



Students help lobby for funds

CHRISTOPHER DIAZ
Contributing Writer

Philip Hamilton will be traveling to Tallahassee with 20 other students March 7 and 8, even though it's not Spring Break yet.

Hamilton, a member of the Student Government Council at University Park, will travel to the state's capital during the first two days of this year's state legislative sessions in an event known as FIU Day to ask legislators for more FIU funding.

Students will be talking to legislators about the University and lobbying for more funding next to University administrators.

"Legislators like hearing from the University [administrators], but they'd much rather hear from students ... Students get to give their personal experiences and tell why these issues are important to them and not just the University," Hamilton said.

They will be leaving by bus March 7 at 8 a.m. and will be returning the next day at midnight.

Among the main causes FIU will be lobbying for this year include enrollment growth, money for the College of Medicine and for building renovations. FIU will also be asking for money for a tracking program to help students have an easier time tracking their degree requirements.

There are currently about 38,000 students taking courses at FIU. Most are expected to pursue careers in South Florida.

The SGA budget allots money for the FIU Day. This year, \$5,500 was allocated in the 2006-2007 budget for the travel expenses.

Steve Sauls is among the administrators who will also be traveling to Tallahassee for the sessions. Sauls is the vice president for Governmental Relations, the principal liaison between the University and federal, state and local government offices and legislative bodies.

"This is an opportunity for students to have their voices heard. It's important for students to talk to legislators face to face," Sauls said.

Yet this year's administrators will not only be lobbying to expand undergraduate studies.

"It's not just about lobbying to get new programs, but also about the quality of the programs," Sauls said. "In fact, one of this year's focuses is improving FIU's graduate program."

The Board of Trustees will be meeting March 7 with legislators and discussing funding. The rest of FIU's administration and students will participate by meeting March 8 with various members of the legislature and with the governor of Florida.

"Since we are a public university, the bulk of funding comes from the state of Florida. One of the biggest things the legislature does every year is make decisions on funding," Sauls said.

The legislature isn't always in session; this year's legislature's formal session commences March 7, and will continue for the next 60 days.

According to Sauls, lobbying is not that easy, and FIU will be competing for funds against other interests and institutions at the

More food options headed to BBC

CRISTELA GUERRA
BBC Managing Editor

Aramark, the company that handles student dining services at FIU, and a faculty committee are putting final touches on the new dining facility at the Biscayne Bay Campus set to finish construction at the end of Spring semester.

Now the question many housing students are asking: what's for dinner?

Robecca Joseph, a sophomore living at Bay Vista housing doesn't feel she's asking for much: she just wants what University Park has.

"I feel that [University Park] has taken everything. We want a Breezeway Cafe,

like they do. I want one-price for all-you-can-eat, the pizza, the pasta, the make-your-own pancakes with the salad bar, fruit bar, all of that," Joseph said.

It seems she might get her wish. Two student forums were held March 1 at BBC in the cafeteria and in the housing community room to find student's preferences of food and food venues. The committee behind the task force was present to poll housing students on what they want out of their eating experience.

This was one of various future surveys and forums to be held in order to get the overall opinion FIU students have on the new facility, particularly because so many go back and forth between both

campuses.

Aramark will be building the interior of the new cafeteria, on the first floor between Academic I and the Wolfe University Center. The facility will include a kitchen area and create space for three or four vendors to serve their food.

Stobs Brothers is the construction company in charge of the new building as a whole; it will house the new cafeteria as well as the recreation center and should be completed by May of this year, according to Greg Olson, senior director of Student Affairs at BBC.

"That's where we are in terms of the

DINING, page 3

FEAR FACTOR

Biology professor tangles with nature's wild side

CHRISTOPHER NECUZE
Production Manager

Unless it's behind the safety of a four to six inch thick sheet of glass, most people try to steer clear of any encounter with a shark. But for Mike Heithaus, professor in the biological sciences department, having a protective barrier can be a little impersonal.

On a remote corner of Western Australia, in a place called Shark Bay, Heithaus leads researchers from across North America in the Shark Bay Ecosystem Research Project, a project created to understand the role that fear plays in the development of marine communities, specifically the fear of sharks.

"One of the easiest ways to explain it would be that we look at the community consequences or the ecological consequences of fear," Heithaus said.

Heithaus says humans aren't the only ones mortified of a shark attack. According to Heithaus, marine wildlife plan their lives around the fear of sharks. How and why they do this, and its effect on the ecology of the bay, is exactly what Heithaus and his colleagues intend to find out.

"When we think about predators we usually think about a body count," Heithaus said. "We think about how many prey they kill and that is how they control communities. It turns out they can also affect prey by scaring them."

Heithaus' research suggests that fear is a greater determinant in the behavior of sea life than the availability of food is sometimes. Shark Bay marine animals such as sea turtles, dugongs – a down-under cousin of the manatee – and rays, which are the standard fare for the resident tiger sharks, will move out of areas just to be safe.

Even lower on the food chain, yet critical to the research, are the beds of seagrass, which form the ecological foundation of the bay. Sea turtles and dugongs, or "grazers," as Heithaus refers to them, who eat the seagrass, are in-turn preyed upon by the sharks and the whole thing goes full circle.



MIKE HEITHAUS/SPECIAL TO THE BEACON

MAKING A SPLASH: Mike Heithaus, a biology professor at the Biscayne Bay Campus, attaches a "Cittercam" to a sea turtle in Shark Bay, in Western Australia. The underwater camera is used to collect data on the daily lives of sea animals.

The research provides scientists with clues about how other marine habitats – which have been destroyed, in part, by over fishing – may have functioned at one point. It also serves as a warning to those interested in restoring the diminishing population of sea turtles and manatees in South Florida, according to Heithaus.

But Heithaus isn't just making underwater appearances. His research and research methods have earned him a spot on the small-screen.

Since it debuted in 2003, Heithaus has been the host of the National Geographic

HEITHAUS, page 2

NEWSFLASH

University Jewish community has new home

Jewish students and staff at FIU will now have a place to call home at the new Chabad Jewish Student Center.

The house has been named the “Tabacinic Chabad House” in honor of Moshe Tabacinic, a Bal Harbour philanthropist who contributed funds for the house.

The house, located at 10031 S.W. 15th Terrace in Miami, will be dedicated at 11 a.m. March 11.

According to the release, only eight universities in the state of Florida have Chabad student centers.

For more information, visit www.ChabadFIU.com.

FIU team only U.S. group to head to China for housing project

A group from FIU will represent the United States in Beijing, China as the only American university invited to take part in the “Future House Community” project.

Part of the project’s goal is to help China’s energy and environmental concerns. According to University officials, it will include 10 houses from eight countries. Each country will design and build a house that reflects its own technological capabilities and design preferences. Among the other participating countries are Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Spain and Sweden. The official construction opening ceremony will be held March 16.

Yong Tao, an FIU professor of mechanical and material engineering, and Yimin Zhu, another FIU professor of construction management, will direct both the design and construction of the Future House U.S.A. Project.

FIU was invited to participate after its team won first place in Energy Balance at the 2005 National Solar Decathlon in Washington, D.C.

Construction of the FIU house will begin in early 2007 and is scheduled for completion by 2008.

– Compiled by Betsy Martinez

TENSION RELIEF



GAUDRY PEUCHAVY/THE BEACON

TABLE TALK: Several U.N. ambassadors gathered to discuss international tensions, specifically Iran’s role in Iraq and the Iranian nuclear weapons program. The event took place March 5 in the GC Ballroom.

Professor hosts own animal TV show

HEITHAUS, page 1

show “Cittercam.”

The Cittercam is a device that is worn by wild animals and serves the purpose of recording important information such as the animal’s whereabouts, acceleration, temperature and environmental data. It was first developed by marine biologist and filmmaker Greg Marshall and then later adopted as a pet project by the National Geographic Society.

What separates the Cittercam from other similar devices, however, is that it is the first of its kind to feature an on-board video camera making it possible for researchers to walk or swim in the footsteps of wild

animals.

Lately, Heithaus has taken a more advisory role in the project making trips to the site only to get new graduate students started and to get new legs of the project underway. New local projects are making it difficult for Heithaus to spend time in Shark Bay.

“I’d love to spend eight or nine months down there, but I just can’t anymore. So it’s up to my students to really carry on the bulk of the field work,” Heithaus said.

With the scent of freshly laid carpet still perfuming the air of his new office in the Marine Science building at the Biscayne Bay Campus, Heithaus is a far cry away from the hot, salty environs of Western Australia, yet his sun washed hair and the enthusiasm in his voice are telltale signs of his dedication to his work. The research will continue under his close supervision and he plans to see it through.

“Really, my philosophy is that as long as you have good questions being asked it doesn’t matter where you work or what species you’re working with,” Heithaus said.

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Gallery exhibit gives brides-to-be wedding tips

PEDRO CORTES
Contributing Writer

The Kovens Conference Center, located at the Biscayne Bay Campus, holds over 30 special events a year, 16 of which are weddings.

In an attempt to bring awareness of the center's capacity to cater to weddings, the center held its First Annual Wedding Gallery. The event was sponsored by the center's catering company, Thierry's Catering and Event Design, on March 4 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The event was free and open to the public. The center did, however, request for those planning to attend to register for the event in advance through the center's website.

"Although the main idea was to get more exposure to [the center], we hope to have created an event that increases the amount of weddings we host [at the center]," said Jean Harris, director of the center.

The gallery was held on both floors and the balcony of the center, overlooking Biscayne Bay.

Upon entering, brides-to-be would get their nametags before being greeted by Courtney Gerring, client services representa-



PEDRO CORTES/THE BEACON

WITH MARRIAGE IN MIND: Several displays exhibiting possible ideas for wedding ceremonies and receptions were showcased at the Kovens Conference Center's First Annual Wedding Gallery. The event, which was free and open to the public, took place March 4.



and the main coordinator of the event.

The brides would then walk into a bride's room—the room where the bride prepares for her wedding—set up on the first floor in order to give the brides-to-be in attendance a sense of what it would be like to dress up for their upcoming wedding ceremony.

The bride's room was large and

contained several linen-covered tables, with plenty of space in the center of the room for attendants to walk in and out.

Afterward, guests walked up the staircase that leads to the center's ballroom, where 25 vendors had set up their wares.

The first thing that grabbed the attention of a guest entering the ballroom was the sheer size of

it. Made for hosting receptions, it had enough space for several hundred guests and for a suitable dance floor.

On display in the ballroom was everything from ornate wedding gowns to ice sculptures of fictional couples, as well as a table for Thierry's Catering company for couples to find information about their services.

"We are [hoping] to cater to all matters of brides, from student to business woman," Gerring said. "Not only do we have indoor weddings, we can also have them outdoors on the balcony, overlooking the bay."

The displays on the tables near the entrance drew much attention, drawing each bride to the linen napkins folded into blooming flowers and large centerpieces with assorted foliage as they walked by.

The professionally-arranged displays, provided by the center's design companies, The Party Fashion Company and Brides Florida, gave attendees ideas on how their set pieces could be put together at their reception.

The buffet and open bar, set up for the couples to sample some of Thierry's dishes, were also large draws, creating lines that wrapped around the room. This led to much socializing and talk amongst the couples.

Harris looked at the exiting couples with a slight smile on her face.

"If this is a success, we hope to make this into a yearly event," Harris said.

For more information on the center, visit their site at www.kovens.fiu.edu, or contact their front desk at 305-919-5000.

New building will house expanded food services

DINING, page 1

project, though nothing's carved in stone yet," Olson said.

Olson also said they're waiting on Aramark for final decisions on other issues including vendors. There is the possibility, however, of there also being a convenience store in the new building or nearby.

The convenience store idea appealed to many students present at the forum because it would allow late night shopping for necessities on campus without having to leave campus in search of a convenience store.

"A lot of it has to do with the funding available. We haven't verified the funding yet," Olson said.

The hope is the fitness center and new cafeteria area will be open and ready for use beginning next Fall.

According to Felecia Townsend, director of business services who heads up the task force working with Aramark on the proposal for venues, the budget comes to \$1.5 million to build the facility.

"We've asked Aramark for breakdown of this budget so we can get a gist [of] what's included in the amount," she said.

Some venues already discussed prior to the forums were Bleeker Street, a panini sandwich restaurant; a grill similar to the one already in the cafeteria and a convenience store that will be open later into the night.

"We did not share with the students exactly what Aramark proposed because we wanted a sense of what they wanted," Townsend said. "We didn't want to do that, rather we went in raw and asked both housing and commuter students what [they] would like to see."

The forum brought many pallets to the table. Students requested a wider variety of food selections. Among those requested were Caribbean food, Asian cuisine, sushi and just a good home-cooked meal that isn't too costly.

Townsend moderated the meeting emphasizing students to tell her what they wanted to see as they walked into the new facility.

Students in turn were given the opportunity to give representatives of Aramark, as well as the committee, new ideas on how they might serve the needs of those on campus.

She admits she was surprised at the amount of students that cook on campus for themselves, though many feel they don't have much of a choice.

Jonathan Alexander Smith's, a freshman who lives on campus said there isn't much to be said as far as good meal options on campus go.

"I want more variety at BBC. There's only like four different places you can get food from. There's Subway, the grill, and the pizza [place]. After that, there's nothing else," he said.

Jonathan Garcia, a consultant within the Office of Business Services and Dining said it works to have freshmen on a meal plan in their first year away from home.

"It's proven that meal plans are very beneficial for freshmen on their own in college," he said. "There are a wide variety of plans, some [are] unlimited and some [are] blocks that don't end until the following year. We're not there yet at this campus, but in order to facilitate and buy in and build out we have to be certain there are a number of meal plans."

Cedric Magron, a junior and housing



YALIMAR PANELI/THE BEACON

EXTREME MAKEOVER: A new building is currently being constructed at BBC between Academic I and the Wolfe University Center. This building will host an expanded recreation center and cafeteria. The building will be ready for use at the beginning of Fall 2007.

student, felt the cost of adding a meal plan to their tuition was not a benefit and definitely not worth the extra cost.

"The meal plan should be optional; what happens then to students who pay for the plan, but prefer to cook in their rooms," Magron asked.

James R. Wassenaar, executive director of student affairs operations and auxiliary services said after the forums they decided against a meal plan at BBC for that very reason.

"We aren't going to have a mandatory meal plan because we didn't want to impose the costs on students. There are only 300

students in housing [at BBC], which would not be sufficient to support a meal plan," Wassenaar said.

The results of the first two forums were very similar to Aramark's original proposal, according to Townsend, who is excited for what's coming for the student union at BBC.

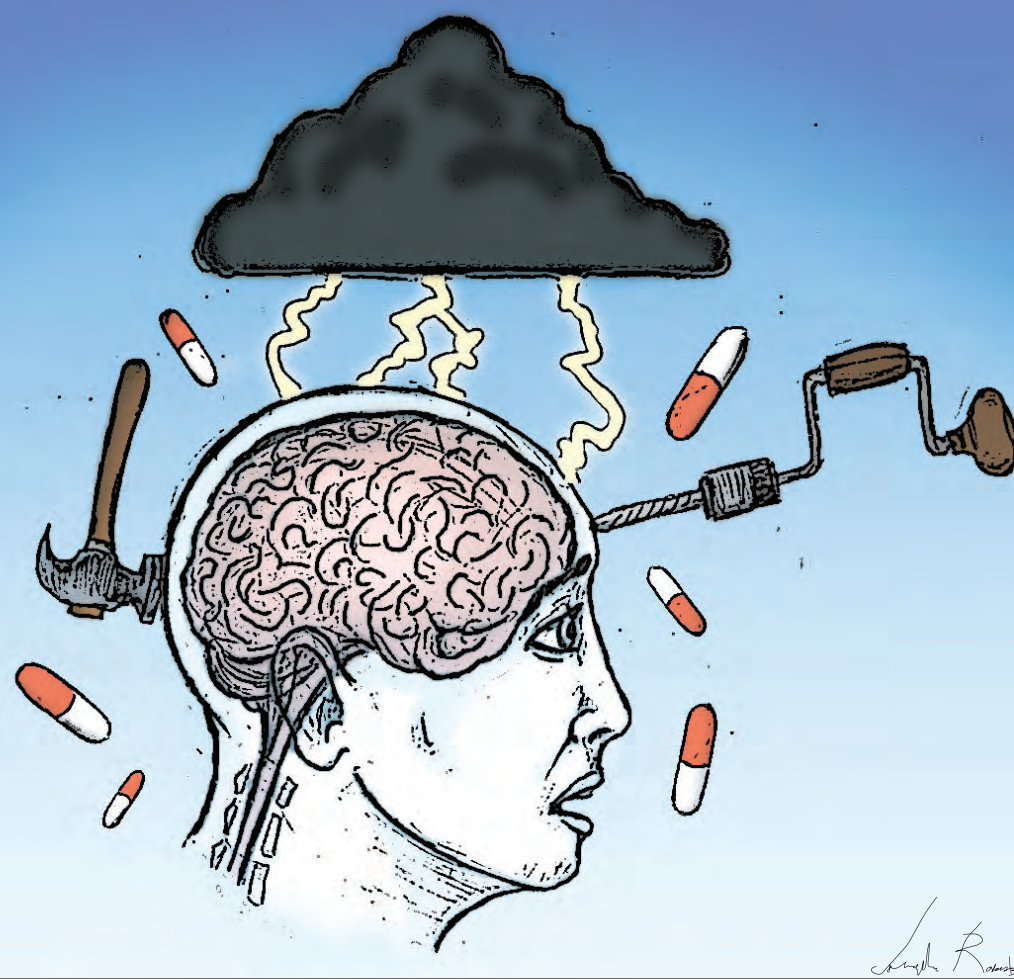
"I really see this as an opportunity to build up the community [at BBC] and create a better atmosphere and see the type of camaraderie that will happen as a result," Townsend said.

-Additional reporting by Nicole Acosta

OPINION

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BRAIN DRAIN



JON ROBERTS/THE BEACON

Mental illness a major problem

JOSE MARTINEZ
Staff Writer

The recent death of former senator and vice presidential candidate Thomas Eagleton calls attention to a divisive force that is far more prevalent than ever: mental illness.

Eagleton, an accomplished senator from Missouri, became a symbol of the stigma associated with mental illness when he was abruptly dropped from the Democratic presidential ticket in 1972 after it was revealed that he had received treatment for depression, including shock therapy.

George McGovern, who had selected him to be the vice presidential candidate on the way to a massive defeat in the general election, later told the *New York Times*: “If I had it to do over again, I’d have kept him. I didn’t know anything about mental illness. Nobody did.”

That prevailing ignorance continues to be a problem. Mental illness is the leading cause of disability in the United States. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, about “26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older — about one in four adults — suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year.”

That includes everything from depression, anorexia, bi-polar disorder and ADHD to schizophrenia and dementia.

Mental illness is evidently a problem that gravely needs to be addressed.

Many individuals incur open discrimination and antagonism for their psychological impediments. We live in a society that reacts harshly to deviance in any form, let alone behavior that shatters what we value as “normal” and “sane.” There is a thin line between pathology and normality, and it changes from person to person.

Every person who has criticized the mentally ill, for whatever reason, has some culpability for perpetuating this invisible plague. The shame of having such a “disease” and being so abnormal essentially renders many unable to seek help for their difficulties, or to even acknowledge the presence of some problem.

Another major hurdle that prevents any sort of progress from being made in curbing the prevalence of mental illness is the sheer cost of mental health services.

This problem needs to be adequately attended to by insurance companies, many of which fail to cover mental health treatment at all.

It is appalling that people who desperately need this service cannot get access to it because of cost and insurance constraints.

This can be remedied by some reform on the part of insurance companies, and perhaps some effort on behalf of major employers can give their employees access to psychological services.

Another startling trend is the growing reliance on prescrip-

tion medications as a means by which to quickly rectify any pronounced mental problem.

In a society that increasingly values time, it is understandable that it has come to this, as people are always looking for a quick and easy fix. This is not at all the solution.

Psychotherapy, while more time consuming, is the right way to treat these sorts of conditions. It enables the individual to enact change on their own, and guide them towards more suitable and productive behaviors. Taking a pill merely alters your brain chemistry temporarily, while not actually “curing” the underlying problem.

Treatments aside, one of the most tragic examples of the consequences for those afflicted with severe psychological disorders are left untreated, is vagrancy or homelessness.

As much as one-third of the homeless population in the United States — that’s 200,000 people — are afflicted with major psychological disorders, typically schizophrenia and manic-depressive disorder.

This is a harsh reminder why attention needs to be called to increase access to mental health treatment.

New advances are surely modernizing the field of psychology, which is still a very young science.

However, the burden of curtailing this growing epidemic lies with us.

It is up to the American people to demand and enact change.

THE BEACON | Editorial

FIU budget proposal leaves questions unanswered

The Board of Governors, the policy-making body that oversees Florida’s public universities, has approved FIU’s \$98 million legislative budget request. Meanwhile, Gov. Charlie Crist has submitted his own budget proposal, which is much lower. The Florida Legislature will consider both budgets during its sessions, which run from March to May, to determine how much the University will actually get.

With the exception of some pressing questions, *The Beacon* endorses FIU’s budget request, along with the spending priorities it enumerates.

With so many big-budget pet projects going up at FIU lately — the stadium expansion and the colleges of law and medicine — it’s encouraging to see that FIU’s top five priorities in its capital outlay budget include two much-need classroom buildings.

It’s a shame, though, that one of them is for graduate students. We understand the importance of making FIU a leader in graduate research and education. But there’s no point in reaching for that without first ensuring that the University has a sturdy undergraduate program.

It’s somewhat worrisome that FIU is only asking for \$5 million for the College of Medicine. This money is expected to pay for teacher salaries, administrative expenses, equipment and technology. That’s all necessary, but it’s only a tiny portion of the money the college needs.

It remains unclear where FIU plans on getting the \$64 million it needs to actually build the medical college’s buildings. Only \$24 million of that amount is accounted for as of yet. Those funds will come from Public Education Capital Outlay money and federal grants, and will be used to build the molecular science building.

The college’s main building, though, will cost \$40 million, and FIU still has high hopes that it will somehow get that money through private donations and matching grants. Since University President Modesto A. Maidique famously lost the \$20 million donation FIU had been offered by former trustee Herbert Wertheim — along with its corresponding \$20 million in state matching grants — no new private donors have surfaced.

The big question is what FIU plans to do if no such donor shows up with a \$20 million donation. Where will the University get that money? Would it stall construction of the College of Medicine? It’s frightening that FIU is banking on a phantom donor for the financing of the college’s main building.

Finally, it’s also disturbing that FIU is requesting \$31.7 million for enrollment growth to fund 1,899 FTEs. We understand that it isn’t necessarily in the University’s hands to cap enrollment growth. The bottom line is that Florida only has 11 universities to accommodate about 300,000 students.

In a perfect world, the state would open a handful of new universities to help absorb Florida’s incoming university population. But as long as there are such few institutions for so many students, universities will keep ballooning in size — and probably stretching themselves thinner and thinner.

As it is, FIU’s administrative and support infrastructure is understaffed and overwhelmed; it’s unable to provide its students with adequate customer service. The thought of adding 2,000 or so additional students to the lines at the cashier, the registrar and the financial aid office — not to mention the parking garages and food courts at University Park — is terrifying.

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Letters to the Editor must be dropped off in GC 210 at University Park, WUC 124 at the Biscayne Bay Campus or sent to beaconopinion@yahoo.com. Letters must include the writer’s full name, year in school, major/department and a valid phone number for verification purposes. *The Beacon* reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and/or spacing constraints. Letters must adhere to a maximum of 300 words.

Let's Dance

MASTERFUL MOVES: At Dance Marathon 2007, a philanthropy event March 3 and 4 at Pharmed Arena, Morale Captain Alejandra Maruri (top) led dancers for 25 hours while participants rocked out to the music (bottom left). Others enjoyed the bouncehouse (bottom middle) and left notes in paper bags for marathon goers (bottom right). The event raised more than \$85,000 dollars for Miami Children's Hospital.



GAUDRY PUECHAVY/THE BEACON



MELINDA BOONE/THE BEACON



GAUDRY PUECHAVY/THE BEACON



MELINDA BOONE/THE BEACON

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WEEKEND

THURSDAY • MARCH 8

WHAT: MySpace Madness Party
WHERE: The Miami Improv Comedy Club (3390 Mary Street, Suite 182)
WHEN: 8:30 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$12.84

WHAT: Mana
WHERE: American Airlines Arena (601 Biscayne Blvd, Miami)
WHEN: 8 p.m.
HOW MUCH: \$30 - \$100

FRIDAY • MARCH 9

WHAT: SPC Films "Happy Feet"
WHEN: 7 p.m. & 10 p.m.
WHERE: GC 140
HOW MUCH: Free

WHAT: Charlie Murphy
WHEN: 8:30 p.m., 10:45 p.m.
WHERE: The Miami Improv Comedy Club (3390 Mary Street, Suite 182)
HOW MUCH: \$32.10

WHAT: The Early November
WHEN: 5 p.m.
WHERE: Revolution (200 West Broward Blvd., Ft Lauderdale)
HOW MUCH: \$13

WHAT: Miami Heat vs. Minnesota Timberwolves
WHEN: 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: American Airlines Arena (601 Biscayne Blvd)
HOW MUCH: \$23.50

SATURDAY • MARCH 10

WHAT: Charlie Murphy
WHEN: 7:45 p.m., 10 p.m., 11:59 p.m.
WHERE: The Miami Improv Comedy Club (3390 Mary Street, Suite 182)
HOW MUCH: \$32.10

WHAT: ZZ Top
WHEN: 6 p.m.
WHERE: Centennial Park (Edwards Drive, Ft Myers)
HOW MUCH: \$35

SUNDAY • MARCH 11

WHAT: Charlie Murphy
WHEN: 8:30 p.m.
WHERE: The Miami Improv Comedy Club (3390 Mary Street, Suite 182)
HOW MUCH: \$32.10

— Compiled by Reuben Pereira

More TV advertisers, networks opting for viewer-created content

JAKE COYLE
 AP Writer

Ever conscious of a good trend, TV networks and advertisers are increasingly adopting the YouTube model of viewer-created content.

VH1, currently airing the third season of "Web Junk 20," will next month premiere the Jack Black-hosted "Acceptable TV," which attempts to fuse TV with the Web. In February, Nickelodeon debuted a two-hour programming block called "ME:TV," featuring contributions from 10-year-olds. TLC last week began a six-part documentary series, "My Life as a Child," where children were given cameras to videotape their lives.

Also, high profile consumer-created ads for Doritos, Chevy and Dove ran during the Super Bowl and the Academy Awards.

But how well can TV play the Web's game? A large part of the appeal of video-sharing sites is that anyone can upload a video in a heartbeat, and that clips of Mentos exploding and men dancing are just a click away. Though now more interactive with on-demand features, television offers far less freedom for the viewer.

Instead, the appeal of amateur video on television is wrapped up in the idea that TV is still a superior medium to the Web — it's the big leagues. You can drop your video into the online wilderness or, as a game-show host might exclaim, "You can be on TV!"

"As exciting as the Internet is, there's still something different and perhaps more glorious about your creation showing up on national television," said Tom Ascheim, executive vice president and general manager of Nickelodeon.

The channel's "ME:TV" includes videos submitted by kids (with parental permission) and a segment called "Web Wallers" where four participants are shown via Webcam. Co-host Jordan Carlos has called it "the ultimate mash-up of online and on-air."

Reality TV, of course, has been a huge beneficiary of the public's desire to be on TV, as have older shows like "America's Funniest Home Videos" and "Candid Camera." But, now, con-

testants might shoot, edit and star in video that gets them on a program.

Current TV, now in about 40 million homes, predates the YouTube sensation with its viewer-created "pods," which make up a third of its programming. Joel Hyatt, who co-created Current TV with Al Gore, is understandably a little irritated that his network, which launched in Aug. 2005, hasn't always been given the credit it deserves.

"We pioneered the concept. We are the only television network totally premised on the concept of viewer-created content," said Hyatt. "We believe that for all of the enormous importance of the Internet, it is nonetheless still a

will get a sequel.

"There's a moment of exhaustion with freeform, throw-anything-up-on-the-Web user content," said Michael Hirschorn, executive vice president of production and programming at VH1. "The dirty secret is that 99.9 percent of it is no good.

VH1 and Nickelodeon are both in the MTV Networks family, which is owned by Viacom. These networks are focused largely on younger demographics, so it's not surprising that they've targeted user-generated content more than most.

"Clearly, there's a directive from on high that this is the direction we should be headed in," says Hirschorn.

Others have also delved into the user-generated pool, including Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report," which invited submissions for a "Green Screen Challenge" last year.

Network news divisions have also increas-

ingly used video shot by citizens with their phones to document events like Michael Richards' racist rant at a Los Angeles comedy club.

Advertisers have also been quick to join the trend and have benefited from news coverage of consumer-created commercials.

"Everything is about cutting through the noise and this is the most recent way of cutting through the noise — which turns out to be probably a lot cheaper than spending \$1 million on production values via an advertising agency," said Kaplan.

It all adds up to a lot of inexpensive, hip programming. Current TV pays \$500 per aired pod, which can increase with subsequent selections. "Acceptable TV" promises creators a cut of the online ad revenue. But most contributors see their reward as a chance for self-expression and a slight shot at fame.

As long as that desire to be on TV remains — and as long as the masses are eager to work on the cheap — television is likely to continue to capitalize on viewer-generated entertainment.

"It has huge long-term implications," said Hyatt. "This is not a genie that's going back in the bottle."

“As exciting as the Internet is, there's still something different and perhaps more glorious about your creation showing up on national television.”

— Tom Ascheim

fact that television is an extraordinarily powerful medium.”

Hyatt says Current purposefully wanted to level the playing field in television, rather than unveil itself as a Web site. (Current does boast a robust Web site and plans to launch a full "destination" site this summer.)

But others wonder if TV should stick to what it knows best: professionally created content.

"Television is and has been in something of free-fall for quite a while — just like the movies, just like the newspapers — and they're doing everything they can to reverse it," said Martin Kaplan, professor at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School of Communication. "So if they see a trend anywhere in any medium, the immediate reaction is, 'How do we make this work for us.' It's an understandable, if desperate, attempt."

The advantage of television is strong editorial decision-making that can choose the highest quality submissions. VH1's "Acceptable TV," which will begin March 23, will air five videos created by the show's staff writers and performers. On the "Acceptable TV" Web site, viewers can vote on their favorite videos, and the most popular

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Golden Panthers' potent offense fuels series win

ROBERTO CARTAGENA
Contributing Writer

The FIU baseball team (9-6) started off the series well, winning the first two games against the Wagner Seahawks (1-2) at University Park Stadium March 2-4, behind solid starting pitching and a potent offense.

However, the series ended with coach Danny Price questioning the leadership on his team.

"We have to find it somewhere," Price said, after the loss in the series finale. "It could be a freshman, senior, whoever, but somebody has to step up and become a leader."

Despite the loss, the Golden Panthers still won their third consecutive series with three injured pitchers.

Price expects outfielder Chris Dunn, infielder Ryan Mollica and catcher Luis Bautista to return from inju-

ries against Rutgers.

FIU 19, WAGNER 11

It was anyone's game heading into the bottom of the fourth and the Seahawks ahead 2-1.

First baseman John Petika led the inning off with a double and eventually scored when pitcher Joe Testa issued a walk to right fielder Dephillip Mason with the bases loaded.

That was the first of nine runs scored by the Golden Panthers in the fourth. Freshman Corey Polizzano pitched five strong innings and allowed one earned run on five hits for the win. Although the Seahawks scored five runs in the ninth, it wasn't enough to match the 19 runs recorded by the Golden Panthers.

Bryan Pullin scored five

career-high runs this game.

FIU 14, WAGNER 2

The Golden Panthers scored 11 runs through five innings with several batters having multiple hits - including freshman catcher Kevin Mirabel, who went 3-for-3 with four RBI.

Despite Mirabel's success, Price opted to replace Mirabel for Cody Jacobs in the sixth inning. As a replacement, Jacobs crushed one over left field for a two-run homer, making Price look like a genius. Price decided to protect his players due to the comfortable advantage the Golden Panthers had against the Seahawks.

"I wanted to keep Mirabel fresh because he just recently came off an injury and we had a nice lead," Price said.

Starter Jorge Ramos gave

up three hits and two earned runs in five innings.

"I felt good; my pitches were working, but I think my fastball had a little too much movement," Ramos said.

WAGNER 10, FIU 9

Prior to the final game of the series, catcher Luis Bautista, assured Coach Price of his availability to play.

"I got your back if you need me," Bautista said.

It was a tied game, 1-1, heading to the top of the seventh inning when the Seahawks scored five runs and managed to drive starter Chris Allen out of the game. The Golden Panthers responded in the bottom of the inning after Seahawk's first baseman Dan Morvay dropped a foul ball that would have ended the inning. The Golden Panthers sin-

gled three consecutive times before the Seahawks went to their bullpen for the fourth time in the inning.

For the second consecutive day, Price called a catcher off his bench to pinch-hit. This time it was Bautista, who, prior to Sunday's game, had not played in the series.

He smashed the first pitch he saw to deep center field for a three-run home run. His first home run of the year gave the Golden Panthers a 7-6 lead.

However, the bullpen gave up four runs in the ninth and the Golden Panthers could not recover.

Pullin continued to swing the bat well going 4-for-6 with an RBI. Outfielder James McOwen's 14-game hit streak to start the season was finally snapped in this game.

SUN BELT BASEBALL STANDING

TEAM	OVERALL	CONF	PCT	STREAK
Louisiana-Lafayette	11-2	0-0	.846	L1
Florida Atlantic	13-2	0-0	.867	W1
Western Kentucky	5-4	0-0	.556	L3
Louisiana-Monroe	8-2	0-0	.800	W3
Troy	9-6	0-0	.600	L3
UALR	7-6	0-0	.538	L3
Florida International	9-6	0-0	.600	L1
New Orleans	9-5	0-0	.643	W4
South Alabama	10-4	0-0	.714	W6
Middle Tennessee	4-8	0-0	.333	L1
Arkansas State	5-6	0-0	.455	L1

*All records up to date as of Mar. 6

THIS WEEKEND IN FIU SPORTS

MARCH
9

Cross Country/Track & Field
NCAA Indoor Championships
Fayetteville, AS

Baseball vs. Rutgers (7 p.m.)
University Park

Home games in bold

MARCH
10

Baseball vs. Rutgers (1 p.m.)
University Park

Softball vs. Western Kentucky
(1 p.m.)
Miami, FL

MARCH
11

Baseball vs. Rutgers (1 p.m.)
University Park

Softball vs. Western Kentucky
(12 p.m.)
Miami, FL

* Conference game

PRO DAY, page 8

my 40 [yard dash time] to see if I could play the next level. I think I ran alright," Bouie said.

His counterpart on defense, Bostic III, took a different approach to the draft, electing to workout at the University of Miami with their strength and condition coach, Andrew Swasey. Bostic III is hoping that scouts will overlook his team's record and base their draft day decisions on his workouts and game tape.

"I missed two opportunities, I didn't get invited to no bowl game, no combine and I was first team all con-

ference," Bostic III said.

Although he didn't have quite the season he imagined, Padrick surprised scouts with his athleticism and speed as he posted the fastest 40-yard dash time among those who participated. Some of his teammates said they wouldn't be surprised if Padrick made an NFL team as a quarterback or another position.

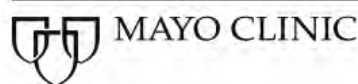
"I'm not really sure, I've been a quarterback all my life and I'm hoping for something like that," Padrick said.

All who participated in Pro Day will have their questions answered when the NFL Draft takes place April 28.



JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON

TURNING THE CORNER: Former linebacker Keyonvis Bouie runs the 20-yard shuttle during Pro Day on March 2.



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NFL scouts search for new talent

CHARLIE GRAU
Sports Editor

Scouts from 24 of the 32 teams in the NFL flocked to the FIU Football Stadium for the second annual Pro Day on March 2 to evaluate nine former Golden Panther football players to participate in drills.

Among those who participated were NFL combine invitees defensive end Antwan Barnes and wide receiver Chandler Williams; linebackers Alexander Bostic III, Keyonvis Bouie and James Black; defensive backs Zach Davis and Chris Smith; tight end Samuel Smith and quarterback Josh Padrick.

Heading into the combine, Barnes didn't have much hype and was relatively unknown, until scouts saw his workout. The former Golden Panther defensive end finished second among linebackers in the bench press, pressing 225 pounds 31 times. He also had the second fastest 40-yard dash among his linebackers by running 4.43 seconds.

At 6'1, 234 pounds, some draft experts say that Barnes could be a first day pick due to his ability to play in the 3-4 defense as either a defensive end or linebacker.

John Murphy of NextLevel Scouting predicted Barnes would get selected in the third or fourth round of April's draft.

"I just wanted to turn some heads finally and get their attention. Afterwards, all I could tell people was that FIU has talent down here and they have to come and see us," Barnes said.

Williams had some success as well in



JESSICA MARSHALL/THE BEACON

MEASURING UP: Former tight end Samuel Smith's broad jump is recorded by scouts representing 24 NFL teams. Pro Day allows scouts to search for talent beyond the NFL combine held in Indianapolis, Ind.

the combine by posting the second lowest time in position in the 60-yard shuttle, while being clocked at 4.42 seconds in the 40-yard dash. As last season's leading receiver in catches (67) and yards (664), Williams has been fielding punt and kick returns to help raise his draft stock. Last season, he averaged 21.5 yards on kick returns.

"I think I opened some eyes, too, because NFL people had me projected as a 4.5 or 4.6," Williams said. "I knew I was faster than that. I don't know if people knew I could run routes like that. I would say I helped myself again today."

Also catching the eye of scouts was Bouie, who led the Golden Panthers with 119 tackles last season and holds the

University record for career tackles with 299.

Although he's shown his play-making ability in highlight reels, Bouie has said he has been working day and night at FIU to impress scouts.

"I think a lot of people were looking at

PRO DAY, page 7

Women's basketball sent packing by Louisiana-Lafayette

ANDREW JULIAN
Contributing Writer

After advancing to the Sun Belt conference tournament quarterfinals with a win at home against the Troy Trojans, the women's basketball team (16-14, 9-9) lost to the Ragin' Cajuns of Louisiana-Lafayette 67-49.

The Golden Panthers had played the Ragin' Cajuns (24-7, 14-4) twice during the season, having come up short in both games against the Sun Belt Western Division champions, including a 23-point home loss on senior night Feb. 22 at Pharmed Arena.

This was the last home game for seniors on the team.

Sophomore forward Marquita Adley led the Golden Panthers with 11 points and 10 rebounds, posting her second double-double of the season, on 3-of-6 shooting from the field and 5-of-9 from the free throw line.

Coming into the game fresh off a win against Troy in which they shot 44 percent from the field, the Golden Panthers' cold shooting night doomed them.

"The shooting percentage really hurt us tonight," coach Cindy Russo said.

Junior guard LaQuetta Ferguson, who led the Golden Panthers in scoring at 15.7 points per game, was limited to eight points on 2-of-15 shooting, while senior center Lasma Jekabson, averaging 14.2 per game, was held to just two points on only five shots.

Coming into the game as the third leading rebounder in the Sun Belt at 9.6 per game, Jekabson only grabbed four rebounds, posting her worst overall outing of the season.

Although they led early, the Golden Panthers simply couldn't keep pace with the Ragin' Cajuns, who really got it going mid way through the first half.

"I think we came out in the first half with a good game plan and we got away from it and I thought we got into trouble and we just couldn't stay in the game for 40 minutes," Russo said.

Led by first team All-Sun Belt performer Yolanda Jones, who posted her second double-double in three games this season

against the Golden Panthers with 17 points and 11 rebounds, the Ragin' Cajuns took the lead for good with 8:42 remaining in the first half at 16-15 on a Jeanenne Colbert 3-pointer.

"We started out a little slow. We came out of the box a little sluggish," Ragin' Cajuns coach J. Kelly Hall said. "FIU rebounded the basketball well early in the game. But after that, we were able to turn it up a notch."

That was the only 3-ponter of the game for Colbert who finished with 13 points and seven assists.

The Golden Panthers were able to pull to within six with just over two minutes remaining in the first half on a jump shot by sophomore guard Iva Ciglar.

The Ragin' Cajuns closed the half up by eight, and opened the second half on a 16-3 run over the first 7:25 that buried the Golden Panthers for good.

The Golden Panthers will head into next season without their starting center Lasma Jekabson. Junior guard LaQuetta Ferguson, the team's leading scorer, will return next year.



PHOTO COURTESY JOE IMEL/SUN BELT CONFERENCE

SENT HOME: Sophomore forward Marquita Adley attempts to block a lay-up. The Ragin' Cajuns ended the Golden Panthers' tournament run.