooklyn rapper Woolard. He not only personifies the legendary rapper, he submerges himself in the role whether he is battling a local "wannabe" rapper or letting his emotions out – physically or musically.

The script infuses some of the lyrics from the Notorious BIG's songs in the dialogue, including a scene where a young Biggie writes down his first rhymes on a notepad.

Notorious could have been the type of movie that follows a formulaic plot, but the

movie manages to avoid such clichés. The true source material comes from one of the screenwriters, Cheo Hodari Coker, who wrote a biography of Biggie and was the last person to interview him.

Coker's writing helps capture the gritty reality in Wallace's life. He also captured the essence of the Notorious BIG and the main figures in the rapper's life including his mother and Combs.

The soundtrack is definitely the highlight of *Notorious*. While some songs that are featured are sung by the real Notorious BIG, Woolard brings his game to the table to recreate Biggie's trademark baritone and commanding tone.

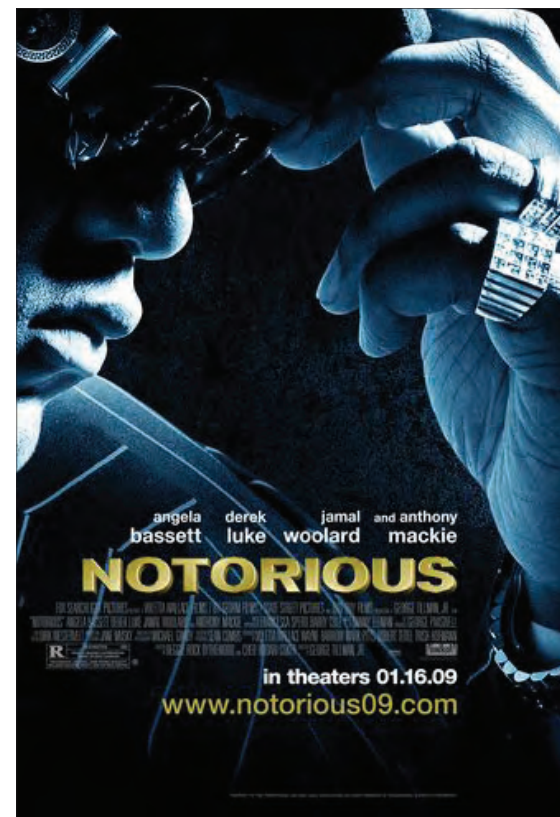
Aside from Woolard providing the film voice of Wallace, Antonique Smith plays the rapper's widower, Faith Evans. Smith has a tremendous voice when she sings one of Evans' songs, "You Used To Love Me."

Another actress that sounds identical to her on-screen persona is Naturi Naughton as former Junior MAFIA member and artist Kimberly "Lil' Kim" Jones. When Jones sings "Get Money" with the rest of the Junior MAFIA crew, she recreates the sultry, sexy and raw sound and performance that made Lil' Kim recognizable.

Jones is not a newcomer to the music scene, as she was in a girl group

called 3LW and made her Broadway debut by landing a role in *Hairspray*.

Notorious mixes the genre of a musical biographical picture and a coming of age drama to tell the story of a man who continues to impact the world, well beyond the boundaries of hip-hop.



Health leave until June for Apple CEO

JESSICA MINTZ
AP Wire

Apple Inc. co-founder and Chief Executive Steve Jobs said Wednesday he is taking a medical leave until June, even though just a week ago the cancer survivor tried to assure investors and employees his recent weight loss was caused by an easily treatable hormone deficiency.

Apple's stock dropped 6 percent. Jobs, 53, said in a letter last week that he would remain at Apple's helm despite the hormone problem, and that he had already begun a "relatively simple and straightforward" treatment. But in an e-mail to employees Wednesday, Jobs backtracked.

"During the past week I have learned that my health-related issues are more complex than I originally thought," he wrote.

Apple's shares have surged and crashed over the last year in step with rumors or news about the CEO's health and his gaunt appearance. While the top executive's health is an issue for investors in any company, at Apple the level of concern reaches fever pitch because Jobs has a hand in everything from ideas for new products to the way they're marketed.

Jobs co-founded Apple with Steve Wozniak in 1976 at the dawn of the personal computer revolution. He was forced from the company in

1985 but returned as CEO in 1997, slashing unprofitable product lines and helping rescue the company from financial ruin.

Since then, under Jobs' demanding leadership, Apple has churned out a string of sleek gadgets, from the iMac and the iPod to a new line of aluminum-covered Macbooks and the coveted iPhone. Many investors fear that without Jobs, Apple would not be able to sustain its growth or its high-end minimalist style.

Last week, Jobs said his disclosure of his hormone problem was "more than I wanted to say, and all that I am going to say" about his health. It came on the eve of Macworld, the biggest Apple trade show of the year, and Jobs said he wanted everyone to relax and enjoy the event.

Even so, the limited amount of information in that announcement did little to soothe Wall Street's nerves. Medical experts not involved in Jobs' treatment said it was unclear what was behind his weight loss, but some specialists said Jobs' past pancreatic cancer could be the problem, since the organ makes digestive enzymes that are key for nutrition.

Apple's history of keeping information about Jobs' health under wraps is only fueling the speculation. The company waited until after Jobs underwent surgery in 2004 to treat a very rare form of pancreatic cancer

Frat Ploys

BY JOEL MALISKAS

MEET THE THIRD, UNOFFICIAL, MEMBER OF OUR GROUP.

SCHIZO, THE SCHIZOPHRENIC SHOULDER SPIRIT

SO... HOW ABOUT THAT SARAH PALIN?

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YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT, DONOVAN... BUT THIS WILL BE HER FIRST PIECE, AND WE'RE FORGETTING THAT—

HEY! WHAT ABOUT ME PEOPLE!

art by iris amelia / story by susana rodriguez

— an islet cell neuroendocrine tumor — before alerting investors.

And last summer, Cupertino, Calif.-based Apple insisted Jobs' weight loss was due to a common bug, even as The New York Times cited anonymous sources who said Jobs had undergone "a surgical procedure" to address the problem.

Apple spokesman Steve Dowling would not elaborate on Jobs' condition or what he discovered in the past week.

"They'll tell you the least they can

tell you," longtime industry analyst Roger Kay of Endpoint Technology Associates said after Jobs' disclosure Wednesday. "They're trying to have it both ways, to protect their guy's privacy and feelings and at the same time somehow signal the market."

Apple's chief operating officer, Tim Cook, will take over Jobs' responsibilities while he is on leave, though Jobs said he plans to remain involved in major strategic decisions.

Cook is seen as one of Jobs' most

likely successors, along with Apple's top marketing executive, Philip Schiller. American Technology Research analyst Brian Marshall — who last week predicted Jobs would step down this year — said Wednesday's announcement tips the bets in Cook's favor.

"The company has been soft-signaling to the Street for a while now that Steve Jobs is not going to be CEO forever," he said. "This will be sort of a trial period for Cook to be chief executive."

THERE SHE IS



JAVIER DE LA VEIGA/THE BEACON

CROWNED: Miss FIU 2009 winner Stephanie Lozano takes a lap around the stage after Tuesday night's pageant results. Lozano won an \$850 scholarship and \$550 toward her talent costume and gown for the Miss Florida pageant.

THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

FRIDAY • JANUARY 16

WHAT: Sex and the City movie
WHEN: 6:00 p.m.
WHERE: GC 140
CONTACT: (305) 348-3068

WHAT: Billy Joel
WHEN: 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino
CONTACT: (954) 327-7625

WHAT: Donna the Buffalo
WHEN: 8:00 p.m.
WHERE: City Limits
CONTACT: (561) 279-8222

WHAT: Adding Machine Play
WHEN: 8:00 p.m.
WHERE: GableStage at the Biltmore
CONTACT: (305) 445-1119

WHAT: Hey Willpower
WHEN: 11:00 p.m.
WHERE: The Vagabond
CONTACT: (305) 379-0508

SATURDAY • JANUARY 17

WHAT: Organic Local Fair
WHEN: 12:00 p.m.
WHERE: Whole Foods, SoBe
CONTACT: (305) 532-1707

WHAT: EcoAdventures: Basic Outdoor Skills
WHEN: 1:00 p.m.
WHERE: Castellow Hammock Nature Center
CONTACT: (305) 242-7688

WHAT: Chris Kraus
WHEN: 2:00 p.m.
WHERE: MoCA at Goldman Warehouse
CONTACT: (305) 573-5441

WHAT: A Jew Grows in Brooklyn
WHEN: 8:00 p.m.
WHERE: Alper JCC Theater
CONTACT: (786) 263-0041

WHAT: War Pigs
WHEN: 8:00 p.m.
WHERE: City Limits
CONTACT: (561) 279-8222

WHAT: Show Me the Funny
WHEN: 8:00 p.m.
WHERE: GC Ballroom
CONTACT: (305) 348-2285

SUNDAY • JANUARY 18

WHAT: Chinese Club Meeting
WHEN: 1:00 p.m.
WHERE: GC 305
CONTACT: (305) 348-2285

WHAT: Miami City Ballet Program II
WHEN: 2:00 p.m.
WHERE: Broward Center Audene Theater
CONTACT: (954) 462-0222

WHAT: Billy Joel
WHEN: 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Hard Rock Live
CONTACT: (954) 779-1808

WHAT: Por los Caminos de La Mancha
WHEN: Call
WHERE: Zu Galeria Fine Arts
CONTACT: (786) 443-5872

WHAT: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)
WHEN: 2:00 p.m.
WHERE: Studio Theatre
CONTACT: (305) 949-6722

Compiled by Mariana Ochoa

NOTEBOOK: MEN'S BASKETBALL

Freshman dominates, wins player of the week

JONATHAN DAVILA
Staff Writer

Golden Panthers forward center Freddy Asprilla was named the Sun Belt Conference co-Player of the Week on Jan. 12.

The freshman big man received the honor after dominating the paint against Sun Belt Conference opponents during the week of Jan. 4.

During that stretch, the Villavicencio, Colombia native had 21 points and seven rebounds in a win against Western Kentucky on Jan. 8 and 28 points with 10 boards in a loss at Middle Tennessee.

"I'm very happy and appreciative ... I work hard everyday," he said.

Asprilla has been the starting center for the Golden Panther basketball team since incumbent

starter Russell Hicks went out with a stress fracture in late November.

Since then, Asprilla scored in double figures in eight out of the last nine games and grabbed 10 or more rebounds in six out of the last nine, including a career-high 15 rebounds in a loss at Troy on Jan. 3.

"Freddy is a beast, man. He can rebound and he can handle. He's an animal. He's been more mean and hard – more aggressive," said teammate and Asprilla's close friend forward J.C. Otero.

In 15 games this season, he averaged 25.8 minutes, 13 points on 52 percent shooting and 8.5 rebounds.

Head coach Sergio Rouco was surprised at Asprilla becoming such an efficient scorer so quickly, but said he always knew he had a great rebounder on

the team.

"I saw a kid that was raw – just reaching his potential. He's a great rebounder. Wherever he plays, he's going to make his money as a rebounder," Rouco said.

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Rouco said that this season the team will continue to focus on feeding the ball to Asprilla in the post, but also said the big man must improve his conditioning and develop a perimeter shot.

However, those goals will be on the to-do list for next season. A short-term goal for Asprilla is to bulk up.

"He's trimmed down. Now, he needs to get stronger," Rouco said.

Recruiting class reaches 20 verbal commitments

FOOTBALL, page 8

games.

"Things are getting better at FIU and I'm excited to be a part of it," Carroll told *The Miami Herald*.

Carroll will sit out a season per NCAA transfer rules and will be a junior when he takes the field in a few years.

RECRUITING BLITZ

The Golden Panthers currently have 20 oral commitments in the 2009 class who intend to play for the team next season.

Headlining the class are a pair of Miami Northwestern standouts in line-backer Kenneth Dillard and wide receiver Wayne Times.

In addition to offensive lineman Rupert Bryan

from Belle Glade Central, and Hutchinson (Kansas) Community College product Thatcher Starling, who is already on campus.

Starling, Bryan and Dillard are three-star recruits, according to *Rivals.com*.

Significant local commits include lineman Giancarlo Revilla from Miami Killian, who spurned offers from other Sun Belt Conference teams such as Western Kentucky and Troy.

Defensive back Derrick Jones Jr. from Miami Springs, the same school as T.Y. Hilton, chose the Golden Panthers over the likes of conference rival Florida Atlantic.

With national signing day less than a month away, FIU is expected to sign

roughly 25 players in the 2009 class.

IN THE RUNNING

The Golden Panthers are also competing for several uncommitted top prospects. Quarterback Nico Flores of North Miami Beach, who holds offers from an SEC and Big East conference team in MSU and South Florida, is considering FIU.

The Golden Panthers are also pursuing 6-foot-7, 356 pounds Claudyson Calixte, who is ranked in the top 100 offensive tackles in the 2009 class by *Rivals.com*.

Both players are considered three-star prospects by *Rivals.com*.

KICK-ON



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON FILE PHOTO

GOT CLEATS?: The men's soccer team will be hosting walk-on tryouts Jan. 27 at 2:30 p.m. at the FIU soccer field. Students must be full-time, have a cumulative 2.5 GPA and be under 24 years old. For more information, call (305) 348-2121.

Leading scorer contained, forward nearing return

WOMEN'S NOTEBOOK, page 8

The team has had continuous trouble battling the press-defense which has produced many turnovers for FIU, allowing the opposing team too many opportunities for fast break points.

The conference's worst scoring team will continue to be hurt by turnovers, especially when the leading scorer is double-teamed most of the time.

If the bench players can't take on more of a role, a five-game losing streak could end up much longer for head coach Cindy Russo, who hasn't spoken out about her team's performance for quite some time.

"Every game someone new steps up, and

I hope there's a game soon where everyone on the team is on the same level," Bosilj said.

"We need to stay together so that we can bring the 'w' home; the coaches are putting a lot of pressure on us during practice so that we can be prepared for upcoming games."

Bouncing back from this slump might be alleviated by the possible return of injured forward Marquita Adley.

Consistency and preparation will be key factors for this team that has lacked momentum since the start of the season.

"We start doing it [winning] and then we stop," said Gonzalez. "I just want to win, that's all that is on my mind."



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MISCELLANEOUS

HONOR STUDENTS: Phi Sigma Theta National Honor Society is seeking motivated students to establish a campus chapter. Contact: Director@PhiSigmaTheta.org

1987 Chevy SS Monte Carlo for sale \$4500 or best offer. New pearl white paint job, headers, exhaust, rebuilt motor. 305 horse power. For more information, call (305) 753-0838.

NOTEBOOK: WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Turnovers hurting idle offense

STEPHANIE GABRIEL
Staff Writer

After their lowest scoring performance of the season just last week against Middle Tennessee State University, the Golden Panthers' women's basketball team traveled back to Miami to continue some important work on handling defensive pressure and controlling the ball.

The Golden Panthers (3-14, 1-5 Sun Belt) put up just 35 points against MTSU. Meanwhile, junior guard and leading scorer, Monika Bosilj, was held scoreless.

"I don't think we had the mental preparation for that game," said starting point-guard Michelle Gonzalez. "Some of the players didn't step up when they knew there was going to be a lot of pressure."

Too many turnovers is a recurrent theme this season for the team.

"Their defense was pretty good and we had a lot of turnovers in the first half which killed us," Bosilj said.

WOMEN'S NOTEBOOK, page 7

PICKED APART



COME BACK TOO LATE: The Golden Panthers lost their sixth straight game after falling to the Owls 94-82 in Boca Raton. The Golden Panthers were outscored 51-33 in the first half. Forward Elisa Carey (above) scored 14 points for the Golden Panthers (3-14, 1-5 Sun Belt). For the complete game story visit www.fiusm.com

CHARLIE GRAU/THE BEACON

NOTEBOOK: FOOTBALL

Transfer QB eligible to play in 2010

JONATHAN RAMOS
Asst. Sports Director

Incumbent starter Paul McCall is likely to remain in the starter role this upcoming season, providing stability and consistency, but Golden Panther fans should be glad to know that McCall will have a qualified replacement when he completes his senior season.

Former hometown prospect Wesley Carroll has completed his transfer to FIU from Mississippi State University and is on campus this Spring, giving the team an experienced quarterback when the 2010 season arrives.

Carroll led Ft. Lauderdale St. Thomas Aquinas to three high school state championship games and went on to earn immediate playing time as a starter at MSU as a freshman.

The 6-foot-2 sophomore was a member of the All-Southeastern Conference freshman team in 2007, but lost his starting position in 2008 and played in just seven

FOOTBALL, page 7

Poor communication makes good players into a bad team



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

SHOOTING THE JAY: Sophomore point guard Michelle Gonzalez shoots a basket vs. Wisconsin-Green Bay on Nov. 14. She is leading the team in assists and turnovers.

You'd think a 5-foot-10 guard with the ability to shoot from the outside would never go scoreless in a game.

You'd think a point guard with the ball-handling skills of a juggler would not have 107 turnovers in 16 games.

Yet both these instances are true for the Golden Panthers women's basketball team (3-14, Sun Belt 1-5) that plays at opposite ends of the spectrum.

Unfortunately for the Golden Panthers, a dismal season thus far is not owed to just inconsistent performances; it is a result of players struggling to convert their individual abilities into team victories.

The team's roster on paper does not compare to last season's, but it is worth at least a .500 record. It is not worth a 35-point performance against Middle Tennessee State University with no player reaching double-digit scoring, that's for sure. And it isn't worth the worst record in the Sun Belt Conference.

So what is the root of the chemistry starved team? Not enough communication.

On offense, when a player is double-teamed or pressured, she might as well be a deer caught in headlights. The pressure brings futility to a situation remedied by an unguarded teammate.

More importantly, it is fixed

through communication and knowing where the open teammate might be.

Lack of communication is a habit the Golden Panthers seem to just can't quit.

Therefore, they lead the conference in turnovers and rank last in scoring.

Those same turnovers make it difficult for the team's defense to set itself and prevent fast-break points.

Turnovers cause a powerful domino effect that hurts the offense, weakens the defense and eventually inflates the number of losses.

If the Golden Panthers handled the full-court press and double-teams with just a little more efficiency, they would be at least the .500 team their talent should allow them to be.

So with 10 conference games left in the season, what can the team do to redirect their current path into a turnaround season?

Besides revisiting the fundamentals, one of the team captains, Monika Bosilj, needs to not only display those oh-so-valuable intangible leadership, but she has to increase her scoring.

When a team is in a rut, a breakout game from the team's leader and arguably best player can give teammates incentive to up their playing level.

One of those teammates is

point guard Michelle Gonzalez, who hit a wall against Middle Tennessee. She is the No. 1 communicator, not in the locker room, but on the court where mistakes are magnified and the games are decided.

Gonzalez understanding her teammates' strengths and appropriate roles on the team should limit the turnovers.

She has the power to keep that first domino from consequently knocking down the rest.

INTERIOR PLAY

Based on the team's stats and my analysis, it seems like the team has done nothing right up to this point.

However, the Golden Panthers' frontcourt play cannot be overlooked. Especially when the team's leading rebounder sophomore center Elisa Carey straps on a knee brace before battling in the paint every game.

This constant reminder of her torn anterior cruciate ligament last season has not stopped her from banging against equally tall and physical centers in the conference.

So, the team's individual pieces are competent enough to make it to the tournament. They just need to start playing more conservatively and cohesively.

If they communicate, the season is safe. At least you'd think it's safe.

COMMENTARY



SERGIO BONILLA