

THE BEACON

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MAST Academy

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Mathletes compete, push the limit

Margaret MacLaren
Editor-in-Chief

Junior Marcos Lanio placed third and senior Christopher Hendrix placed fifth at the Cyprus Bay Regional Mu Alpha Theta competition on March 8. Both were competing in individual statistics tests. Other areas of study are Algebra I and II, Geometry, Pre-Calculus and Calculus. Individual tests last one hour and have 30 multiple choice questions. Four points are awarded for every correct answer and one point is subtracted for every wrong answer. Zero points are awarded to blank answers.

Hendrix tied with another student in his individual competition, but the tie was broken after three problems. The tie breaker was described as “intense” by senior Stephanie Villagra.

In addition to individual exams, there are also team competitions and an interschool exam.

Teams of four complete 12 problems, which are generally made up of four parts. They have four minutes for each problem.

Usually, each team member will complete one portion of the problem and everyone else will check their work. This can be complicated, Lanio said, when half the team reaches one conclusion and the other half reaches a different one.

Team scores are based on the number of points gained in the written exam plus the individual scores of each team member.

The statistics team, made up of senior and club president Scarlett Barker, senior



Members of Mu Alpha Theta, the mathematics honor society, talk after the Cyprus Bay Regional Competition on March 8. The school earned four trophies, two for individuals, one for a team and one for the interschool exam.

Andres Donoso, Hendrix and Lanio, were sixth in their subject area, but with their individual scores, achieved third place.

Club sponsor Julie Hood described the interschool exam as a “crazy trivial pursuit” variation. It is given to each school at the start of the competition in a packet with several copies of the questions, but only one answer sheet. It contains questions that may be unrelated to mathematics. This year’s test included a crossword puzzle.

Students worked on their school’s exam while not participating in their individual or team competitions.

The school reached fifth place. This was the first time this school has placed in the interschool exam.

The Mu Alpha Theta team has gone to three competitions this school year and has won awards at each event. Barker won first place in January.

Fifteen students are going to Orlando for the April 17 state competition.

Competitions begin early—six or seven in the morning. Lanio recalls waking up at four a.m. to arrive on time to the January competition, which took place in Broward County. Mu Alpha Theta members complete practice problems together to prepare for competitions.

Hood is “amazed” that high school students take the time to participate in math competitions on weekends. Lanio, however, is not baffled.

“Math is awesome,” he said.

State budget cuts reach Miami schools

Alyssa Fowers
Staff Writer

The Florida State Legislature approved five hundred million dollars in budget cuts in early March, twenty eight million dollars of which will come out of Miami-Dade County Public Schools. A moratorium on nonessential spending has been placed on schools and according to principal Thomas Fisher, a larger budget cut is expected for next year.

“There’s so much up in the air, I don’t know what will affect us and where,” Fisher said.

Purchases affected

Lead Teacher Margaret Haun’s film studies class has already been touched by the cuts. Funding for the equipment needed to complete the class’s final project was cancelled at the final level of district approval.

Other purchases may also be limited.

The spending moratorium requires that all school spending be submitted for approval.

“What it boils down to is that we need to be very detailed in what we ask for and why,” Fisher said.

Teacher reactions

The budget squeeze has some teachers angry.

“It’s mismanagement,” Chemistry teacher Joseph Zawodny said. “No one can tell me that they don’t have enough money... How can it be that every couple of years we have a new program for something? They throw the stuff out and they get something new...They waste money incessantly and they shouldn’t do that.”

Others see it as a result of overall hard times.

“It’s not that it’s been reallocated. The position is, the state doesn’t have the money to spend and so it’s just a lack of fund-

ing rather than a reallocation,” Haun said.

Fisher, however, firmly believes that the quality of education at this school will not change.

“It will not affect the number of teachers or the instructional programs. If we have to cut other places—field trips, extra-curriculars—well, you tell me what you’d rather have cut,” Fisher said. “The one thing I know is, it won’t affect the instructional program. It cannot.”

Consequences

Two hundred part time employees in Miami-Dade County public school will be left jobless as a result of the cuts. Additionally, the PACE program, which helps at-risk girls in eighteen campuses across the state, may have to close one of its schools.

The School Board ruled to take ten million dollars from its contingency reserves. It also decided to take \$450 thousand from overtime for employees.

Community colleges throughout Florida will also be affected by the state’s cuts. These colleges are in a difficult position because of their open enrollment policies and a recent increase in students.

Student reactions

Freshmen Audrey Aradanas, Diana Coelho and Sharon Matamoros are dismayed that education should suffer because of economic woes.

“If we don’t educate the people, we have no future,” Coelho said.

They have a few ideas about how to reduce costs within the school.

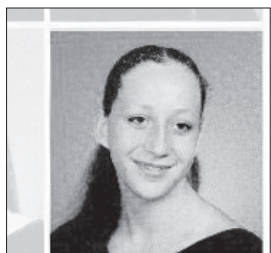
Aradanas believes electricity costs could be cut if measures to conserve were taken.

“I think we spent a lot of money on the iPods and macs,” Coelho said.

Matamoros suggested that part of the problem is in the disparity between teachers’ salaries and those of their employers.

Inside...

Alumnus returns



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The stir over coffee

pgs. 6-7



pg. 9



Taverna

Opa!

Trebuchet competition



pg. 10

Athletics plans for new field

pg. 11



News In Brief

What's going on in your school?

The annual Solar Celebration will give Wafa Khalil's Solar Energy students and Julie Hood's Physics students an opportunity to display projects and research they have accumulated over the year. It will take place on March 23.

Science Fair projects are due on Monday, April 7th. The judges will consist of faculty from RSMAS as well as other community members. The awards ceremony will take place on Thursday, April 10th. Parents and students are welcome to view the projects after judging.

JROTC's USCG Platoon Competition will take place on April 30. Platoons will challenge each other in physical ability and team work through activities such as the mile run, tug-o-war, obstacle courses and sit-, push- and pull-up tests. Members of the winning platoon will receive ribbons to adorn their uniforms.

National Honor Society's Induction Ceremony on April 24 will honor upperclassmen as they become official members of the club. Students need an unweighted GPA of 3.5 and a teacher recommendation to be eligible. Family and friends are welcome to attend the ceremony, which will begin at seven p.m. in the auditorium.

Compiled by Toni Darwish

C-UNIT & G-CREW
Rollin out of MAST
dirty style in
June 2008

Grad returns to classroom

Margaret MacLaren
Editor-in-Chief

Alumna Brette Weinkle will be teaching Advanced Placement and Honors United States History while teacher Nairy Reboredo takes a leave of absence.

"It wasn't that long ago that I was a MAST student," Weinkle said. She believes that as a young teacher she is able to relate to her students.

Weinkle became an employee of Miami-Dade County Public Schools when her mother's friend, an employee of Mercy Hospital, offered her the position as a job coach in the hospital's Project Victory.

In this post, Weinkle helped supervise educable mentally handicapped students who were given jobs in the hospital. Weinkle realized that she enjoyed working with the kids and that she was interested in teaching. She taught as a substitute a few times before she was offered this position.

Weinkle said that although many things have changed since she was here taking classes, the "spirit of the school is still the same." One difference, however, is that there used to be one AP history class offered to juniors, as opposed to the four the school currently offers.

After graduating from high school in 2002, Weinkle attended the University of Florida where she was an English major. She changed

Photo by Jehan Sinclair



Brette Weinkle, class of 2002, prepares juniors for the AP US History exam, scheduled for May 9. Weinkle sought her social studies certification specifically to take this position.

her major to anthropology briefly before becoming "disillusioned" by her professors' constant quest for grant money.

In college Weinkle wrote for the University's literary magazines and occasionally wrote reviews for Gainesville newspapers. It is her dream to one day be paid for her

writing.

She plans to attend rabbinical school, which will allow her to pursue a career in which she can teach, write and help produce change.

Weinkle is interested in social action and hopes that as a teacher she "can get her students interested in the world around them."

Spring Break carnival requires planning, funds

Candice Allouch
Staff Writer

The Student Government Association (SGA) has been organizing the annual MAST Blast celebration and collecting money to cover its cost from dances, bake sales and holiday grams since the beginning of the year. This kick-off into Spring Break will run from 12:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. on March 27, following a morning of 40 minute classes and a school-wide lunch.

"We've been working really hard because we want to make this the best MAST Blast ever! There has been a lot of researching for new ways in which MAST students can have fun," senior Marco Blanco, SGA historian, said.

There will be an array of activities including a rock-wall and bounce house, slip and slide and the popular video games Rock Band and Singstar.

Ping-pong and billiard tournaments will take place in the cafeteria, and basketball competitions supervised by basketball coach and social studies teacher Adam Mass will take place on the court. Those interested in swimming should bring bathing suits and towels as the pool will be open and student DJs will be playing music on the pool deck.

For one dollar, students can try their luck at dunking Principal Thomas Fischer or Assistant

Principal Clyde Stephens. All proceeds from the dunk tank will be used for future SGA activities, possibly extending to next year's festival and school dances.

Cotton candy and popcorn will be sold during all the events and all of the proceeds from the sales will also go to future SGA activities.

"We are going to start new traditions," senior Sarah Goldberg, SGA president, said.

The students were responsible for identifying party rental companies, compiling bids and seeking administrative permission for their plans. They needed to make adjustments twice before they were given official approval from Principal Fisher and Activities Director Maignan.

All leadership students and class officers are expected to rotate through one hour shifts at the activity booths with at least one teacher as chaperone.

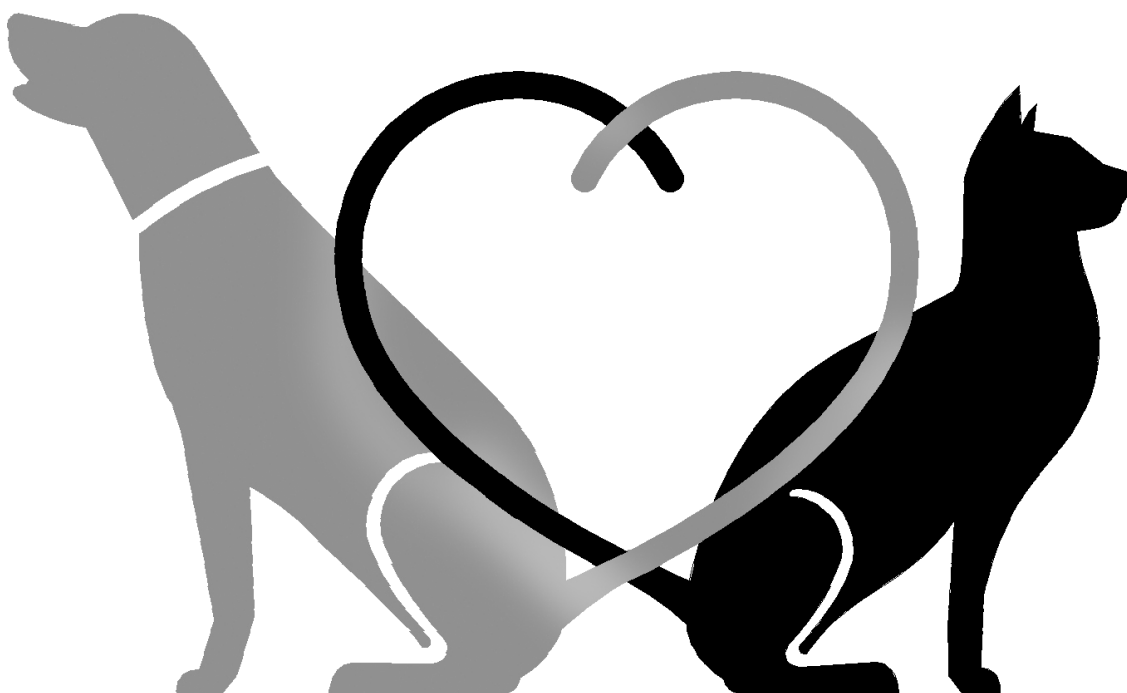
According to Activities Director Genevieve Maignan, MAST Blast will cost approximately \$23 hundred.

Senior Coral Silva, SGA Secretary, said, "There was a little trouble at first [with] fundraising, but thanks to the Valentine's Day dance we pulled through and got many activities together to promote class unity and have a great time!"

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Class of '08 takes center stage



Seniors Thais Wilson-Soler, Heidi Lazcano, Amanda Labora, Nicholas Morales, Chloe Hans-Barrientos, Delfina Vizzoco, Georgia Pesquera and Corin Liantaud dance in the Senior Extravaganza.

Christine Montero
Staff Writer

Seven performances ranging from an impromptu "jam session" by the drum ensemble to aerobic dance numbers to songs written about classmates took over the auditorium stage at the much-anticipated Senior Extravaganza on March 20.

"Everyone wanted to be involved in the production of this show. It was innovative, creative, funny.... It really brought our class together," senior David Pertierra said.

Though past senior classes have organized performances to showcase their collective talents and hobbies before, this year's show was surely an unprecedented one. The senior class incorporated an awards show into the event. Seventeen categories included "Best Smile" and "Most Likely to Save the World" and film clips of all the nominees were shown.

"Forget VMA's, forget Grammys, we don't even know Oscar anymore. It's all about the MAS-Ties," senior class president Chinelo Okany said of the trophies each winner was awarded.

Okany, along with seniors Jose Duran and Stefan Schwindeman were part of a group that helped organize the event. Duran and senior Matthew Deblinger served as hosts and produced the video that served as an introduction to the show as well as the nominee clips and two performances with their group, Snakes '08.

With a five dollar entrance fee, the Senior Extravaganza was also a fundraiser for this year's prom.

However, the event was not only a showcase appealing to seniors exclusively. A large portion of the audience consisted of underclassmen as well.

"I thought the show was cute and really well put together. There was a lot of class spirit going around—something I don't think my class could pull off," junior Marjorie Nuñez said.

Senior Katrina Avila, winner of the award for "Best Photography," agreed.

"So much hard work went into the show in just two weeks. The trophies that were given to winners weren't bought with class funds, they were bought by seniors themselves. That really shows the love that went into the show and the fact that '08 runs this place," she said.

Club Highlight

Young Democrats and Republicans *An Equal Access Club*

Marcella May
News Editor

The political awareness clubs, Young Democrats and Young Republicans, have seen a renewed surge of interest in advance of the upcoming presidential election.

"[The clubs] haven't been very active before this year, but now they have purpose and drive," world history teacher Calvin Webb said.

Webb sponsors both clubs, though meetings are conducted at different times. However, membership is not mutually exclusive.

"Nobody is one hundred percent liberal or conservative," Webb said. Although no student is an official member of both, sophomore Joe Andreoli has attended meetings of both.

"There are so many issues nowadays that it is best to stay away from party influences and formulate your own opinion,"

Andreola said.

The meetings are in a similarly open manner, with members discussing different platform issues. The economy has been of particular interest.

The most clearly discernable difference between the clubs is their size; the Young Democrats have a much larger base, with 30 official members as compared to the Young Republicans' three.

The clubs are currently planning a joint meeting to prepare for a mock presidential debate such as the one held by students in 2004. Club members will represent candidates during an assembly in the auditorium. Neither club is endorsing an individual candidate.

"It is important for high school students to understand politics and learn how to make intelligent and informed choices," senior Marissa Salas, treasurer of the Young Democrats, said.

Community Service Opportunities

Star Worlds sailing regatta

April 7-18

Star Worlds sailing regatta is being hosted by Coral Reef Yacht Club in Coconut Grove from April 7 to the 18. Volunteers are needed to help measure and launch boats and support social activities. Positions are available after-school and on the weekends. No sailing experience is required. Contact volunteers@starworlds2008.com for more information.

Arbor Day tree planting

April 25

In celebration of Arbor Day, register to plant trees in East Little Havana on April 25 with Mayor Manny Diaz and Commissioner Joe Sanchez. The celebration will begin at eight a.m. in Henderson Park, located at 971 NW 2nd St., Miami. The planting will end at 11 a.m. with a free lunch and music. For details, please call Hands on Miami at (305) 646-7460.

Best Buddies Day

March 29

Volunteers are needed for Best Buddies Day Miami on March 29 from 7:30 a.m. to four p.m. Held at Village Green Park on Key Biscayne, Best Buddies Day will include a Walk for Friendship, activity booths, celebrity guests, live entertainment and free food and beverages for all. Volunteers are needed to help set up, register guests and guide entertainment and food vendors to their designated locations. Contact junior Carla Aronsohn in homeport room 38 for more information.

AIDS Walk Miami

April 20

The 20th Annual AIDS Walk Miami-Run and Blade for the Cure is scheduled for Sunday, April 20 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Volunteer positions include greeter/guest relations, event set-up/break-down, floater, general assistance, merchandise and behind-the-scenes/planning and preparation. Contact (305) 751-9255 for more information.

Compiled by Catie Skipp



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Ramblings... Society's hamster wheel



Amanda Labora
Staff Writer

This past weekend, my mother invited me to get a manicure with her. After examining my nails for a few moments, I decided that I could benefit from such an excursion. When we arrived at the salon, a manicurist ushered me over to porcelain colored, hand shaped chair. As I soaked my hands in god knows what, it occurred to me that I was spending my time and money frivolously.

While I sat in a tacky hand chair and paid a woman to coat my nails with chemical slush, millions of people, plagued by actual worries, were suffering. I was overcome with feelings of guilt and disgust. "Is this really what our complex society and highly developed reasoning abilities amount to?" I thought.

Sometimes I wonder what our society would look like from an observer's point of view. Would our quotidian wor-

ries seem ridiculous, even hilarious? Are we really all that different from a colony of ants?

As silly as it may sound, getting a manicure made me reevaluate my place in the world. I am on the verge of leaving home for the first time, of carving my own path in the world. I like to think that I am going to college this fall to explore new ideas and expand my understanding—not because it is the "next step" towards society's definition of success.

Do we simply go to college in order to get a high-paying job, make a lot of money and procreate? Is the journey on which I am about to embark a unique or even meaningful one?

I, like most of my fellow seniors, will be forced to make a difficult decision in the coming months. Once we've decided whether or not to go to college, we still have to choose a college. Unfortunately, money, a determinant of societal success, will play an important role in our decisions. Is it wiser to accept an offer from an elite out-of-state school or sacrifice a dream to avoid being saddled with loans?

I feel innately compelled to advance, to move forward towards a certain point. What exactly I am striving for, whether it is financial and social success, happi-

ness or my inevitable physical death, is unclear. This innate feeling, which I believe plagues all humans and connects us to one another, is analogous to a hamster running on a wheel.

It seems like we are all racing towards a finish line that may not even exist. What are we in such a hurry to accomplish? Why are we so concerned with society's arbitrary measures of success?

Jean Jacques Rousseau said, "man is born free but everywhere he is in chains." I chuckled to myself when I first read this, calling him a fruitcake in my head, but now I am beginning to wonder if he has a point.

There are so many things about the world I wish I could change such as the negative impact we have had on the environment and the pain we inflict on one another. I had always believed that it was possible to "make the world a better place" and still play by society's rules. Maybe that's because I was spoonfed idealistic mantras in grade school.

I don't believe that the problem rests with individuals. I think that most people, given the option, would take steps to do the "right thing," whatever that may be. Rather, it is society that constrains us.

For example, even if everyone at school wanted to stop driving cars to

school in order to reduce carbon emissions, they wouldn't be able to. At the present, public transportation is too limited, unreliable and time consuming.

For several months, I considered riding my bike to school or taking the bus. However, the number of books I carry and the amount of sleep and time I would lose, at the expense of my academic and social responsibilities, would make this an uneconomical and impractical decision.

Although this is an oversimplified example, it does illustrate that the obligations we choose over the idealistic or right thing are forced upon us by society.

Sometimes I feel the urge to strip myself of my worldly possessions and live off the fat of the land with indigenous people in a remote part of the world. I want to run away from my societal obligations and be accountable to no person, government or society. Would I be as happy, if not happier, than the people who follow the beaten path towards so called success?

I wish that there was a clear-cut answer to that question but there isn't. I doubt that I could ever completely detach myself from society and am not entirely sure I want to. I guess the only thing I can do for now is keep living.

Presidential platforms a neglected issue among teens



Brynn Katzen
Sports Editor

"I'm voting for Obama. I don't even know what he stands for but... his video 'Yes I Can' [is] so cool," junior Nick Connor said.

With the presidential election already in full swing, Americans should be looking into each candidate's platform in order to make an educated decision as to who they want to support and ultimately vote for. While some people put forth the necessary effort, many people, typically younger voters, tend to blindly vote for a candidate.

"McCain calls himself a conservative and that's good enough for me," Ketchum said.

"I'm voting for Obama. I don't even know what he stands for..."

However, there are some students who look into the politics of each candidate and learn what they stand for.

"I'm voting for Obama. At first I didn't like him because I thought people would just vote for him because he is black, but then I did a project for Mr. Maas on him and I ended up really liking him," senior Gaby Goodman said.

Younger voters need to pay just as much attention to elections as older voters, if not more.

"Social security, health care and alternative energy sources are the issues that interest me, and I really like Obama because of his stance on these issues.

He's also a good orator and more inspirational than 'hilarious,'" junior Gonzalo Iribarne said.

Although some student voters have made educated decisions about which candidate they are supporting the percentage is not nearly as high as it needs to be.

By the time the next President's term ends, this generation will be graduating college or graduate school, looking for jobs and supporting themselves. The new president will have a considerable influence on our future as individuals and the United States as a whole.

Newspaper censorship unjust

Broward school devalues student-run journalism

As most journalism students know, there is a fine balance to be struck between free expression and dangerous banter when publishing a student newspaper. Certain lines should not be crossed in any newspaper for the sake of decency and respectable journalism. However, the right to push the limits occasionally must be preserved.

Monarch High School saw its newspaper, *The Knights Circular*, rescinded because of typos and a series of stories that their administration wished outsiders would not read. One such article was a satire in the December issue describing the downfall of Santa Claus. Another student saw his column cancelled after he described the way pedestrians in the school parking lot obstructed the flow of cars. This seemed to cast the Coconut Creek school in a negative light, and apparently warranted censorship.

To the contrary, these types of articles are the reason student-run newspapers exist; they are a traditional avenue of expression and a vehicle for change. If safety concerns are being raised among students, the school's administrations should want to hear about them, even in a public fashion.

While schools do have the legal right to monitor the content of student-run newspapers, they should not use this power to undermine the first amendment rights of students. The academic press should nurture future journalists, leaders and community members. Needless censorship sends a discouraging message to anyone hoping to exercise his or her rights as a citizen. Students at Monarch High are more likely to remember this real-life lesson about freedom of the press than anything they may be tested on.

This recent bout of censorship is by no means an instance of a harsh crackdown by McCarthyist officials. It is, however, ridiculous that innocuous parody or even mistakes in spelling could ever seem to warrant stopping publication. This should be a principal's last resort.

THE BEACON



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Calorie count

Starbucks is viewed as one of the fastest growing businesses in the country, with the smallest size frappuccino costing upwards of four dollars. With that extra price also comes extra calories...

Starbucks

| | |
|---|-----|
| Caffè Vanilla Frappuccino® Blended Coffee | 430 |
| Caramel Frappuccino® Light Blended Coffee | 160 |
| White Chocolate Mocha Frappuccino | 410 |
| Double Chocolate Chip Frappuccino | 510 |
| Whipped Cream Topping | 70 |

Generic

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Maxwell House | |
| Folgers Coffee | 0 |
| Cream (Carnation, 1 Tbs.) | 0 |
| Sugar (1 Tsp.) | 40 |
| | 15 |

Coffee by the numbers

1732 Year Bach wrote a coffee cantata

1675 Year Charles II issued a proclamation banning coffee houses, claiming they were where people met to plot against him

800 Number of aromatic compounds discovered in coffee

350 million. Number of cups of coffee Americans drink per day

1.5 Average number of coffee beans it takes to make an espresso

42

30-40

1.7

53

Coffee alternatives pose danger

Toni Darwish
Catie Skipp
Staff Writers

Many students can relate to staying up until four in the morning trying to cram for the next day's test. Whether it is for AP Chemistry or AP Biology, most students consume some kind of caffeinated beverage to keep them awake throughout the night. In the past few years, energy drinks such as Red Bull and Monster have replaced coffee, the original energy drink. With about twice as much caffeine as the average cup of coffee and a more "kid-friendly" taste, energy drinks have become dangerously popular with students.

"I don't like the taste of coffee, so I would rather drink Redbull, but only occasionally because I know it's not that good for me," freshman Tariq Darwish said.

Last week four teenagers from Falcon Cove Middle School in Weston were taken to a hospital emergency room this month, their hearts racing and bodies dripping with sweat. The students drank Redline, another popular energy drink, and several other substances that release significant levels of mood-altering serotonin. Although the students were released from the hospital in good condition, this incident raised concern among the Broward County School Board

members.

The question at hand is whether or not to ban students from energy drinks in school all together. Many feel that energy drinks should be for adults not only because of the high-caffeine levels but also because of the harmful additives such as taurine, glucuronolactone and ginseng. Energy drinks cause extreme dehydration as well as feelings of nervousness and anxiety. Adolescents are young enough to keep up their own energy levels with a well-balanced diet and a good night's sleep.

"I drink Redbull all the time for a quick fix throughout the day, whether or not I'm on my way to dance or trying to pull an all-nighter to study," junior Maria Teixeira said.

The labeling on energy drinks is often misleading, promising consumers with "... a wicked mega hit that delivers twice the buzz..." and "... a smooth flavor you can really pound down." The pressures students face in life have added to this new fad of drinking energy drinks to stay awake for longer periods of time getting in the way of their natural sleeping patterns.

"I don't drink those things [energy drinks], it's as if I'm drinking the chemicals found underneath my kitchen sink with added sugar and caffeine," junior Al Patterson said.



Java jams: songs for the coffee lover in all of us

- Yung Joc** - "Coffee Shop"
- Bob Dylan** - "One More Cup of Coffee"
- Duke Ellington** - "Cafe au Lait"
- Blur** - "Coffee and T.V."
- Joni Mitchell** - "Coffee and Conversation"
- Prince** - "Starfish & Coffee"
- The Cranberries** - "Wake Up and Smell the Coffee"
- Dethklok** - "Duncan Hills Coffee"
- Frank Sinatra** - "The Coffee Song"
- Red Hot Chili Peppers** - "Coffee Shop"
- Peggy Lee** - "Black Coffee"
- Lagwagon** - "Mr. Coffee"
- Copeland** - "Coffee"
- Manhattan Transfer** - "Java Jive"
- Johnny Cash** - "A Cup of Coffee"
- Spandau Ballet** - "Coffee Club"
- Aesop Rock** - "Coffee"
- Bob Marley** - "One Cup of Coffee"
- Norah Jones** - "In the Morning (Coffee Songs)"

Coffee with a smile

"Mom and Pop" coffee shops offer Starbucks alternative

Thais Wilson-Soler
Truck Editor

Several years ago the satirical newspaper *The Onion* printed a headline "New Starbucks Opens In Rest Room Of Existing Starbucks." While this may be an exaggeration, the rate at which the Starbucks chain has expanded is truly astounding.

According to its website, the chain has more than 11 thousand stores in the U.S. alone with additional stores in 43 foreign countries. While dedicated fans of the brand happily anticipate its expansion, there are many who long for the quaint and cozy neighborhood coffee shops of yesteryear.

"[Chains] don't have originality. I could go to a Starbucks anywhere," sophomore Siobhan Robinson said.

However small in number, friendly neighborhood coffee shops still exist. Donut Gallery and Oasis Café, both on Key Biscayne, are two such examples.

Donut Gallery, located on 83 Harbor Dr., is a 30-year-old restaurant voted the "Best Greasy Spoon" restaurant of 2002 by Miami New Times restaurant guide. Pictures of patrons and customers adorn the walls of the small diner, giving it a close, friendly feel. The

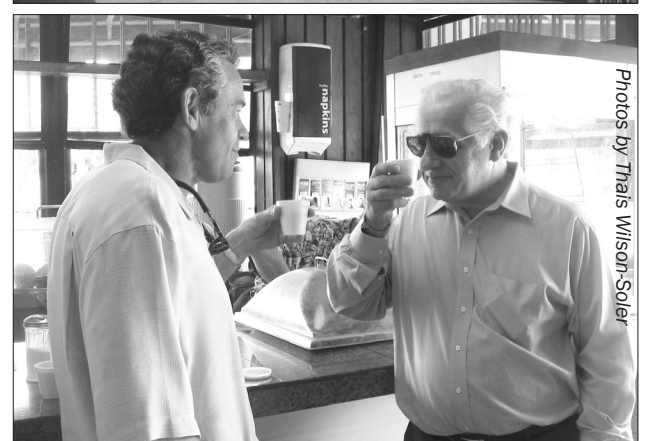
simple breakfast fare and black coffee harkens back to the days when it took no more than two syllables to order a coffee drink.

Cuban-owned Oasis Café caters to a crowd that favors the strong Cuban cortadito over a frappuccino or iced coffee any day. It offers a vast array of Cuban food such as ropa vieja and fried rice. A hefty dessert menu includes pies, cakes and an assortment of pastries with fillings like guava, cheese and meat. Owner Lino Suarez attributes the café's success to its originality.

"We're unique," Suarez said. "We've been established for 40 years and we started from scratch... It's not a chain."

Lino Suarez believes that the personal touch independent coffee shops offer will keep customers coming back.

The age of the neighborhood coffee spot may have faded out of the limelight, but for those who remember a time when words like frappuccino didn't have meaning and coffee was not synonymous with the ubiquitous Starbucks chain, a few beloved fragments remain, in the form of restaurants like Donut Gallery and Oasis Café.



Key Biscayne's Latin-style Oasis Café customers enjoy an afternoon cortadito. The café is also known for its Cuban pastries and croquetas.

Photos by Thais Wilson-Soler

Coffee: for better or worse

Victoria Diez
Staff Writer

It's a little bit of heaven in a paper cup. Frothy hot cappuccino topped with foamy milk, some whipped cream and a sprinkling of cinnamon. For many people, a daily cup of coffee or two is an essential part of their daily routine.

Of course, what they may not realize is that that Double Chocolate Chip Frappuccino Blended crème has a whopping 25 mg of caffeine. While drinking moderate amounts of coffee is safe and even may be beneficial, the over consumption of caffeinated drinks can cause negative effects.

In an article from newsscience.com, "Coffee: The Demon Drink," Richard Lovett said that "global consumption of caffeine has been estimated at 120 thousand tons per annum, making it the world's most popular psychoactive substance. This number equates to one serving of a caffeine beverage for every person, per day."

Studies have found positive effects from consuming moderate amounts of coffee (between one and three cups a day). For example, the risk of contracting Parkinson's disease may be reduced from 50 to 80 percent and the risk of colon cancer reduced by 25 percent in moderate coffee drinkers. Coffee can help relieve asthma attacks and alleviate certain types of headaches. Coffee can increase mental alertness and concentration.

But drinking excessive amounts of coffee can cause side effects that range from mild to life threatening. Most people know that excessive coffee drinking can lead to insomnia.

In addition, heavy coffee drinkers may be diagnosed with a type of syndrome called "Caffeinism." Its symptoms include agitation, disorientation and mild dizziness. More serious health risks include high cholesterol, lower fertility, and high blood pressure. Recent studies suggest a link between excessive coffee consumption and increased risk of coro-

nary heart disease.

Although caffeine is usually thought to be safe in moderate amounts, consuming as little as 100 mg of caffeine a day can lead a person to become "dependent" on caffeine.

"Coffee is kind of addictive. When I drink it I either want to do more things or go to sleep. I've stayed up until 4:00am studying after drinking coffee. It makes me feel like I can stay up even if I really don't think it does anything," junior from School for Advanced Studies Monica Mejuto said.

Coffee drinkers who give up the beverage suddenly will generally experience withdrawal symptoms that include tiredness, irritability, and severe headaches.

Still, the allure of coffee is great, and many Americans couldn't imagine starting their day without their favorite brew.

"Every morning I drink a cup of coffee. I don't see what the big deal is; the only symptom I ever feel is energy," junior Cristina Martinez said.

percent of world output of coffee Brazil is responsible for

average number of cups of coffee men drink per day

average number of cups of coffee women drink per day

number of countries which grow coffee, all of them located between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn

Latte lovers anonymous: coffee addicts confess all

You've seen them on weekday mornings, the students whose faces are lit with an inward glow, their teeth showing in a cheery smile despite the time of day. They are the self-proclaimed coffee addicts, students who depend on caffeine in order to function, and these are their profiles.



Nicholas Morales, senior
When did you first drink coffee?

When I was two or so, it was Cuban coffee. I guess it was a cultural thing. It was always around... I just grew to love it.

How many cups of coffee do you drink a day?

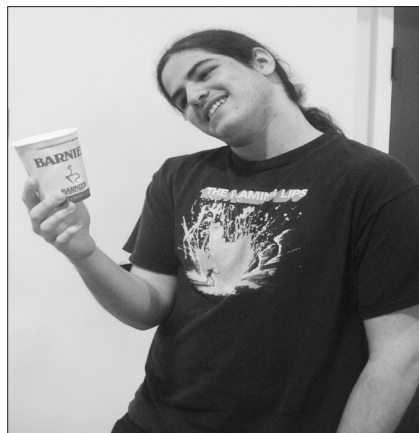
At least one cup.

Why do you drink coffee?

I need to stay awake somehow.

What is your favorite coffee drink?

An Iced Caramel Machiatto with an extra shot of espresso.



Danny Giovinazzo, senior
Why do you love coffee so much?

It's the essence of life... I'm addicted.

How many cups of coffee do you drink a day?

Two or three. Usually I have one to two cups in the morning... maybe another at night.

How is a day with coffee better than a day without it?

I can think! That pretty much sums it up.

What is your favorite coffee drink?

A Caramel Machiatto from Starbucks.



Photos by Thais Wilson-Soler and Anam Parpia

Maria "Duda" Teixeira, junior
How many cups of coffee do you drink a day?

One cup in the morning, two in the afternoon.

What is your favorite coffee drink?

A cortadito.

How long have you been drinking coffee? Why do you drink it?

Since I was seven.... It gives me a headache if I don't drink it.



Phillip Ordoñez, sophomore
Why do you love coffee so much?

I got used to the taste; it tastes good.

How many cups of coffee do you drink a day?

One, usually in the morning. On Saturdays I usually have three a day... that's when I work.

What is your favorite coffee drink?

When it's hot out I get a Caramel frappuccino. When it's cold I get a hot mocha.



Graphic by Anam Parpia

Drink responsibly: a caution to coffee drinkers

Allison Goodman
Layout Editor

One-fifth of the world's coffee is consumed in the United States. This coffee is often bought overseas for a price less than the cost of production.

Fair trade, an international certification issued by Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International (FLO), guarantees consumers that the farmers receive at least 1.26 dollars per pound, helping farmers overcome poverty internationally.

"We want to globalize the economy, but if we are going to trade with other countries, we have to make sure we have an ethical agreement with these countries. It holds true for all international trade," senior Daniel Giovinazzo

said. "It is morally and ethically unacceptable to say we need to have a certain set of standards for Americans, but everyone else can go to hell as long as we get cheap products."

However, it is not always easy to find coffee branded with the free trade stamp.

"Starbucks thinks they're God's gift to the world, but they're not," senior Andrew Alfonso, a former Starbucks employee, said. Starbucks employees do not brew fair trade coffee for their customers unless asked.

"I didn't even know what [fair trade] was," junior Ibis Alcala said. Alcala drinks Starbucks coffee regularly and never knew that Starbucks offered fair trade coffee. She plans to start requesting it.

Mor(gu)e than an internship

Allison Goodman
Layout/Photo Editor

Senior Audrey Medina interns in the Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner Department, which performs autopsies for Miami-Dade County. Three times a week, for four hours a day, she is able to learn about this field of science through hands-on experiences, such as weighing organs and “bowel moving” and by watching autopsies.

The medical examiners that Medina works with begin cases by taking fingerprints and by doing external and internal examinations; the latter includes removing, dissecting and taking samples of the organs. These samples are put on slides and examined under a microscope. Autopsies can take anywhere between half an hour and an hour and a half to complete.

Bodily fluids, such as blood, urine and bile, are sent to the toxicology lab for analysis, but even so, it is sometimes necessary to consult with a specialist. Every afternoon, a meeting is held to re-

view cases.

“The very thought of working with dead people usually throws people off, but I am fascinated by

cases where the cause of death is not immediately apparent.

“Some of the more interesting cases are the ones where it seems

When she first began her internship, she had some trouble classifying organs, distinguishing lungs from livers and kidneys from bladders. However, her knowledge about the human anatomy has improved dramatically.

Although Medina cannot be paid for her work under the terms set by the MAST Internship program, she feels she is being compensated appropriately nonetheless.

“I’m paid in knowledge,” Medina said.

The medical examiners, she said, are very willing to work with her and are generally more than happy to answer her questions. She also works with toxicologists, accountants, medical students, detectives, lawyers, forensic odontologists, forensic etymologists and anthropologists.

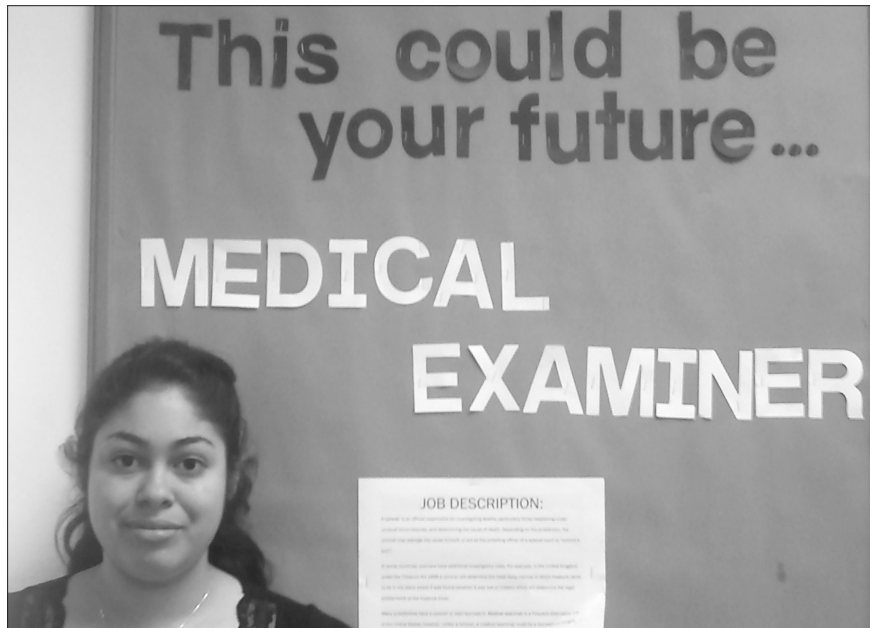
“I’ve networked with people

from all over the world at this point,” Medina said. She began working at the morgue in July 2007 and was hesitant at first to have to work with infants and children. However, after her first day, when she witnessed the autopsies for a double homicide case, she was immediately desensitized. Medina has learned to keep her internship purely professional.

“You leave all emotion outside the morgue,” Medina said. She has witnessed over a hundred autopsies, cases ranging from homicides to suicides to natural deaths. She also has the chance to learn about the business aspect of the profession, occasionally inputting case data into the database.

Medina knew that she wanted to work in this field before she started her internship. Her experiences at the morgue are doing nothing to discourage her. She plans to major in forensic pathology in college.

“I’m going into college with a lot more experience than other students,” Medina said.



Senior Audrey Medina prepares for a career in forensic pathology with county medical examiners.

it... It’s like a massive puzzle,” Medina said. Her favorite cases are ones dealing with neuropathology or cardiopathology—cas-

like nothing is wrong. Those are the ones where everything’s gone haywire; where you have to put your skills to use,” Medina said.

Making a world of difference

Emily Cava Northrop
Editor-in-Chief

There are more reasons for saving the Earth besides the fact that it is the only planet with chocolate. Earth Day, founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, is a time to remember that Mother Earth should not be taken for granted.

“For several years, it had been troubling me that the state of our environment was simply a non-issue in the politics of the country,” Nelson said in a 1993 American Heritage Magazine article. “Finally, in November 1962, an idea occurred to me that was, I thought, a virtual cinch to put the environment into the political ‘limelight’ once and for all.”

He proceeded to convince President John F. Kennedy to lead a “national conservation tour” the following year. It did not bring about the change Nelson wanted so he continued the campaign himself for the next six years. Inspired by Vietnam War protests and teach-ins, Nelson decided to hold a grassroots protest against environmental destruction. This demonstration, held on April 22, 1970, became the first annual Earth Day.

What was first celebrated by a reported 25 million marchers is now an internationally recognized holiday.

Junior Jehan Sinclair, president of ECLIPSE club, is planning to lead the school in celebrat-

ing Earth Day through the week of April 20.

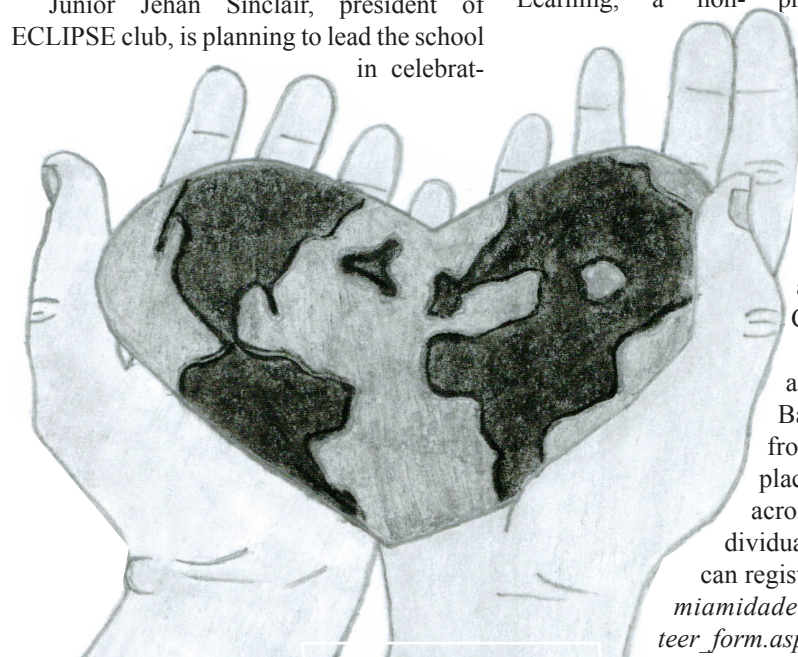
“It is important to celebrate Earth Day because it’s important to recognize and appreciate ... our environment,” Sinclair said.

The club plans to pass out lollipops with eco-facts and green necklaces to increase environmental awareness.

Chemistry teacher Joseph Zawodny hopes to give a school-wide sideshow presentation honoring several realms of the ocean. He is digitalizing his slide collection – composed of images taken by him, colleagues including art teacher Craig Kirk and friends from the past – and choosing songs to match the feeling inspired by each category. He plans to start by introducing the universe, accompanied by John Lennon’s “Across the Universe,” and then move through fish, the deep ocean, mangroves and the Keys and conclude with what Zawodny describes as “phylogenetic march” to Elton John’s “The Circle of Life.”

There will also be community events highlighting Earth Day. According to a press release, the Miami Seaquarium is adding “a green theme” to its usual shows and will hold several similarly-themed carnival games for children. Student delegates will attend to showcase the school’s efforts that support environmental sustainability. Earth Learning, a non-profit organization, is sponsoring the second annual EarthFest, a free community festival which be held from noon to sundown on Sunday, April 20 at Key Biscayne’s Crandon Park.

Students can also volunteer at Baynanza, a waterfront clean-up taking place at over 20 sites across the county. Individuals and groups can register online at www.miamidade.gov/derm/volunteer_form.asp.



Demystifying the lenten season

Chelsea Westra
Staff Writer

On Ash Wednesday, students that go to Catholic Church before school to get holy ashes on their foreheads often get weird looks and a joke about how they must have fallen asleep during class.

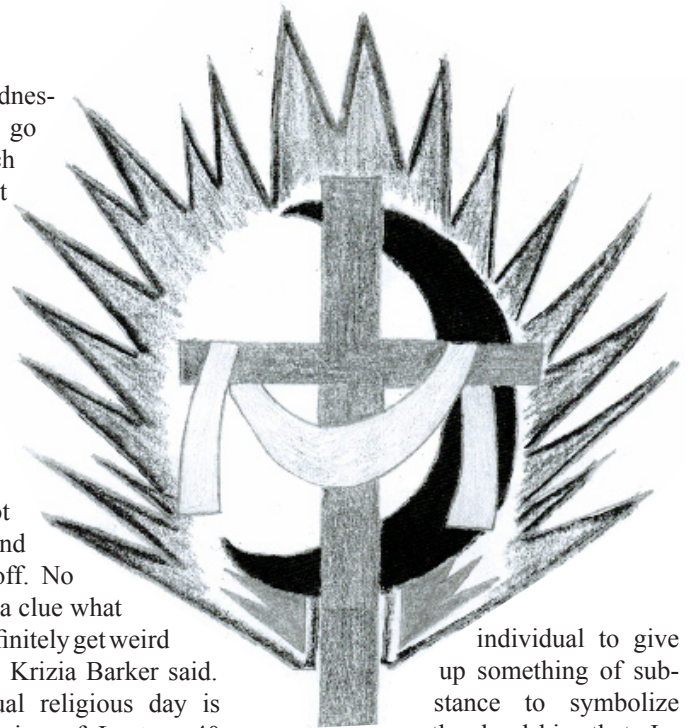
“Once a friend came up to me and was like ‘you’ve got dirt on your face!’ and started wiping it off. No one seems to have a clue what [Lent] is about. I definitely get weird looks,” sophomore Krizia Barker said.

But this unusual religious day is actually the beginning of Lent, a 40 day liturgical season for Catholics that ends the day before Easter. According to Kenneth Collins, ordained minister of the Christian Church, ashes on the forehead represent the beginning of a “sober reflection, self-examination and spiritual redirection.” The period signifies the 40 days Jesus is said to have spent fasting in the desert.

During Lent, religious individuals remember this fast by giving up something they enjoy or adding something new in their lives that will make their spiritual, mental and physical lives more wholesome. Adding new habits, including taking out the trash every night, is one way people observe Lent. Many other people give up food, such as sweets and soda, but some students are creative in their Lenten sacrifice.

“[I gave up] biting my nails,” senior Heidi Lazcano said.

There are several reasons as to why people give up their favorite things for Lent. Many religious institutions recommend this practice for several reasons. According to the Christian belief, the purpose of Lent is for an



individual to give up something of substance to symbolize the hardship that Jesus felt when He was fasting.

“A lot of people give up stuff to get closer to God, and that was part of my reason. However, I really like the challenge and I like to see if I can hold out for 40 days,” Barker said.

This challenge, which lasts for almost six weeks and doesn’t seem like a long time, is not easily completed by many people.

“I tried to give up swearing because I felt like I needed to. Considering I got ejected from a water polo game for cursing, it didn’t exactly work out,” sophomore Margaux Herrera said.

While some people have difficulty with it, the undertaking is still beneficial to most.

“I gave up eating after 9 p.m. I’ve been keeping it up, and I think it’s effective and useful for people who want to give up something they like but don’t usually have the willpower,” sophomore Abraham Acosta said.

Even if religion isn’t your “thing”, the benefits of giving up or adding something to benefit yourself and others cannot be denied.

Go Greek on SoBe

Taverna Opa engaging, appetizing



Waiters entertain diners at Taverna Opa, a Greek restaurant located on South Beach. Servers frequently toss paper napkins into the air with a shout of "Opa!" Professional belly dancers perform nightly and customers are encouraged to join in the festivities.

Cherie Rodriguez
Staff Writer

Taverna Opa is a lively Mediterranean style Greek restaurant found in the heart of Miami Beach. The restaurant is casual and fun. The music is vivacious, which makes it a great place to dance and hang out with friends.

The ambiance of the eatery is lively and entertaining. There is everything from belly dancers, napkins being thrown in the air and waiters dancing Greek dances on the strong and rustic wooden tables. Customers join in too and the music is a mix of recent hits, techno and typical Greek music.

The first Taverna Opa opened in Hollywood, Florida in 1998. It proved to be a successful endeavor, and the veteran restaurateur Peter Tsialiamanis decided to open one on Miami Beach's Ocean Drive. This four star restaurant offers its customer the good service found in an high class restaurant, without the uptight feel of its competitors or even the high price tag. Plates cost on average of \$16 per person, not including beverages. Opa allows the patron to choose either king crab legs \$14 or something as simple and affordable as the Keftedes—ground, beef, onion and parsley (\$3.95). In addition to being an entertaining place to visit, Opa is appealing because of its delicious food.

"The lamb chops are my favorite," junior Christopher Aguilar said.

"I liked that you could dance on tables, and the employees throw napkins in the air," junior Elizabeth

Turner said.

"I like the loudness and craziness of the environment, and people that don't even know each other feed off of each other's energy," sophomore Margaux Herrera said.

The building itself looks like and has all of the charm of a vintage Greek restaurant. It is white with the typical red tile roofs seen throughout Greece.

Customers can decide to sit in the front or back section, the latter being suited more to families. Most of the party goes on indoors, and the tables are much stronger and longer, able to accommodate big parties.

The furniture style is very plain and rustic. When empty, the restaurant looks like any other, but when full it is a completely different place. The people who work there give the place its special appeal.

"I liked sitting indoors, because it's where most of the party is and you get to dance on tables," junior Tomás Pendóla said.

Taverna Opa is located at 3640 Ocean Dr. Miami Beach, Fl. 33139. Keep in mind this is a family restaurant until 11 p.m.; after 11 it only serves adults. Customers under 21 are as good as out the door when the clock hits 11. Reservations can not be made at this restaurant.

To get a good table, plan to arrive around seven p.m.. It tends to get packed with people after around eight p.m., especially on Fridays, weekends or holidays. The entertainment starts around this time and good tables are available. Lines do form so it is important to arrive early.

From high fives to the finger

Jehan Sinclair
Staff Writer

Hand gestures come in a variety of forms and can convey a plethora of messages—from a simple greeting to a personal affront. Whether overt or not, nonverbal communication plays a big part in everyday speech. In certain situations, hand gestures succeed where words alone fall short. The following is a short compilation and history of well known hand gestures.

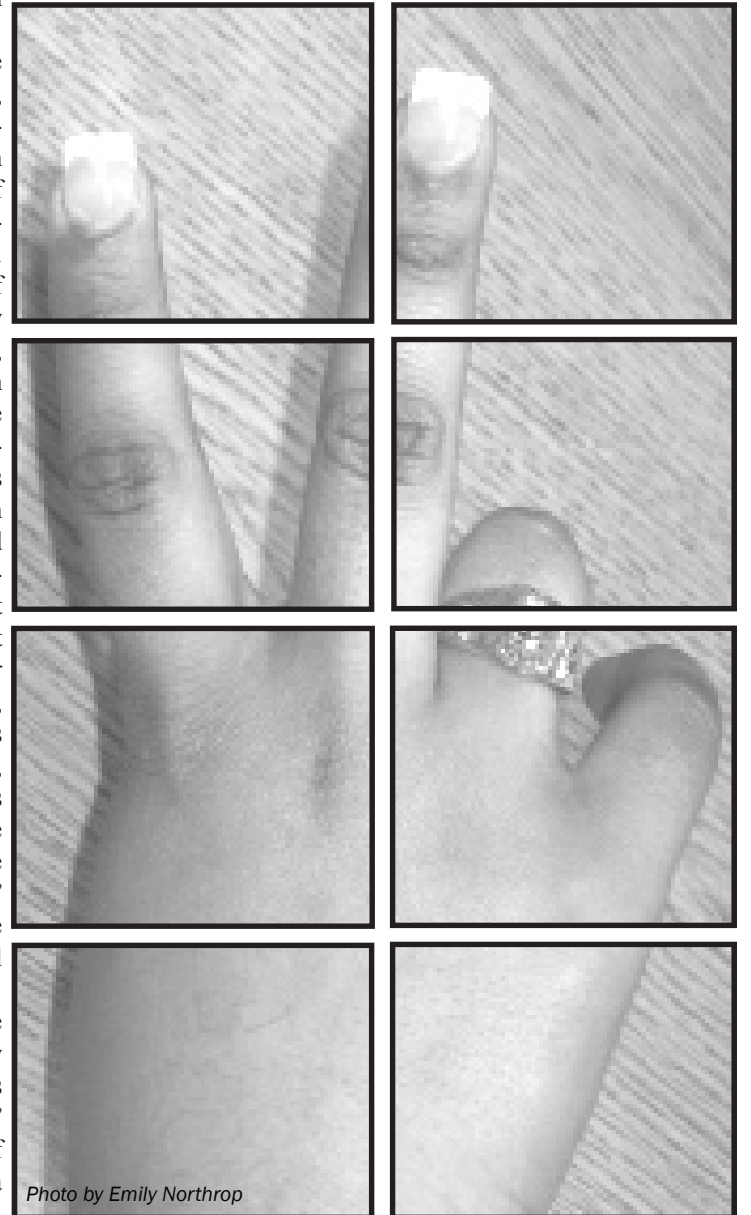
The versatile high five can be used as a greeting, in celebration, or to recognize camaraderie between two people. The origin of the High Five is still disputed amongst historians. However the founders of National High Five Day (April 19), Wynn Walet, Conor Lastowka and Sam Miotke credit Murray State University basketball player, Lamont Sleets Junior as the inventor of the modern high five. As the legend goes, Sleets learned the gesture from his father, Lamont Sleets Senior, who used it amongst his Vietnam War veteran friends. Back then, it was simply known as "The Five." Little Lamont, in an attempt to be like his father, would imitate the gesture when greeting the veterans and say "Hi, Five!" Later on, Sleets Jr. used the gesture with his basketball teammates.

Also known as the "Rock Fist" in U.S. Heavy Metal and Rock subcultures and the "Hook em' Horns" to fans of the University of Texas at Austin, the Corna is made by extending the index and little fingers while holding the middle and ring fingers down with the thumb. In Italy and certain Spanish-speaking countries, when the sign is placed behind the head of or pointed towards another person, usually a man, it means his wife is cheating on him or a curse similar to "the finger."

According to *TheBigView.com*, a website on religious philosophy, mythology and science, in Buddhism the gesture is called the "Karana Mudra." In figural representations of Buddha, this gesture expels demons and wards off evil. Ironically, during the 1960s, Anton LaVey, founder of the Church of Satan, was often photographed sporting the gesture and it has come to be recognized as the Satanic salute.

"The 'V' sign," as made famous by British

Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill during World War II, originally stood for "victory." On January 4, 1941, Victor De Lavelaye, a Belgian refugee in Britain, suggested on a BBC radio broadcast that this sign was a method to keep up ally morale while lowering the Nazi's. *Icons.co.uk* states, "De Lavelaye's campaign was taken up by the BBC, which began to broadcast the Morse code for V (dot-dot-dot-dash),



followed by the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, whose notes correspond to the Morse signal; "fifth" can also be written using the Roman numeral, V. These four notes would have an added significance for educated Germans because Beethoven supposedly said that they represented the sound of 'fate knocking on the door.'"

The letter 'V' was to be written on walls whenever possible in Nazi-occupied territories. In the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, when the V Sign is made with the palm facing backwards, away from the viewer, it is considered a rude insult on par with "the finger." Globally, the gesture is seen as a sign of peace.

'08 RUNS THIS PLACE!!!

A special thanks to ...

Jose, Matt, Stefan, Alex M, Carl, Chinelo, Michael R and Rashal

for all their hard work in organizing the Senior Extravaganza. It was AMAZING!

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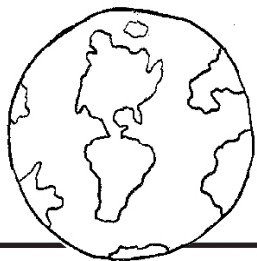
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What's new in the world of science

Reading minds may be possible with new software

that uses an fMRI scanner, Berkeley scientists announced. The machine had visuals for the subject to memorize, then when the subject thought about one of the pictures the machine predicted the subject's thoughts. Eighty to ninety percent of the time, the scanner was correct. Scientists say that the research is intended to study how the brain processes still images. The software can predict the subject's thoughts by analyzing previous thought patterns.

Oil prices have broken the significant barrier of \$100

per barrel. The cargo vessels responsible for moving up to 98 percent consume a significant amount of fuel. But a company named SkySails has created an innovative sail that can move a large ship. It may look like a traditional sail, but it acts like a giant wing that creates lift and translates that power onto a pulling force on the ship.

Remains of what is possibly the largest dinosaur

were found by team of paleontologists from the University of Oslo's Natural History Museum (in Norway). The team excavated the 150 million year old skeleton of a pliosaurus and, after months of piecing bones together, it was concluded that this sea monster could have grown 50 feet.

Computerized tutors designed to teach and feel

are being developed by researchers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Arizona State University. The machines will be equipped with sensors that detect if a student is discouraged, angry or bored. Using a posture chair sensor, the computer vision system will study the subject's facial expressions; anything from a slight tilt of the subject's head can be an indicator of the student's interest.

Compiled by Anam Parpia

Lost Water Polo Uniform Return to Shelbi Augustus



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Students catapult to success

Jehan Sinclair
Staff Writer

The Middle Ages brought the world many noteworthy inventions. Slaving away in their bedroom chambers over dim candle light, ingenious pioneers in the field of technology brought people the mechanical clock, mirrors, spectacles, plate armor and even soap. Though these items had their advantages, none of the aforementioned could topple castle walls by flinging heavy, high speed projectiles. This was a job for the trebuchet.

According to *Medieval-Castle-Siege-Weapons.com*, the trebuchet has its roots in China, appearing around 300 B.C.E. There are two weapon types, the early traction trebuchet, which relied on man power, and the improved counterweight trebuchet, which relied on gravity. At its best, it "could generate enough power to hurl stones as large as three hundred pounds up to a distance of three hundred yards."

The age old tradition of destruction by siege engine continued at the Trebuchet Competition, hosted and judged by physics teacher Julie Hood on Wednesday, March 19 in the parking lot. Students from honors and regular physics classes were divided into teams and required to build their own trebuchet. Points were awarded based on how accurately trebu-



Seniors Andrew Alfonso, Jonathan Yoc Kim, Simone Nibbs, Danielle Giguere and Kelly Fernandez look on as a trebuchet flings a cement-filled tennis ball across the field.

chets hit their target.

Hood said, "It's an engineering endeavor. Kids measure, scale and work as a team. They also study projectile motion.... The best part is that it's fun."

Students were given over a month to prepare for the competition and continued prepping the week before.

"Our trebuchet is going to be ten feet tall, the sling is made out of a backpack and we're going to win," junior Casey Shaw said.

Other students created different mechanisms aside from the trebuchet. Juniors Al Patterson, Catie Skipp and Michael Raghav created a potato canon using PVC pipe.

"The compression chamber is about one to two feet long with a four foot barrel and a

screw cap. Hairspray is used as the propellant and a grill lighter as ignition," Patterson said.

On the day of the competition the parking lot was filled with students anticipating the upcoming event. An array of trebuchets could be seen, from wooden behemoths to PVC bantams. The smaller trebuchets held their own against their larger counterparts.

"It's not the size of the trebuchet that counts, it's how you use it," senior Kelly Fernandez said. This statement proved to be correct when juniors Dalton Clarke, Gustavo Pardo, Rahul Paul, Gabriel Lopez and Sebastian Vivancos' creation, dubbed "the little trebuchet that could," won first place.

"Ours was the smallest one but we came out on top," Lopez said.

New medication gives hope for HIV cure

Mar Trujillo
Features Editor

Physicians have developed "miracle drugs" in recent years that are highly effective at treating HIV-infected people by reducing the level of the virus in the blood. Although these medications cannot eliminate the virus from the infected person, they can significantly improve their quality of life.

Unfortunately, the medication often makes the patient so violently sick that they have to stop taking it. If that happens, virus levels rise rapidly in the blood and the

symptoms of the disease emerge again.

According to an article by Jerome Zack, a professor in the Departments of Medicine and Microbiology, Immunology and Molecular Genetics at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, the lab in which he works has developed a model that allows researchers to more easily study cells infected with HIV. They have used the model to identify a new approach in an attempt to eliminate HIV.

"We next added a molecule called an 'immunotoxin,' which

is part antibody and part bacterial toxin. The immunotoxin works like a smart bomb; the antibody portion recognizes and binds to the viral protein present on the cell, but does not bind to uninfected cells. The toxin, which is attached to the antibody, then enters and kills the infected cell before the cell can produce more viruses. Using this approach we eliminated up to 80 percent of latently infected cells," Zack said.

Even though this method is probably years away from being used on actual

patients, according to Zack, "it provides proof-of-concept that latently infected cells can be eliminated without harming normal cells."

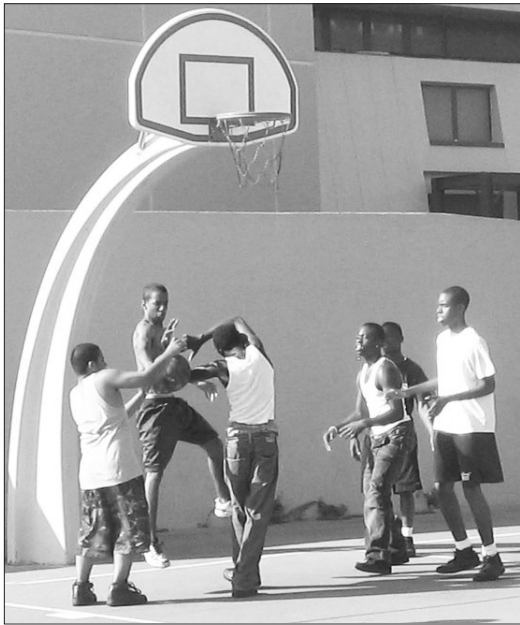
The work that Zack and his research crew have made gives hope to others that one day physicians working with HIV infected people will be able to destroy the hidden sources of the virus.

This will most probably allow the patients to not show the effects of the virus when they stop taking medication and hopefully this will lead to a cure.

This space could be yours!

Buy an ad in *The Beacon*.

Game not over for basketball players



Though the basketball season is over, players continue to practice, sometimes staying until the 5:30 p.m. bus.

Catie Skipp
Staff Writer

Pre-season training has started early for the school basketball team. Every day after school, players such as juniors Ricardo Rendel and Nicholas Graham and senior Adlai Bradley play scrimmage games on the basketball court outside of school.

The boys are practicing on their own accord.

"We love basketball. And we actually want to win some games next year!"

Graham said.

This new after-school ritual has become popular with students that are not even on the team.

They consider it fun to just play non-competitively with friends.

According to Rendel, "We play until the last minute, we usually have to run to catch the 5:30 activities bus."

The boys are not the only ones getting ready for next year. The girls have begun to join in their scrimmage games.



Photos by Catie Skipp

Will Ketchum, Michael Ronzetti, Adlai Bradley, Seward Paul, Nick Graham and Ricardo Rendel watch Rendel's ball enter the hoop. This shot decided the winner of the game.

Tentative plans for field restoration in play for next year

Laura Londoño
Staff Writer

Directly behind the school's parking lot is an abandoned field big enough for both the girls and the boys soccer teams to practice on. There is a plan to restore that field by replacing the old grass with new sod and turning it into a conditioned infrastructure for athletics. After soccer season ends, the field will be used to accommodate the girls softball team.

The whole project is estimated to cost between 40 and 60 thousand dollars. However, in light of recent budget cuts in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, it is not certain that the funds for the project will be available.

"The process of doing it is not the problem, the problem is getting started," Athletics director Jose Lopez said. "If we get the



The empty field next to the parking lot could become an athletics field. The conversion would cost between 40 and 60 thousand dollars.

soccer field, we can save money because I don't have to pay Crandon [Park] for soccer and softball plus transportation."

The school pays \$640 a month to Crandon Park so the soccer team can practice,

and another \$624 a month for softball.

The new field, 55 by one hundred yards, would only serve as a practicing field. In order for it to function as a home playing field, trees would have to be cut down and

Virginia Key does not allow this.

"I think that [having the field] would be amazing; we could have a more constructive practice time. There would be more space to run and shoot and we wouldn't get kicked off at five like in Crandon. It would be like a real home field," sophomore and soccer team player Daniella De la Riva said.

Patrick Canary, a member of the boy's soccer team said, "We need a field, especially because everyone keeps getting hurt at practice since the Crandon field is full of holes. That way our team can actually be good next year."

Both the girls and the boy's soccer teams have high expectations for next year's season.

Junior soccer player Carlos Gonzalez said, "I think [the field] is a good addition to the soccer teams and now all the guys team needs is a good coach and a winning season."

Sports teams volunteer at triathlon

Erin Jester
Opinions Editor

Fifteen hundred athletes from around the world were estimated to compete in the Miami International Triathlon, a race combining swimming, biking and running.

Athletes in the Olympic division completed 0.9 miles of swimming, 24.8 miles of biking and 6.2 miles of running.

The Sprint division completed 0.5 miles of swimming, 12.4 miles of biking and 3.1 miles of running.

Athletics Director Jose Lopez

asked all athletic teams to assist with organization of the race, which took place March 16 on Virginia Key. The biking and running took place along the Rickenbacker Causeway, while swimming was held at the Marine Stadium.

Some students covered the morning shift, from six a.m. to 12:30 p.m., setting up water stations for the athletes and helping to direct parking.

"I was the person who handed water bottles to the bikers," sophomore water polo player Tosca Li-

chtenheld said. "It was scary when they went by really fast."

Our school was used for overflow parking, with all proceeds from parking costs going directly to the athletics program.

"It's an easy way for us to make money—the more money we have, the more we can spend on the teams," Lopez said.

Students on the afternoon shift, from noon to 6:30 p.m., managed water stations and contributed to the general good humor by cheering from the sidelines.

April events

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 4.01 | Boys Track vs. La Salle (Away) 3:00 - 5:00 pm |
| 4.07 | Girls Waterpolo vs. Carrollton School Of The Sacred Heart (Home) 4:00 - 5:00 pm |
| 4.07-4.12 | Girls and Boys Track Districts |
| 4.14-4.16 | Girls and Boys Tennis Districts |
| 4.14-4.19 | Girls and Boys Waterpolo Districts |

Compiled by Brynn Katzen



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Spotlight

Spotlight is a forum for creative expression of students and staff. Please submit poetry, short literature, artwork and photographs to *The Beacon* in room 9.



Photos by Casey Shaw

Slices of Bitter Concern

By Ashley Benitez

Dear Beautiful Facade,

I know I can't make you stay, but I wish you wanted to. I wish there was something I could say to make you change your mind, so you would just see that I am more than her.

Please stay,

Weak me

Dear Gumbo,

If you are so powerful, then why are you not fixing everything? You do exist don't you? If you do, then where are you? This world is chaotic.

Fix it,

Caring me

Dear Prejudiced Tyrant,

How do I put this so you can understand it – You are an idiot. They put you as head of the country to make a positive difference.

Start feeding the hungry and stop making the rich richer.

Or be impeached,

Mad me

Dear Acronyms,

It continues to amaze me that a sixteen year old can find the biggest producer of marijuana, but you can't. Would you like a neon sign with flashing arrows?

Investigate more,

Astonished me

Dear Broken mirror,

Stop beating yourself up! No fairytale has a happy ending, just a missing slipper. So don't waste your time hoping for happiness. You have to create it yourself.

Start Now,

Wise me