

SWEET VICTORY



JOEY KOSANKE/THE BEACON

TRADITION: Mykaelle Figueiredo and Anthony Rionda were taken to the fountain in front of Primera Casa after they were announced the new SGC-UP president and vice president.

UNIVERSITY PARK

It's official: Rionda wins presidency

DAVID BARRIOS
Senior Staff Writer

Anthony Rionda and Mykaelle "Myka" Figueiredo, who ran unopposed in this year's election, were officially announced president and vice president respectively of the Student Government Council at University Park.

Rosa Jones, vice president of Student Affairs, announced

all election winners to a crowd of students, who gathered at the Graham Center Pit April 3.

"This is truly amazing," Rionda said. "We've got great people that will do great things for FIU."

Figueiredo echoed Rionda's sentiments.

"I'm truly excited today and for the next year," he said.

Rionda, currently chief of staff under

Arthur J. Meyer's administration, and Figueiredo, current senator for the College of Public Health, were elected by 862 votes.

A total of 1,482 students voted in this year's elections, held April 1-2.

Students could vote for both the president-vice president ticket and the approval of the new constitution online, through their PantherSoft account.

However, students could not vote online for any senator candidate.

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BISCAYNE BAY CAMPUS

Neistein defeats Paul by 23 votes

BARBARA QUIJANO
Asst. News Director

Biscayne Bay Campus students have a new president and vice president to represent them in the Student Government Association.

Voted by the student body on April 1 and 2, winners of the BBC-Student Government Council were announced April 3 during Day at the Bay

by Craig Cunningham, director of the Office of Campus Life & Orientation.

"I just want to offer my congratulations and a sincere thank you to all of our students who ran for positions here at the Biscayne Bay Campus," said Cathy Akens, assistant vice president of student affairs at BBC. "We certainly believe that your involvement here in student government,

as student leaders, is vital to the community here at Biscayne Bay, and we appreciate your willingness to run and offer your time and talents to your peers."

Sholom Neistein, winner of the presidential candidacy with a total of 232 votes, took the ballot against opponent Kenasha Paul.

"I'm just happy that students voted," Neistein said. "A ton of work is going through my mind right now."

Paul, who ran for the second time this year for

BBC, page 4



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

SURPRISE: Sholom Neistein (right) reads the election results, after he was announced the new SGC-BBC president.

Online glitch brings back paper ballots

DAVID BARRIOS
Senior Staff Writer

Technical difficulties plagued the 2009-2010 Student Government Association elections.

Online voting, being held through PantherSoft, experienced several problems throughout the elections which were held April 1-2.

Students who tried to vote for Student Government Council at University Park candidates

through PantherSoft were only allowed to vote for the presidential ticket and ratification of a new SGA constitution; senatorial candidates' names were not available online throughout the entire process.

Jose Toscano, SGC-UP advisor cited "coding issues" as the main reason for the errors. According to Toscano, colleges and majors for the now defunct School of Social Work, Criminal Justice and Public Affairs, were not properly encoded

into the elections system.

"This was fixed however, on Tuesday morning," he said. "It then bumped majors like political science, history and international relations. Many students were not able to vote. This is when we went back to paper ballots. Up to this point, they're still trying to figure out what happened."

Due to the online glitches, students were told to go to the Graham Center computer lab, where they could cast their votes

on paper ballots.

At the GC computer labs, students had to submit their Panther IDs and log into their PantherSoft accounts to prove to members of the elections board that they were experiencing difficulties.

"Then voters would be handed paper ballots, and they would be asked information including college and academic year. From there we'd determine what candi-

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UP

School of Arts and Architecture

Katrina Fumagali

School of Arts and Sciences

Cristina Loreto
Altanese Phenelus
Taylor Prochnow
Adam Johnson
Pablo Martinez

School of Nursing

Stephen Hernandez
Christina Mellon

School of Business

Marcos Oyola
Angela Maria Parra
Prena Sood

School of Engineering and Computing

Haider Hachem
William Velez

School of Education

Angeline Gonzalez
Erica Lovett

Honors College

Vignesh Doraiswamy

UP Housing

Edward Proenza
Janice Rubio

Upper Division

Helena Ramirez
Stephanie Jimenez
Yuniel Molina

Lower Division

Daniela Maria Gonzalez
Maribel Chaluja
Daniel Ybanes
Alex Lastra

Vice President

Mykaelle Figueiredo

President

Anthony Rionda

BBC

Upper Division

Natalya Cohen
Joshua Numa
Emmanuel Osemota

Lower Division

Karine Guerreiro

Vice President

Christin Battle

President

Sholom Neistein

NEWS FLASH

FIU

Facebook group supports Rosenberg for president

There is a new group on Facebook which calls for Mark Rosenberg, former chancellor of the Florida Board of Governors and current FIU professor, to be the new president of the University.

In September 2008, he announced he would be stepping down as chancellor of the BOG and return to be faculty at FIU.

Since Maidique announced he was leaving the presidency of the University, Rosenberg has been quoted by the media, including *The Beacon* and *The Miami Herald*, saying he was interested in applying for the job.

However, at a meeting of the Presidential Search Advisory Committee on March 25, where members reviewed resumes of 15 applicants, Rosenberg was not in the list of interested candidates.

On April 17, PSAC will have a longer list of candidates.

LOCAL

RoboCroc dies after surgery complications

An American crocodile known as "RoboCroc" died April 2 at Miami Metrozoo after complications from surgery. The crocodile had been found in the Keys after being run over by a car last December, and had suffered life-threatening damages to his skull. Surgeons had nicknamed him "RoboCroc" after four metal rods were implanted on his skull two weeks ago to repair the damages. RoboCroc was not expected to live even a day after surgery, but he held on for two weeks, according to a *Miami Herald* article.

Ron Magill, spokesman for Miami Metrozoo, said in the article, "Every day he was alive was a miracle to me, and we really started getting our hopes up that he was going to make it."

NATIONAL

Unemployment rate hits highest mark in 25 years

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the unemployment rate increased from 8.1 percent in February to 8.5 percent in March.

The report released on April 3 also stated that 663,000 jobs were lost in March and 5.1 million jobs have been lost since December 2007, when the recession started.

- Compiled by Julia Cardenuto and Paula Garcia

Election process raises concerns

ELECTIONS, page 1

dates they would be eligible to vote for besides president and the constitution," Toscano said.

However, problems still persisted. In the race between Moses Aluicio and Vignesh Doraiswamy for the Honors College Senate seat, students outside of the Honors College were allowed to vote.

Toscano said afterward that they checked the ballots and students who voted in that race to make sure they were in the Honors College.

Members from SGC-UP and Campus Life began validation of paper ballots at 11 a.m. on April 2 and continued until 10:30 a.m. the following day.

In total, 1,482 students voted in the SGC-UP elections, down from roughly 3,000 during last year's elections. Approximately 688 paper ballots were submitted.

Many questions were raised by both SGC-UP members and the student body as to the validity of the elections.

"I think it was ridiculous and should've prompted FIU to hold elections at another time," said junior Priscila Mojica.

"It's something so important to the student body and certain organizations, that to have held the voting in the midst of all that chaos was faulty

I think it was ridiculous and should've prompted FIU to hold elections at another time.

Priscila Mojica, junior

on their behalf."

Andrew Sanchez, a sophomore, also expressed his frustrations with the elections.

"I think it's ridiculous that someone has to go all the way to Graham Center to vote for representation in their school. Not everyone can go to campus to vote. Some of us have other priorities to attend to," Sanchez said.

Chris Cabral, current senator for the College of Arts and Sciences held many concerns about the management of this year's elections.

"Congratulations to everyone who won. It's great for them ... It would be wrong of me to sit here and pretend that this election was without flaws.

"Is it fair to have an election where people are told that they can vote online but then are not able to? Was there an e-mail sent to every student at FIU to use paper ballots if their online voting didn't work? Were there multiple locations to submit paper ballots? No," Cabral said.

Chelsea Franco, who was running for one of the housing senator seats

said, "People who wanted to vote were prevented from doing so because the paper ballots were not widely publicized and online voting was malfunctioning; therefore further disenfranchising commuter students and housing students alike from voting.

"I feel that the election results were skewed toward those of Greek persuasion and did not reflect the actual opinion of the student body as a whole."

Toscano said he doesn't understand the low voter turnout and that students should get more involved.

"This year, we had hoped that we'd have more students who would get involved," Toscano said. "I cannot answer as to why 1,482 voted in a school that has more than 36,000 students. We get a lot of student concerns, that they want things addressed and changed. Part of that is showing us also that you want to get physically engaged and involved by submitting your vote to support this person. Or perhaps if you don't support this person."

University launches networking site

LAUREN AGOSTO
Staff Writer

This semester, the University launched SocialWorld, a social networking site created to unify students, organizations and events.

The Web site allows

students to maintain relationships with different on-campus organizations and keep track of their members securely, from one central location.

SocialWorld is open only to FIU students and organizations, making it more private than sites like Facebook or MySpace.

Some features of the Web site include an event calendar, which allows students to know what events have been planned by clubs and organizations; online payments for events and club dues and media sharing, where students can post blogs to promote their events and network communication channels – which allow students to network with on-campus leaders that they may not see on a regular basis.

These features allow students and organizations to coordinate events with anyone within the University community.

"I think it will benefit my organization, Music Saves Lives, because it will help us get the word out about our club and what we do, which is to spread the word about our cause and what we are fighting for, which is to save lives," said Luis Rivera, member of Music Saves Lives.

SocialWorld is already being used by 65 other universities throughout the

country.

It is a sister company of Acteva, which is the leader in online registration and payments.

It is privately funded and owned by Acteva, and free of charge for university students and organizations.

"Through these unique benefits, the SocialWorld network provides users and organizations with a valuable service," said Pat Shah, campus marketing director for SocialWorld, in a recent press release.

"SocialWorld has become the destination site for student organizations to manage their campus events and associated transactional activities related to their organizations.

"The network provides users with a trusted, opted-in environment for their friends and organizations."

Student organizations can also use SocialWorld to sell tickets to their events.

"The SocialWorld application caters to the needs of the Greek system, university organizations, athletic teams and various groups on campus," Shah said in the same press release.

"The site serves as a powerful tool for managing membership, communications and collections, while the distinctive framework will also improve community development and facil-

itate campus activities."

News of the newly implemented Web site has not yet reached all organizations on campus.

Ben Badger, a member of the Council for Student Organizations, did not know about the new social network.

"As a CSO member, I have not heard of this new social networking site. I do know that CSO is planning a new Web site system for clubs and other documentation but, right now, the CSO clubs only use Facebook and Gmail as far as social networking sites are concerned," said Badger, who represents Anything Goes Anime in CSO.

While SocialWorld is a social networking site geared toward the promotion of club organizations and events, students still have the opportunity to have exclusive organizations with the same benefits.

Students can decide whether they want their organizations to be made either private or public within the school network.

"It allows students to communicate, collect dues, raise funds, make friends, post events, share pictures and much more. Log on to your school and see what all the buzz is about," Shah said.

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Filmmakers expose child slavery in Uganda

MEENA RUPANI
Contributing Writer

In the spring of 2003, three young filmmakers journeyed to Africa and began their fight to save children from being abducted and used as child soldiers in Uganda.

As a result, they created the documentary, "Invisible Children: Rough Cut," aiming to bring awareness and opening the eyes of people all around the world.

Today, the Invisible Children Organization is present in cities nationwide and has recently started a chapter at FIU.

Dorian Santos, president of the Invisible Children chapter at the University, developed the chapter along with the assistance of her sorority in the Fall of 2007.

Santos' main goal is to spread the word about the organization and what it can do for children in Uganda.

"I want students to be aware of the situation in Uganda; then it is hard for them to ignore what is happening," said Santos, a

sophomore psychology major.

The Invisible Children Organization, members argue, is different than other organizations that are trying to help out in Africa.

Ana Diaz, the fund-raising chairwoman, said she believes other causes are not aimed solely at the children.

"While most of us grow up having a childhood of playing around and being cared for, these children are abducted from their homes and their minds get filled with violence and abuse," said Diaz, a freshman journalism major.

Sarah Morgan, member of the organization, said that one of the distinct characteristics of Invisible Children is that it is not just another organization ran by the government.

"I think the main thing that makes this organization stand out is the fact that not only was it started by a group of young people, today it's still made up of mostly high school and college students," said Morgan, a junior international relations major.

"I believe we can help these

children out by ending the war and giving them education and help for them and their families with the best psychiatrists possible. Since they are only children, they still have opportunities for normal and amazing lives."

Members of the organization said they're looking forward to their upcoming event called The Rescue, which will be held April 25.

Christa Lupo, for example, said she is hoping that this event will change the situation in Uganda.

"The Rescue is basically a demonstration to the government to show them what these kids in Africa go through. On the morning of the 25th we 'abduct' ourselves and travel to a location, there we leave behind our pictures for our families and friends, symbolizing leaving them for good," said Lupo, a freshman international relations major.

During The Rescue, members walk to several different locations and "while walking we have all our possessions for the night, and we all follow along

carrying a rope ... symbolizing the chains the abductees are attached to," Lupo said.

The Rescue is occurring in more than 100 cities across the world and, according to Santos, it is the largest event the organization has ever had.

It is a way of showing others how these children and their families are helpless when they become abducted.

Santos said she wants Invisible Children to be a solid organization at FIU long after she graduates.

"The other members of my board are younger than me, I hope to teach them the ropes of the organization and trust them to keep it moving after I leave," Santos said.

The Invisible Children at FIU has a Facebook group already and a Web site on the way, which is scheduled to launch in the Fall.

"We do more than just raise money; we actually get up and have demonstrations. If you care enough, do something about it and come out and support and join our events and causes," Lupo said.

Four-day workweek returns this Summer

BRIAN ALONSO
Staff Writer

The University will once again adopt the four-day workweek this coming summer as a cost-saving initiative.

According to a memorandum sent by President Modesto A. Maidique, employees working on campus in the summer will work 10-hour work days from Monday through Thursday in order to reduce costs.

The effort is being spearheaded by a team in the Department of Human Resources called the Summer Schedule Task Force.

This schedule will be adopted for seven weeks between June 19 and July 31. The schedule will revert back to regular hours of operation on Aug. 3.

However, it will not be implemented on certain services such as the bookstore.

This proposal is not new as it was implemented last year and was regarded a success.

The savings from the schedule were estimated at around \$250,000.

Not only was it fiscally successful, it was also considered popular by University employees.

According to a recent memorandum released by Maidique, a survey was conducted of all summer employees with the schedule and about 80 percent approved of the system.

He proposed that two reasons for this opinion are the savings associated with getting to the University and the increased free time in a three-day weekend, making it easier to balance employees' work and personal lives.

President and VP tossed in fountain

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Jose Toscano, SGC-UP advisor, said that this was due to "coding problems."

For the upper division senator seats, Helena Ramirez, Stephanie Jimenez and Yuniel Molina were elected. Ramirez and Jimenez are currently SGC-UP senators and Molina is a new member of student government.

Winners for the lower division senate seats were Daniela Maria Gonzalez, Maribel Chaluja, Daniel Ybanes and Alex Lastra.

Haider Hachem and William Velez won two seats in the senate for the College of Engineering.

The new proposed constitution also passed.

After the announcements both Figueiredo and Rionda were taken to the fountain and thrown in, fulfilling a tradition.

Luda's sold-out performance pleases crowd

SOLDANAYS MUJICA
Staff Writer

Up to 2,200 students gathered in the soccer field to see Ludacris' sold-out performance in the annual Up-Roar Concert held April 2.

The Student Programming Council organized and paid for the event.

Joshua Brandfon, SPC coordinator, Cristina Rodriguez, vice president of external affairs and

co-director of the concert and Ferran Coleman, vice president of internal affairs and co-director as well, managed to bring Grammy Award-winning artist Ludacris and Grammy-nominated local group Locos Por Juana to perform for the students.

"The opportunity presented itself to us and we jumped on it because we had the funds for it, so we are

glad that we were able to get these artists," Rodriguez said.

Several weeks before the event, SPC gave out 2,500 free tickets for students and 100 extra tickets were sold for non-students at \$20.

"I expect the students to come out and have fun," Coleman said before the event. "I want all of them to enjoy being a college student and enjoy the college life because that's what SPC is all about."

According to Brandfon, 40 students volunteered and helped in the event.

SPC paid \$70,000 for Ludacris to come and \$3,500 for Locos Por Juana.

As soon as the gates opened at 7 p.m., students ran into the field to get a close enough spot by the stage to see the show.

SPC members spent the night giving away beach balls, key chain flashlights and glow sticks to students during the concert.

The first performance of the night was Locos Por Juana, a local Miami band whose members are all from different countries. They played Spanish alternative rock, reggae and ska hits such as "La Nalga" and "Lo Tienes Todo."

After they rocked the stage, students began chanting "Luda, Luda, Luda" to bring Ludacris out. Once Ludacris hit the stage, screams broke out from the crowd. The performer everyone waited for began rapping some of his famous hits like "Move," "Southern Hospitality," "Money Maker" and "Area Codes."

Ludacris is a rapper from Atlanta, Ga. and

has been in the music industry since 2000.

He brought some of his friends – Shawna, Little Faze, Tity Boi and Bigga Rankin – out on to stage to perform with him.

As Ludacris told students goodbye because his time had run out, they began chanting the rapper's name for an encore.

Ludacris did just that as he began to rap his verse for T-Pain's song "Chopped and Screwed."

STUDENT REACTIONS

"My favorite part was when Shawna came out and started rapping and showing her skills and what I liked was that even when Luda was supposed to leave, he brought an encore," said junior Angela Ramirez.

"It was very interesting how Ludacris interacted with the audience as opposed to just making noise, and how he sang the songs everyone knows with the special guests that he brought with him," said sophomore Wilnise Jannith.

"What I liked best was the opening act, especially since I don't really listen to that kind of music and I was surprised to find that Ludacris sounds the same live as he does on the radio, because some performers sound different live than on their albums and he didn't. It was just a really big party on the soccer field and everyone had fun," said junior Devin Oliver.

For photos of the Ludacris concert, please see page 8.

Long-awaited lecture refunds are underway

JULIA CARDENUTO
News Director

Students who bought tickets for John Legend's performance will be able to get their refunds two months after the performance was canceled.

Refunds will be made available April 8-10 and April 13-15, from 9 a.m. to 4

p.m. at the Bursar's Office, located in PC 120 at the University Park campus.

In order to receive the refund, students need to present their ticket to the Bursar's Office.

The event was supposed to happen at the U.S. Century Bank Arena on Feb. 11.

Legend canceled his appearance at FIU on Feb. 9 after the death of his

grandfather.

"An Evening With John Legend," was part of the Student Government Council at University Park Lecture Series.

"On behalf of SGA and myself, I apologize that the refunds took so long," said Jose Toscano, SGC-UP advisor. "Again, there were several university policies that we had to abide by. It's just part of the process."

Neinstein, Battle win elections by small margin

BBC, page 1

the SGC-BBC presidency, got 209 votes.

"Of course I'm going to be disappointed," she said. "But I'm always going to support the choices of the student body."

Despite winning, Neinstein acknowledges Paul's contribution for the past year as SGC-BBC vice president.

"Kenasha is pivotal to the structure and foundation of SGC-BBC," he said. "Her dedication hasn't stopped in student government."

Christin "Cici" Battle, who was running with Paul, was elected vice president with a total of 226 votes, defeating Juan "JC" Remedios, who tallied up a difference of 34 votes with 192 votes casted.

"I don't know, it hasn't really hit me yet," Battle said. "But a part of me is torn because my running mate didn't make it."

Remedios, who is currently the Student Services chair, is not discouraged by the defeat and is looking forward to working with the new administration.

"We both have a lot of values, experience and strong leadership skills to bring to this organization," Remedios said. "But now we know who's going to lead us into tomorrow, and with them leading us [SGC-BBC] is going to be a force to be reckoned with."

Although the Neinstein-Battle partnership for the executive board of SGC-BBC was unplanned, both sides are willing to collaborate and become one team.

"The first thing I want to do is sit down with Sholom and talk about the issues, because it's not just me, but our ideas, and we have to be on one accord," Battle said.

"I did not run with Cici; however, that doesn't matter," Neinstein said. "Politically aside, we both want the best for the students, and that's what will unite us."

But Paul thinks it will be challenging for the partnership to coincide.

"It's going to be difficult since they were our opposite ticket, but everyone in SGA works well together," said Paul. "They both will have so much to learn, so it's going to be a learning experience no matter what."

Jeffrey Bustos, a freshman philosophy major, voted for Neinstein and Remedios on the ballot.

He was enthused about the win, but disappointed for the loss.

"I see Sholom a lot around campus and he's always trying to get people involved," he said. "He was the only candidate involved in all of the clubs and actually cares about everyone. He's actually looking out for the welfare of the students."

For Remedios's loss, Bustos thinks that it "sucks, he looked very compassionate about the student body."

Paul also kept her running mate informed about the things that went on in SGA in the past year, but as for Neinstein, she believes "he's going to be jumping to the executive board when there is a lot more to it than meets the eye."

As stated in his platform, Neinstein's main reason for running as president was "to ensure

that the BBC students receive the proper representation with complete transparency so that students are knowledgeable to what SGA is doing."

In Battle's platform she states that she wants to "strive to uphold the duties and obligations of student government, putting students as her No. 1 priority," forming a government that is built upon student

interests and needs.

"Our priorities are a little different, but we'll work through them hopefully and do what is best for the student body," Battle said.

As for the possible future plans of Remedios and Paul, they both still want to be involved in SGA.

"I'm thinking of running again," said Remedios. "I want to see what this year brings along. We have a strong team now, we're going to get better and better each year."

Although Paul does not know exactly how, SGA is still in her future plans.

"It's still up in the air, but I'm still going to be involved in SGA," said Paul. "I want to serve SGA in some capacity, but I just have to figure it out."

Additional reporting by Pamela Duque.

Our priorities are a little different, but we'll work through them hopefully and do what is best for the student body.

Christin "Cici" Battle, vice president-elect
SGC-BBC



SERGIO MONTEALEGRE/THE BEACON



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

CLOSE MARGIN: (Top) Sholom Neinstein, SGC-BBC's president-elect, celebrates his victory in the 2009 SGA elections with Joshua Numa, SGC-BBC general undergraduate senator-elect, on April 3 behind the Aquatic Center. (Left, top) Neinstein and Kenasha Paul, current SGC-BBC vice president, embrace after the announcement of Neinstein's victory against Paul in the SGC-BBC presidential race, while Debbie Brown, BBC elections commissioner, watches the opposing candidates interact. (Left, bottom) Christin "Cici" Battle, SGC-BBC's vice president-elect, engages in a debate with Neinstein on behalf of Kenasha Paul, who was absent from the candidacy open forum, on March 31 in Panther Square. Students and faculty in attendance were treated to free food and drinks.

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Day at the Bay turns into 'no-show at the bay'

SERGIO MONTEALEGRE
Staff Writer

Dried sea grape leaves blew through the wind with no student in sight around Biscayne Bay Campus' bay area for Day on the Bay.

The event, which took place April 3, had the lowest turnout in years, according to David Fonseca, a junior political science major and committee chair of environmental affairs for Student Government Association.

"It was the first time we decided to try this on a Friday," said Fonseca. "The turnout was much less than other semesters."

The event began at 9 a.m., though the first participant didn't arrive until 11:30 a.m.

Day on the Bay, hosted by SGA, is usually held on a Saturday and is intended to clean the coast around campus.

"It's a fun way to keep students motivated on the environment," Fonseca said.

He also said that the event was held on a Friday this year in hopes that more students would attend.

However, that was not the case.

In an effort to get more students to attend, SGA went to the Marine Biology building to gather students to help bolster support. But that did not work either.

"The building was almost empty," Fonseca said.

Due to the lack of participants, SGA attempted to rally more support by asking those attending the BBC presidential election result ceremony to clean the bay area in exchange for free food. That plan also failed.

"Friday was a trial-and-error date," Fonseca said. "We feel returning to Saturday will be much better next time."

Day on the Bay is held every semester. For more information call (305) 919-5804.

Theater tickets at bargain prices

JOANNA CHAU
Contributing Writer

Junior international business major Leandro Mazufri loves theater and arts, and when he wants tickets to his favorite shows, he doesn't go to Ticketmaster or StubHub. He goes directly to the University Theater Ticket Office.

"A good show can cost \$50 or more. [Her] services make the arts more accessible and economical," said Mazufri, who has purchased from the office more than 10 times.

The University's Theater Ticket Office, located in the WUC 110 in Panther Square, is run by Esther Propis, coordinator of the office, where she has been selling tickets to cultural events for 16 years.

Propis came to the University after retiring as a social worker for impoverished elderly people. She would take them to cultural events using tickets donated by theater promoters. She now uses those same contacts to acquire tickets for University students.

Propis was introduced to the arts when opera tickets were given to her at a young age. All it took was that initial experience to create the passion and love for the arts she has now.

"I see students who have never attended a show before come back to me over and over again," Propis said.

The office offers tickets to shows such as "Cirque Du Soleil," *Chicago*, Miami City Ballet, *Stomp*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Mamma Mia!* and more at



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

WORKING HARD: In her office, Esther Propis discusses the ticket options available to an inquiring student for a performance for the New World Symphony.

a discount price or for free.

For instance, a recent ticket to the popular opera *Madama Butterfly* was sold for \$16, when originally it was \$25.

An additional fee is included for the University, but it is no more than \$5, according to Propis.

"Her services are really helpful," said David Diaz, a senior public relations major. "She got me great seats to *Madama Butterfly* at the lowest price."

A complete list of the tickets she offers are posted on bulletin boards in front of the office, but if a student is interested in something in particular, she will try her best to get it.

The seats Propis sells or gives away

vary from show to show. Although students cannot choose the seats, she tries to give them the best seats possible in the price level available.

Tickets can be purchased and picked up in the office or at the theater will call. Her services are primarily for University students and faculty, but others interested can purchase as well.

"My mission is to promote and encourage young people to explore the arts," Propis said.

The University Theater Ticket Office is open Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, call (305) 919-5903.

University looks to 'cough out' student smoking statistic

MIKIALA C. TENNIE
Staff Writer

Senior nutrition major Elizabeth Donahue knew all the side effects of smoking, but it wasn't until recently that she became part of the 24 percent of young adults that smoke in America.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in 2007 that close to a quarter of adults who smoke are between the ages of 18 and 24. To bring down these rates, the University is making strides to help its students who belong to that statistic quit smoking – for free.

By partnering with the Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center, the University has begun a smoking cessation program on both the Biscayne Bay and University Park campuses.

"I had the freedom to choose between going cold turkey or using the patch. It was up to me; it wasn't like some strict regimen," Donahue said. "It gave me the opportunity to set my goals as to what I would do between classes when I would normally smoke."

Tobacco specialist Katie Greco works with the Miami-Dade AHEC and meets once a week with students who want to quit smoking.

"It's very convenient," she said. "If someone is interested there are referral forms."

Before the first meeting, participants are asked to fill out a referral form that can be obtained on the Miami-Dade AHEC Web site or can be picked up at the Wellness Centers on either campus.

The form asks questions about smoking history, frequency and triggers. This information helps smoking cessation specialists, like Greco, to get an idea about the best way

to help each smoker.

Greco meets with students by appointment at the BBC Wellness Center Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. to engage individuals in programs that will help them quit according to their personal needs. She also works at the UP Wellness Center on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Greco said that quitting generally takes about five to seven attempts before achieving success, and she believes it is the support and accountability of the program that helps many smokers persevere.

"The lack of motivation and support is a huge deal to people," Greco said. "Support can make 100 percent of a difference."

The aim of the program is to provide that support for the participants during a four to six-week program consisting of one session per week.

Donahue finished after four sessions.

Dona Walcott, assistant director of the program at BBC, has seen people struggle with quitting first-hand.

"A lot of students talk about quitting, but they chicken out or decide they aren't ready," she said. "We have a hard time getting people to commit."

Although Greco cannot tell participants what to do, she is equipped to educate students on the best cessation options.

Greco recommends quitting aids such as the patch, gums and lozenges to put nicotine back in the body without the other thousands of toxic chemicals that smoking a cigarette entails.

"There are more than 4,000 chemicals in a cigarette. Cigarettes can be the hardest to quit even with heavier drugs," said Greco, referring to illegal drugs. "It's definitely a challenge when they've done it for so long."

According to Greco, many people choose not to quit because of the stress and weight gain after cessation.

"You can't really say it helps with stress because their body is really going through withdrawal," said Greco. "It's the same kind of thing with other drugs. When they're stressed, they go to cigarettes to get that buzz or high to suppress it."

The age of a smoker, according to Walcott, is also an excuse that some use to delay quitting.

"A lot of smokers are young and they're not in the 'let-me-quit mode,' and they are

not understanding of the long-term effects," she said.

The CDC reports that some of the long-term effects of smoking include cancer, heart disease and some respiratory diseases.

The program makes an effort to educate participants on method strategies to help manage stress and the weight gain that happens after cessation.

"Hopefully, when they do come every week, it's an incentive," said Greco. "I'd like to get the word out to the faculty and staff."

For more information, go to the Wellness Center Web site at <http://www.fiu.edu/~health/wellness/smokingcess.htm> or to the Miami-Dade AHEC Web site at www.MDAHEC.org. Katie Greco can be reached at (305) 994-9268.



NATHAN VALENTINE/THE BEACON

THE SOAPBOX: AN OP-ED COLUMN

Black Student Union has full rights to exist

JAMES RICHARDSON
Special to The Beacon

I recently received a series of e-mails regarding the formation of a Black Student Union as a governing council at FIU. Included was an absolutely horrific anonymous e-mail from a person who is attempting to have students repeal the formation of this student organization during this current election cycle.

The anonymous writer states that the formation of the Black Student Union is a “wildly racist notion and has no place at FIU, which prides itself on diversity and equality.” Correct me if I’m wrong, but isn’t this repeal just as racist?

With a slight understanding of this anonymous person’s thought process, I ask *The Beacon* if the Council of Student Organizations and/or the student government has reviewed the charter for this organization. Are all persons, regardless of skin color (or any other Equal Employment Opportunity factor) allowed to become members of organizations under the new BSU umbrella or members of the BSU itself?

If the organization limits its membership to only the African-American community at FIU, then I will personally make an appearance at the next CSO or student government meeting calling for their repeal as well. However, I highly doubt this is the case.

This leads me to an additional point the anonymous e-mail creator fails to realize. There are many forms of “discrimination” or, better defined, ways in which students are “limited” in equality all over campus. Isn’t priority registration a limitation of equality in registering for classes? A freshman doesn’t have the equal opportunity to register for a class of his or her choosing as a senior does. Isn’t an organization that only allows people of certain majors or people who are members of certain colleges to join, in essence, practicing discriminatory or limitations toward others?

I personally experienced a limitation with an organization on campus that’s within my own college. I don’t have to like it or respect it, but I discussed it with the leadership and understand why these limitations were placed.

The point I am making to the anonymous writer of that e-mail and to anyone who supports the repeal of the BSU, an organization for the education, enlightenment and enrichment of the African-American community on campus, is to take a good look at yourself (and any organizations you are a part of) before you succumb an entire student population to race wars.

I am a Caucasian male. I also happen to be a homosexual. I enjoy my social and cultural experience at FIU greatly because I continue to understand and recognize the minority perspective much better. Additionally, I have great respect among my peers for being able to give them perspective on my experiences as a homosexual. I even meet other homosexuals and Caucasians and gain more perspective from their experiences. This is what college is about: opening one’s eyes, exploring new ideas, taking risks, becoming vulnerable and learning your own (plus other) perspectives.

My campus experience and living in South Florida has opened my eyes to new ways of thinking that I could never have imagined somewhere else. I think it’s awesome that an organization such as the BSU is opening the eyes of the rest of the FIU community so all students can become educated on the African-American experience. I look forward to the opportunities they will bring to the FIU community.

James D. Richardson is a third-year international business major and member of Eta Epsilon Phi, the international business honor society.

REGISTRATION FRUSTRATION

Signing up for classes no easy task

KIMBERLY ENGELHARDT
Staff Writer

Nothing, absolutely nothing, can be more stressful or annoying than logging on to PantherSoft and trying to solve your own problems. Ever since FIU has upgraded PantherSoft, I can’t seem to navigate through the page properly. Y0es, I was aware that this updated site was implemented several months ago. Fortunately, I had multi-term registration and I had nothing to worry about – until now.

Registering for graduation should be easy; at least, that’s what I first thought. Graduating is as easy as pointing and clicking the link. As Geico says, it’s so easy a caveman can do it, right?

Wrong. I’m a technology-savvy student of the 21st century and I didn’t even know how to navigate the site properly. I don’t know whether it was the hours stuck writing term papers in front of the computer’s brilliant white screen that somehow made my vision worse or that I’m a very distracted person who can’t read for the life of me. The fact was that I thought I registered correctly for Summer term graduation. This was not the case.

When March 25 came, one of my good friends called to ask me when my registration appointment was. I told her it was perhaps March 30, but for some reason the registration date was not displayed. This

really scared me. I didn’t know why my registration date was not displayed.

The next day, I went to complain to the registrar’s office that my registration appointment did not show. I owed nothing to Financials. As it turned out, I accidentally registered for *Spring* graduation instead of Summer. Consequently, I could not register for my last class. The SASS report is useless, there’s absolutely no communication between that report and registering for classes. I should have been blocked from registering for Spring graduation and given only one choice: Summer graduation.

Instead, more than a month later, I was notified of this error (from Feb. 19 to April 1). Too late now. I already knew the problem before I was even given the notice. The system is too slow to realize student errors. There should be more integration with all aspects of a student’s school life profile.

A representative at the registrar’s office promised that my enrollment appointment should be up by the end of the day. Relieved, I returned home and had a peaceful rest. I could finally register for that last class. No one was going to take away my joy of logging on to PantherSoft and clicking on that last class I needed.

Unfortunately, this was not the case. As soon as I logged on to PantherSoft, I checked my registration appointment, which was made for April 16.

Unbelievable. I’m a graduating senior in the Honors College with one more class to go and I’m given the last possible date to register. Again, FIU has failed in its careful scrutiny of its students. I nearly had a heart attack. The School of Journalism and Mass Communication offers so few classes over the summer, and registration for its classes is highly competitive. If I accepted that April 16 registration appointment, I would be guaranteed NOT to graduate on time. I imagine all those people in similar situations: college seniors with one class to go and with the last possible registration date.

Frustrated, I returned back to the registrar’s office on Monday to complain that I shouldn’t have been given the last registration date when I’m a senior, one class shy of graduation. Again, they told me that they’ll fix the problem. And they finally did. It took about a week to get everything solved.

However, I shouldn’t have had this problem in the first place. If PantherSoft could scan the SASS report for missing classes and inform students when they are eligible for graduation, life would be sweet. It would be even better if discrepancies like seniors with one or two classes shy of graduation be the first ones to register.

I wouldn’t want somebody in my shoes. If you are a graduating senior facing the same problem as I, please don’t hesitate or be complacent with your registration date: complain.

THE BEACON | Editorial

Lack of communication, online glitch leads to low turnout

Around 2,000 votes were cast in this year’s Student Government Association elections, compared with almost 4,000 votes last year, a record.

This year’s embarrassing turnout is not simply the result of student apathy. The lack of student interest was due in large part to the lack of organization in both councils.

“This year, we had hoped that we’d have more students who would get involved in SGA,” said Jose Toscano, Student Government Council at University Park advisor. “We spent \$4,000 of our marketing budget to get the word out about SGA throughout the year ... Maybe it’s a reflection of what people felt due to John Legend.

“I cannot answer as to why 1,482 voted in a school that has over 36,000 students ... I still can’t answer why students don’t vote.”

The low turnout can be attributed to different factors. The SGC-UP elections commissioner for the ‘08 elections, Carlos Ordoqui, told *The Beacon* last year that the record high turnout was a result of the fact that there was more than one candidate for president and also because students were able to vote online. This year’s SGC-UP presidential candidate

running unopposed and problems with the online voting system likely contributed to the low turnout.

The glitch in the voting system resulted in students only being able to cast their votes online for the SGC-UP presidential ticket and the ratification of an amended constitution; students were unable to cast their votes for senatorial candidates.

Student Media reported on the problem, as did current SGC-UP senators and students alike. Even so, the problem persisted throughout both voting days and students had no choice but to cast their votes on paper in the Graham Center computer lab.

Many students did not know that they could do so, however. More of an effort should have been made on the part of SGC-UP to communicate this to students and it likely contributed to a turnout of less than 4 percent of the student body. A University-wide e-mail to students may have solved this problem.

SGC-UP controls and allocates more than \$10 million of student money, it is only fair to the students, then, that elections for their representatives go off without a hitch; the online voting system should have been

tested and retested weeks prior to elections. Had there been such widespread problems in a real election, it is very likely that courts would mandate a revote.

When approached by Student Media, Toscano said the online voting issues were due to “coding problems.”

Such excuses are not valid.

The Beacon understands that oftentimes glitches can be unpredictable and even unfixable. This is what makes communicating with students such an imperative, even if it means personally leading them to the manual voting site.

Many candidates did so, but there is only so much one can do with so many people to contact in less than two days.

In these circumstances, those candidates with organizations behind them have an overwhelming advantage as they simply have the human power to do so.

This results in candidates being elected based on how many people they know rather than their stance on the issues.

The way the new proposed constitution was presented was also an issue of concern.

The new constitution, which passed, was available for vote online only. *The Beacon* feels that little effort was put into

informing the student body about the proposed changes.

Even though the constitution was available online during voting, SGA is asking students to read both versions of the document and hunt for changes, which is asking too much. Any changes should have been highlighted and explained in layman’s terms, rather than legal jargon.

Student Media tried several times to get a copy of the new proposed constitution but has yet to receive it.

Furthermore, as is done in U.S. politics, students should have been voting for specific amendments to the constitution, rather than an entirely new one.

Toscano said that he felt the John Legend performance cancellation might have played a role in the low turnout and that students are not interested in what SGA does.

Rather than blaming student apathy, the new SGA should be more proactive and less reactive. Their pitch to students should be a simple one: “We control \$10 million a year of your money.”

We believe that when SGA finally fulfills its promise of making transparency a priority, students will become more involved and active in student government.

Couch Surfing 101

Travelers satisfy wanderlust with free accommodations

CHARLIE GRAU
Senior Staff Writer

When Will Bradwell and his friends were planning a cross-country road trip three years ago while at the University of Florida, they couldn't figure out how to do it. With the cost of hotels, gas and food, it seemed impossible for three college students.

But then one of his friends suggested CouchSurfing.

"It sounded like hitchhiking but on a whole different level. It's a really smart way to travel for people our age who are trusting like that and don't want to spend all that money on hotels," said Bradwell, 24, of Miami.

CouchSurfing.com is a hospitality exchange networking Web site where people offer free lodging at their home. Launched Jan. 1, 2004, members can search through other members' profiles when planning a trip. When opening an account, you can choose to host, surf, show travelers around without hosting or do all three. Membership is free.

The thought of staying at a stranger's house may scare many, but those involved say the CouchSurfing community share a love for traveling and meeting new people.

"[These] are people a little bit outside of the box as far as how to look at the world," said Rick Murphy of Fort Lauderdale who has hosted couchsurfers more than 100 times. "They want to spend time with people in a city where they can be shown around either by maps or can be taken to see cities from an insider's view versus a tour book or

the inside of a Hilton Hotel."

When receiving an inquiry to crash at his place, Alejandro Sepulveda, an FIU junior majoring in biochemistry, said he checks out that CouchSurfer's profile to see if they are legit or not.

When checking into a profile, Sepulveda looks at comments left by others on that particular CouchSurfer's profile. Comments can be negative or positive, depending how well behaved a surfer was or whether a host was hospitable.

"It makes you feel a little more comfortable about opening your home to a stranger," said Sepulveda, 24, of Kendall. "You can usually kind of tell what type of person they are after looking at their profile. So I go off of that and then the rest is just chance. Life is full of opportunity. You might as well take a chance."

Crystal Murphy, public relations team leader and global ambassador, said the site also has two other safety checks. Although not required, CouchSurfers can become verified members by making a donation to the site with a credit card. Verification helps confirm a surfer's identity and address. This verification system is meant to strengthen the security of the community.

Members can also vouch for others and leave recommendations on their page.

"Before you can vouch for a person, you have to receive three vouches yourself," Murphy said. "But most of all use common sense. That's the biggest thing we stress. You shouldn't let someone stay at your house who just started a

TOP 10 COUCHSURFING COUNTRIES



WWW.UMSL.EDU/COURTESY PHOTO

profile yesterday or contacted you in a shady way."

Once everything checks out for Sepulveda, he then exchanges e-mails and talks to the person over the phone to set up parameters for the visit.

"You usually talk before hand so you're able to explain, 'Hey I have a job and can't show you around at this hour or this hour, but when I get out I can show you the town,'" Sepulveda said.

The not-for-profit Web site registered in New Hampshire was

developed by Casey Fenton, Sebastian Giao Le Tuan, Daniel Hoffer and Leonardo Bassani da Silveira. Fenton first thought of the site after taking a trip to Iceland. Before heading on his trip, Fenton e-mailed 1,500 students from the University of Iceland asking if he could stay with them. In 24-hours, he received more than 50 e-mails from students to come crash with them.

"We first started the site to facilitate intercultural understanding and enable people to have adventures and new experiences they would

not otherwise encounter," Hoffer said. "But we did not expect it to get this way."

As of April 2, there are 1,037,847 registered members from 229 different countries. The average couchsurfer's age is 27, but CouchSurfing doesn't discriminate.

"As a gay couple, we didn't know how many people would want to stay with us," said Murphy, 55, who lives with his partner John Devine, 45. "CouchSurfing is not a gay thing or a straight thing, it's a people thing."



POP & CIRCUMSTANCE

University books Ludacris, redeems years of bad acts

I appreciate the effort. Honestly, I do. I realize how much work is put into setting these events up, and I know that schedules often don't match up and demands are difficult to meet.

And I'm sure that the people who attended the show, for the most part, had a good time during the hour plus that it lasted.

And certainly, this was a marked improvement over the acts in years past, which included a one hit wonder, a guy who hasn't had a hit since

most of FIU's students were in high school and a side project.



CHRIS TOWERS

With all of these things considered, last Friday's Student Programming Council Spring concert, featuring Ludacris, has to be considered a success, and for the most part, it was.

Starting from the booking, getting a Grammy Award-winning, multiple platinum selling artist with 19 "Hot-100" singles is a big win for SPC. The lack of a legitimately exciting

opening act is a little bit of a disappointment, but it's rare that anyone goes to concerts for the opening act.

The show itself went off without any noticeable hitches. There wasn't too big of a lull between the sets, which is to be applauded, given the fact that the stage was set up in a few days on a soccer field.

Chris Bridges did his best to put on a good show and get the crowd into it, and judging by the middle fingers flying and the "boos" being thrown, it was a great success.

So why the pessimism in the opening? Well, frankly, this is the first win SPC has had since my class has been here. Last year's concert offered little for students to look forward to. Very few stayed until the end of the show, waiting simply to hear a few choice songs by Fabolus and OneRepublic.

And the year before, with Jack's Mannequin as the headliner was even more of a head scratcher, as at least Fabolus and OneRepublic had some sort of weight to them on the collective strength of a few hits. Jack's Mannequin elicited a big "who?" from a good portion of the student body.

I understand that SPC is made up of students working with a limited budget and

resources, so they can be forgiven for some of these shortcomings. One hopes that a pretty sizable crowd at this year's performance can put them in the right direction going forward.

This is, after all, Miami, a city not known for its acceptance of smaller acts. This isn't really your typical college campus, and as such, the approach of these events has to be a little bit different. People aren't going to go check out an artist they've never heard, or heard sparingly. It's all about the event in Miami, and Ludacris is the type of act you can make into an event.

Student apathy is a big concern for any organization here, as even our most successful and well funded sporting events struggle to draw respectable crowds.

If SPC can learn anything from this event it is that you have to cater to your audience. Most people in Miami can find something better to do than going to see OneRepublic for free, but Ludacris can and did draw legitimate excitement.

For the first time in a few years, SPC got it right.

Pop & Circumstance examines all things pop music every week.



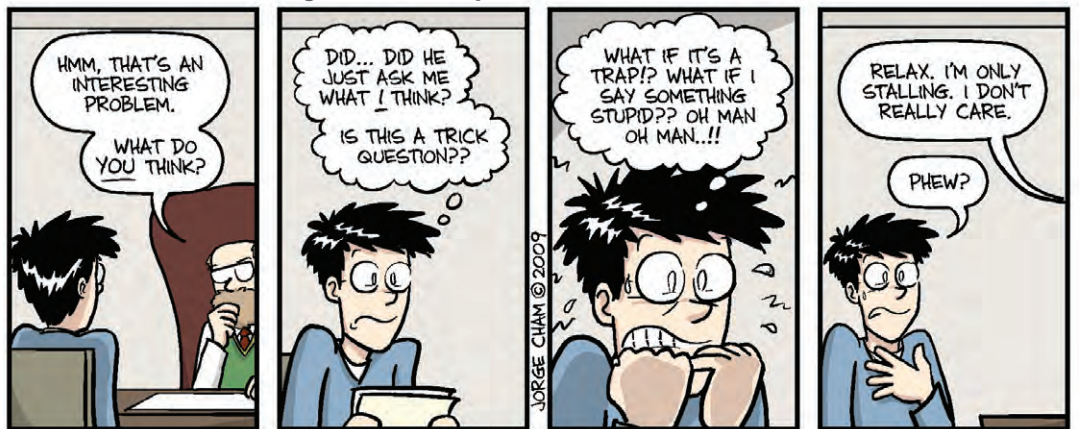
1. Lil Fate (left) performed onstage with Ludacris (right).
2. Ludacris headlined SPC's 2009 Up-Roar Concert.
3. Itagui Correa, Locos por Juana's lead vocal, belts out a note.
4. Chamo Love, bass guitarist for Locos por Juana, gets into the song.



PhD: Piled

higher and deeper

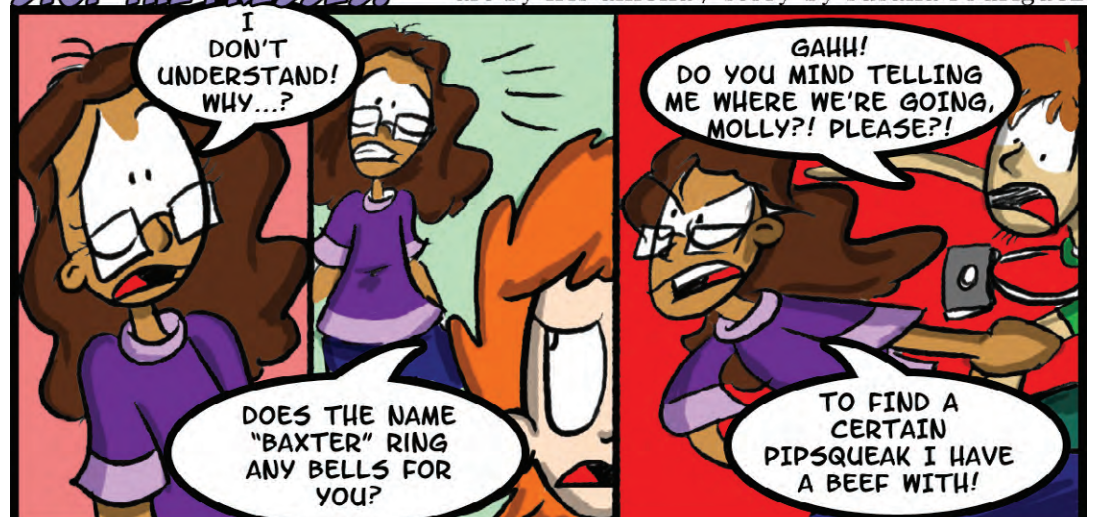
diversions



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art by iris amelia / story by susana rodriguez



THIS WEEK ON CAMPUS

MONDAY • APRIL 6

WHAT: Inside the Music: New World Symphony
WHEN: 7 p.m.
WHERE: Lincoln Theatre
CONTACT: 305-673-3331

WHAT: Students for Environmental Action - Focus on Green Energy
WHEN: 12 p.m.
WHERE: GC Ballroom
CONTACT: 305-348-2285

WHAT: French Club – Civilization Conference
WHEN: 12 p.m.
WHERE: GC Panther Suite
CONTACT: 305-348-2285

WHAT: Students Write Organization – Meeting
WHEN: 2 p.m.
WHERE: GC 340
CONTACT: 305-348-2285

WHAT: Department of Multicultural Programs & Services – National Coming Out Day
WHEN: 2:30 p.m.
WHERE: GC Pit
CONTACT: 305-348-2285

TUESDAY • APRIL 7

WHAT: Flight of the Concorde
WHEN: 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Bank United Center
CONTACT: 305-284-8686

WHAT: Brendan O'Hara & Komakozie – The Big Bounce
WHEN: 10 p.m.
WHERE: Florida Room
CONTACT: 305-576-6161

WHAT: Truth for Life – Meeting
WHEN: 12 p.m.
WHERE: GC 340
CONTACT: 305-348-2285

WHAT: Chinese Club – Meeting
WHEN: 12:30 p.m.
WHERE: GC 140
CONTACT: 305-348-2285

WHAT: Children beyond Borders
WHEN: 4 p.m.
WHERE: GC 340
CONTACT: 305-348-2285

- Compiled by Mariana Ochoa



ADAM JOHNSON/THE BEACON

GOAL: Jerry Campos, of Tau Kappa Epsilon, and Francisco Martinez, of Pi Kappa Alpha and the FIU soccer team coach soccer for the Special Olympics.

Greeks aid Special Olympics

Just a couple of weeks after some of the men of the Interfraternity Council participated in a track and field event for the Special Olympics, they helped out again at the Miami Area Special Games Competition, where they were accompanied by members of the Multicultural Greek Council and Panhellenic Council.

About 31 Greeks participated in the event, where they helped coach the soccer players, took on water-boy responsibilities and refereed tennis games.

"Greek attendance for the second Special Olympics event more than doubled from the first event, and the Special Olympics staff members knew we were Greeks from FIU without even having to ask. IFC President Mario Medina got this ball rolling with our Greek community and the Special Olympics and I am proud to be a part of it," said Adam Johnson, a member of Pi Kappa Alpha, who participated in both Special Olympics events.

This event was even more special to Greeks since a family member of Delta Phi Epsilon's

Giselle Quesada was there. She is a Special Olympian from the Beijing Special Olympics.

Her name is Valeria Vargas and she was diagnosed with Niemann Pick Disease Type-C, which results in lipid storage in the brain and body.

She has proven to be an inspiration by many by becoming a great swimmer, and in the summer of 2008 she qualified for the Beijing Special Olympics, in the 25-meter freestyle and the 25-meter backstroke.

She took the Gold Medal in both competitions.

"Seeing my uncle in tears on national TV because his daughter had just won her first gold medal in Beijing is a moment I will never forget and the reason I knew I had to be part of this event," Quesada said.

"Seeing the young athletes at this event have such a positive outlook on life given their individual circumstances serves as such an inspiration. I'm glad I was given the chance to be part of this event and an opportunity to meet such hard-working kids."

GREEK LIFE



AMANDA BATCHELOR



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FIU unable to carry walk-off magic to Saturday night

BASEBALL, page 12

ERA.

But the Hilltoppers' offense mustered enough firepower to give the Golden Panthers' Friday night starter his worst performance of the season.

"They're hitting .347 for a reason because they're very good," Thomas said.

Rembisz gave up seven earned runs through 5 2/3 innings. He struck out just three batters and walked two.

The Golden Panthers' offense was effective, obtaining timely base hits and gaining a 6-2 lead in the bottom of the fifth. A Lammar Guy three-run homer capped off the four-run fifth.

The Hilltoppers had an answer though. They responded with a five-run sixth inning to get their first lead of the game, 7-6.

For the next three innings, the Golden

Panthers' offense went cold. When the Hilltoppers tacked on an insurance run in the top of the ninth, the two-run lead seemed a bit more insurmountable.

Even so, the Golden Panthers picked a good time to start getting on base. Mike Martinez reached on an error, and Garrett Wittels singled to start the rally.

Guy's double brought in the first run home, and Mollica would drive in Guy to make the Golden Panthers record 18-7, 7-3 against Sun Belt Conference opponents.

Coach Thomas expected his senior co-captain to give his team the win.

"I'd be surprised if he didn't come through."

WKU 5, FIU 4

Once again, the Golden Panthers were down headed into the bottom of the ninth trailing and with Ryan Mollica at the plate with two outs.

Last game, he was the hero, but this time he could not bring in Lammar Guy from third base to tie the game. Mollica took a third pitch strike with a 3-2 count

The Golden Panthers could not capture an early series lead as they lost 5-4 vs. the Western Kentucky University Hilltoppers at University Park Stadium on April 4.

This was the closest comparison to a pitching duel the Golden Panthers were involved in all season.

For the Golden Panthers, Tom Ebert kept the conference's best offense in check and off balance through 7 1/3 innings.

"He mixed up his pitches well," said head coach Turtle Thomas. "I thought Tom Ebert did a great job going deep in the game."

He allowed three earned runs and was taken out of the game following a solo home run by Matt Rice.

With Rice's homer, the game was 4-3.

Daniel DeSimone came into the game and provided little relief as Wade Gaynor took him deep to tie the game at four.

DeSimone gave up one more run to give the Hilltoppers a 5-4 lead in the top of the eighth.

Matt Hightower pitched 6 2/3 innings and gave up four earned runs. The Hilltoppers' bullpen shut the door on the Golden Panthers offense. They gave up no runs, two hits and three strikeouts.

"We didn't string many hits," coach Thomas said. "It seemed we got one hit per inning."

Thomas was removed from the game by the home plate umpire after Tim Jobe was called out on strikes.

When asked if he hoped the series would be so close and competitive, Thomas answered, "Well, I was hoping it would be. We feel like these are two very evenly matched teams."



Thank you for reading

Monday
Wednesday
Friday

Abundant surprises ignite hot start

TOWERS, page 12

Rembisz have combined for a 7-1 records and anchored a pitching staff that leads the Sun Belt in ERA, and as good as Rembisz has been, Ebert has been dominant, striking out 48 batters in 42 innings over six starts.

The big right-hander has overpowered opponents and looks like the ace of the staff.

BEST DEFENDER: LAMMAR GUY

Playing the premium outfield position, Guy has shown his athleticism and range by making a number of fantastic catches and has really made up for an outfield lacking in range with converted designated hitter Townsend in right and Pablo Bermudez in left still hampered by the lingering effects of a hamstring injury.

In a spacious home park, he has really made things much easier for the pitching staff by reeling in every-

thing hit to center.

BIGGEST SURPRISE: HOW ABOUT EVERYONE?

Is it Junior Arrojo's emergence as a legitimate second leadoff hitter at the bottom of the lineup?

Is it the pitching staff lowering its ERA by three runs to lead the conference? Is it the emergence of the recruiting class as early contributors? Frankly, on a team that has already outperformed last year's squad, you can't pin down one surprise.

For a team to turn around this quickly, you have to have a lot of players step up and perform, and especially some guys you might not have expected have to contribute.

Not many people expected such a quick turnaround, and that has to be the biggest surprise of all.

FINAL RECORD PREDICTION: 36-20

A mirror image of last season's

record, and a vast improvement for a team still looking to rebuild. With its top two starters and a lineup as strong as this one, 1-9, this team

could certainly make some noise in the Sun Belt Tournament in May in Troy.



CHRIS TOWERS/THE BEACON

SLIDING BY: Junior Arrojo scores against Western Kentucky as he is cheered on by Tyler Townsend.



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BASEBALL WEEKEND

WALK-OFF ... AGAIN

FIU walks off on a Friday for a third time

SERGIO BONILLA
Asst. Sports Director

Ryan Mollica had the chance to send his team to victory in the final at bat of the game in the first two games against the Western Kentucky University Hilltoppers.

In the first game, he made his team go crazy as his teammates chanted, "This is our house!" in the home team locker room.

However, the second game of the series did not culminate in a euphoric celebration, but in a third strike call on the previous night's hero, Mollica.

The Golden Panthers were just beginning to face more elite Sun Belt Conference opponents when they faced the University of Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns.

Yet the Hilltoppers boasted the best overall and conference record of any opponent this season.

FIU 9, WKU 8

Ryan Mollica was insulted when the Hilltoppers opted to intentionally walk Pablo Bermudez to get to him.

"I saw the intentional walk; I took that as a slap in the face," Mollica said. "I wanted to pick it up there. I hadn't done anything all night."

So, he did.

Down 8-7 with the bases loaded and two outs, Mollica was 0-for-4 during the game heading into the at bat. He hit a sharp groundball in between first and second base. He sprinted toward first base before diving safely for an infield single.

This brought in Garrett Wittels to tie the game. The Hilltoppers' defense did not immediately throw to home and this allowed Lammar Guy to slide in for the



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

WILD FINISH: Lammar Guy is carried by teammates after scoring the game-winning run against Western Kentucky. The Panthers snapped a five-game losing skid vs. WKU.

game-winning run.

The celebration ensued.

The Golden Panthers defeated the Western Kentucky Hilltoppers 9-8 on April 3 at University Park Stadium.

Facing the best opponent this season, the Golden Panthers managed to keep the Hilltoppers' offense from reaching their season average of nearly 10 runs per game.

Coming off a bullpen implosion vs. Jacksonville University, relief pitcher R.J. Fondon kept his team in the game after Scott Rembisz lost control of his pitches

and the game.

Fondon entered the game with a 7-6 deficit in the top of the sixth and two outs. He pitched 3 1/3 innings and gave up just one unearned run.

"He's been a little bit up and down this year," said head coach Turtle Thomas. "But the last couple of times out, he's thrown consistently hard."

Western Kentucky came into the game with the Sun Belt Conference's best offense, but just the sixth best team

BASEBALL, page 10

Early returns promising for improved baseball team

COMMENTARY



CHRIS TOWERS

In some ways, assessing the FIU baseball team presents an interesting challenge unlike some of the school's other sports this past season. Sure, like the football team, they were lead by a second-year coach coming off an abysmal season.

However, the baseball team's successes, standing at the midseason point with an 18-8 record, can be appreciated on their own rather than just in the context of the previous season's struggles.

And on the other hand, we've seen a couple of other sports share similar success, but none have done so in quite the same fashion as the baseball team, which has prominently featured 23 new faces.

The baseball team must be assessed on its own terms, then.

BEST HITTER: TYLER TOWNSEND

A case could be made for a number of players, including fellow preseason all Sun Belt pick Ryan Mollica, but Townsend's mixture of power and patience has him pacing the team in both slugging percentage and on base percentage.

He has produced consistently from day one. He has truly lived up to the hype and developed into one of the Sun Belt's top hitters in his junior season.

BEST PITCHER: TOM EBERT

Ebert and fellow Juco transfer Scott

TOWERS, page 10

New kids add refreshment to team

COMMENTARY



ANDREW JULIAN

Halfway in, 26 games down and 28 to go, what we've seen from FIU's baseball team is, when classified as a whole, very refreshing.

From where the team was last year through 26 games (9-17, and allowing more than eight runs per game), any type of turnaround is refreshing, but what makes this one different is just how it's getting done.

In this case it's pinpoint power pitching that's preventing certain types of poor performances.

With the top three starters for FIU a combined 9-2, with two conference Pitcher of the Week awards and a 2.81 ERA with a 6.5-to-1 strikeout-to-walk ratio, it's been smooth sailing on most afternoons and early evenings for the starters.

Add four complete games in 18 starts, and you've got the makings of a dominant conference pitching staff.

What's more is that you've got a team batting well over .300 and with

four everyday players batting over .340, you're going to find runs in nearly every game.

The improvements that have been made up and down the lineup and on the front line of the starting rotation are night and day from a year ago, and with an 18-8 start, through April 4, this is a good liking team, poised to return to the Sun Belt tournament.

The improvement in the numbers are the part that would be referred to as impressive welcome improvements to the fans, but maybe not something called refreshing.

What I'd call refreshing is how the team conducts themselves in the dugout during games and also, the contributions FIU has gotten from its freshmen.

Despite some bullpen issues, R.J. Fondon has been solid this season. The freshman lefty is tied for the most wins, and boasts a sub-4.00 ERA. He's been a mid-week starter and a weekend reliever, and has been effective in both roles.

One of the most difficult defensive positions on the field is the hot corner, and all of the chances this year at third have been taken by freshmen.

Garrett Wittels and Raiko Alfonso have platooned at third base, and while Wittels has committed seven errors, he's also shown quite a bit of range, and a very strong throwing arm in the field.

Alfonso has made just three errors in 39 chances this, and posts a .294 batting average in just 51 at-bats.

The evolution of this team's personality can be seen before games with Lammar Guy and Junior Arrojo sliding into hype-circles before games, and the team taking up a new dance routine, the Cha-Cha slide, in the middle of the fifth inning.

A greater aspect of team, and a sprinkling of newcomers, have taken the Golden Panthers from a .357 team to a .692 team that's well on its way to making the conference tournament, following a one-year absence.

A strong second half will be expected, and the expectations will be welcome, as they come with success. A trip to take on Sun Belt leader Middle Tennessee will be perhaps the toughest test of the season for FIU, and will go a long way in showing just how far FIU has come in the last year.



VICTORIA LYNCH/THE BEACON

SMOOTH SWING: Ryan Mollica is batting .340 and leads the team with 33 RBI.