Principal to Retire At End of 2007 School Year

By Rebecca Budhoo

Dr. Friedman signs diplomas for the class of 2007. Photo by Laura Torres

Much at Stake for this Year’s FCAT

By Erin Albert

Students need to improve on the upcoming FCAT to ensure that Beach High gets at least a “C” ranking. Last year, low writing scores were the main reason that Beach High was rated a “C” and not a “B” level school. This year, however, there is going to be more consideration as to what will be included in the school grade calculation.

Improvement among students earning the lowest twenty-five percent of scores in both math and reading will count this year. The state has raised the minimum requirement for a school to receive certain grades, meaning that students must now earn higher points for the school to keep its “C” grade.

While ninth grade FCAT scores do not count towards graduation, every ninth grader who does not score at least a three in reading and in math this year will be put into a remedial class, and will lose some electives. Beginning with the class of 2010, sophomores will need to pass both the objective and the essay portions of this section of the exam to graduate.

Starting next year, passing the FCAT Science will be a graduation requirement for eleventh graders. This year, however, all eleventh graders must take it, and it will affect the school grade. Since it does not affect them, the big question is: what will motivate this year’s eleventh graders to do well on the test?

Furthermore, the FCAT science exam covers Earth Space Science, Chemistry, Biology, and math related to science. Many students took these classes in seventh and eighth grade. Additionally, there are currently 79 eleventh graders who are not in any science class this year.

Continued on Page 2, FCAT

Cum Laude System Will Replace Numerical Class Rank

By Jouberte Milfort

Next year, the school district will get rid of class ranking for good. Instead of the traditional Valedictorian and Salutatorian system, high schools will honor students with the use of Summa Cum Laude, Magnum Cum Laude and Cum Laude. Miami Beach High, as well as other schools, have used rankings to distinguish their students. The ranking system will be eliminated.

As a girl in a traditional Greek family from Pennsylvania, with four brothers and two sisters, pursuing college was not expected of Dr. Friedman. Watching her older sister struggle throughout her life with being mentally challenged inspired Dr. Friedman to become a principal. Beginning with her two daughters at the end of the school day and bring them back to play in her office until she had finished her day’s work.

Dr. Friedman has taught all levels of education: Elementary, Middle, High School, Adult Ed., and College. At the beginning of her career, her main goal was to achieve her Doctorate, and later on, she did. She is always encouraging teachers and staff members to further their education by pursuing higher degrees.

Dr. Friedman has not only been involved with education in schools, but has also fought to change state laws concerning education. One law she was able to change is that students who miss school for religious holidays are no longer considered absent, but are counted as being on a school trip and are still considered to have perfect attendance. A second state law from 1926 allowed parents to drop their children off on school grounds any time they wanted, and have the principal and administration be responsible for them. With Dr. Friedman’s help, that law was changed to limit the time period during which they are responsible to thirty minutes before and after school.

Among her many achievements, Dr. Friedman was selected as the Region II Principal of the Year in 2006. The same year, she also received the prestigious Principal Achievement Award from the Florida Department of Education.

Dr. Friedman will miss the students very much when she retires, but confesses she will miss the graduation ceremony the most: “It gives me the goose bumps, because you feel that you are the luckiest principal in the world when you declare the seniors graduates”. She is known as one of the few principals in Dade County who actually signs each and every graduate’s diploma.

In her spare time, Dr. Friedman enjoys solving challenging Sudoku puzzles, reading novels, and learning about forensics. She also spends time at home with her husband and two wonderful daughters who have graduated. Travel is at the top of her list of plans upon retirement.

An announcement about the appointment of the new principal is expected in the coming weeks. Dr. Friedman will be working closely with her successor until the end of the school year when she will hand over the reins and begin a new adventure in her life.

When asked how she wants to be remembered, Dr. Friedman replies, “Fair. I do not have favorites.” Her message to students is “Never, never, never give up.” With a smile, she adds, “Appreciate what you have. No one can take your education or knowledge away from you.”

Cum Laude System Will Replace Numerical Class Rank

By Jouberte Milfort

When the titles of Summa Cum Laude, Magnum Cum Laude and Cum Laude are used, the top five percent students will have the title Summa Cum Laude, the next top five will be named Magna Cum Laude, and the next eleven percent with a 4.0 GPA will be Cum Laude.

In this system, twenty-one percent of the students will be recognized for their efforts instead of only the Valdicitorian and Salutatorian. “I think it will help to ease the tension over specific rank,” MBHS high school counselor Dr. Jon Page says.

“I think it will limit competition, which can be really cut throat.” Student Government President Veronica Gordon explains. Eraining the coveted title of Valedicitorian can cause an enormous amount of rivalry. “Friends even end up hating each other over it,” Gordon states.

The loss of rankings, “colleges will be taking more notice of students’ SAT and ACT scores,” Page explains. This means that in order to get accepted, colleges will pay extra attention to how well a student did during these tests.

When using the ranking system, colleges do look at a student’s scores, but the rank gives them a clearer idea of how a student performed in high school compared to their class mates. This shifting of attention from GPA to SAT and ACT scores causes some students to have an entire new problem to stress over.

While some students stress over the heightened importance of their SAT and ACT scores, other students don’t know the difference or even care how they are affected by this change. “I don’t even know what the Valedictorian or Cum Laude is,” sophomore Jessica Gonzalez stated.

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On Wednesday, February 14th, Principal Dr. Jeanne Friedman held a meeting to discuss the sudden resignation of Mr. Eric Selby. The meeting was intended for Scholar’s Academy students, but some students that are not in the academy attended. The lunchtime meeting lasted approximately an hour and a half, and left the library with standing room only.

Mr. Selby was in his second year at Beach High, where he aided Dr. Iron Page in tutoring and advising Scholar’s Academy students and led the Scholar’s Academy Club. About a month ago, Mr. Selby started the process to get a teaching job here at school.

On Saturday the 10th of February, Mr. Selby quit, sending a controversial letter to select students, parents, administrators, and local publications. He also created a Myspace and posted the letter on his page. The letter criticized the school, the teachers, security guards, librarians, and the principal. Later that week Mr. Selby wrote another letter defending his actions, but only posted it on his Myspace.

“Students, I felt compelled to meet with you because I honestly feel my integrity has been tarnished,” said Dr. Friedman at the meeting’s opening. Mr. Selby, in his e-mail messages, wrote that if he were to write a book about Beach High, he would title it a chapter about Dr. Friedman “The Reign of Terror” (referring to the period of extreme violence towards suspected counter-revolutionaries during the French Revolution). Dr. Friedman said she wanted to use this meeting as a place to clear the air and defend herself and the school.

During the meeting, students were able to talk to Dr. Friedman and discuss issues that were bothering them. Students brought up concerns about security, the library, teachers, school morale, and even sexual harassment. Dr. Friedman assured them that improvements will be seen, in order to fix the issues that have been apparent.

No one is sure of the reason that Mr. Selby quit. Dr. Friedman imagines that he grew impatient waiting for his teaching job to be approved. She thinks he perceived that it was Dr. Friedman who was keeping him waiting and at the meeting clarified that she had been waiting for a response from the school district.

Although the Scholar’s Academy Club leader is gone, the club will continue its activities. Dr. Page has assumed responsibilities, and he and the club board will finish the year. “The Op-Ed contest will continue, and we are looking forward to the brunch and a new lead teacher,” says Dr. Page.

New Course Selection Options Available

By Rebecca Budhoo

On Wednesday, the Beach High faculty voted to keep the eight period block schedule for next year rather than return to the traditional six period bell schedule. The teachers in attendance voted 93% in favor of the new schedule. Returning to the six period schedule next year would have resulted in 132 dropped classes, and a loss of funding for the school.

Beach High’s Chemistry teacher, Dr. M. E. Rodriguez thinks most science teachers like the block schedule because it creates extra lab periods. History teacher Dr. Michelle Ivy voted against the eight period schedule because teachers lost 40 hours of teaching time a year in the switch from the six period schedule. “It strains the AP classes”, she explained.

Math teacher, Mrs. Patricia Gregory feels that the length of the period is a big improvement, and loves the new electives she taught. She was related to an AP teachers were initially opposed to the eight period schedule because they believe students need to have math every day, but seem to be supporting it more and more. “Students won’t have math every day in college”, she said.

Student reception of the eight period schedule has been mixed. Some enjoy the extra day to do homework and the opportunity to take more classes, while others feel the work load increase has caused more stress or are unhappy about the loss of class time. “It’s nice to be able to scatter your schedule,” said Ms. Ingles, “it’s a higher volume of work”, said junior Caroline Kaine.

For students who have not yet passed the FCAT, the eight period schedule offers a chance to take the electives rather than only having remedial classes along with core classes. “I guess it benefits kids who didn’t pass the FCAT, because they don’t have to suffer losing their electives,” said Senior Stephanie Cortes.

Administrators are considering moving to a six period Monday/Wednesday schedule. This means that instead of alternating days between odd “A” block days and even “B” days, students would have all eight classes for one day a week.

District Introduces New Health Program for Teachers and Students

By Vanessa Fernandez

Physical Education teachers Mrs. Lynn Tennison and Mrs. Toni Harmony are working on a health program report to be turned in to Downtown Student Services. The School Health Index is an eight unit report with different categories and 20 questions about everything that the school provides health-wise. The School Health Initiative, or SHI, has to do with the nutrition, fitness and wellbeing of the faculty and students at Miami Dade County Public Schools.

Superintendent of M-DCPS Dr. Rudy Crew will use the data that the teachers provide to monitor schools’ health and fitness programs. The goal of the SHI is to evaluate different areas of schools, such as the nutritional services and drug and alcohol use by students.

The department wants to see if schools are providing students with healthy options. The SHI gives an overall view of the faculty and students’ mental and physical health. For example, the MHBS clinic offers treatment for asthma, eating disorders, and even regular yearly check-ups for all those who are registered under the clinic. Some pupils have no idea of anything that is being offered to them, and that is exactly what the SHI wants to change.

Mrs. Tennison and Ms. Harmony have decided to incorporate the School Health Index idea into their classroom curricula. “Nowadays students have computers and (iPads which make them even less active than what they used to be. No recreational program can teach them physical fitness like we can here at Beach High,” Mrs. Tennison points out.

She wants to involve and offer opportunities to all the faculty and students in many new after school activities to create a more active community. Programs like a Walking Club, Salsa Club, Yoga classes, and even having the Weight room open after school for faculty, staff and pupils have been proposed. Mrs. Tennison and Ms. Harmony hope these programs will encourage much more participation in physical activities.

Correction from Last Issue

In the article “Dropout Prevention and GED Programs Help Students” by Amy Rodriguez, the end of the last sentence was omitted. It fully states, “My education is precious to me, but I like the idea that if I do drop out, I have something or something to help me go through it.”

In the article “Students Stress Over National Testing” by Javier Hernandez, the last word is omitted. It ends as “activities”.

In a photo of two football players on page eight, the player on the left is Jorge Molina, not Jorge Moliente.

Top 10 Reasons You Should Pass the FCAT

1. To take required and wanted electives
2. So you don’t get put in intensive classes
3. So you don’t have to take FCAT Prep classes
4. If you don’t pass, you’ll be stuck in this school for a long time
5. Your parents will be proud of you
6. So you can graduate, go to college, and make lots of money
7. So you can move on to bigger and better things
8. So our school grade won’t drop
9. So we won’t have extra hours and days of school
10. So you can go on field trips! duh!

- Erin Albert and Rachel Stein
Mrs. Robinson Retires
By Julia Carfagno

Beach High’s Advanced Placement coordinator, ESOL department chair, Foreign Language, Reading, and Testing Chair has retired after working at Beach High since 1979. “Perfection was the name of her game,” describes Mr. Pollack. Not only did Mrs. Evelyn Robinson work in our school for over twenty-seven years, but she is also an alumnus of the class of 1964. Mrs. Robinson, a graduate from St. Joseph College in Brooklyn, New York, came to Beach High in 1979 to work as a math teacher. Before Beach High, she taught every math subject at Coral Gables Senior High and in several public schools in New York.

Having attended Beach High for only her junior and senior year of High School, Mrs. Robinson reminisces on the huge changes Beach High has been through. Being a refugee from Cuba, Mrs. Robinson was the minority. “Ninety-something percent of Beach High was Jewish. I love being the minority. “Ninety-something percent of Beach High was Jewish. I love being the minority. Being a refugee from Cuba, Mrs. Robinson reminisces on the huge changes Beach High has been through. Being a refugee from Cuba, Mrs. Robinson reminisces on the huge changes Beach High has been through. Being a refugee from Cuba, Mrs. Robinson reminisces on the huge changes Beach High has been through.

Mrs. Robinson’s retirement is making an impact on students as well. “I’ve talked to her during office aide a couple times, she’s a sweet lady and will be missed,” says junior Hanna Olman.

Ten years ago, Mrs. Robinson stopped teaching math and began to work more on testing and ESOL. “Teaching was my favorite out of the several job titles that I’ve had,” says Mrs. Robinson. “I’m here cause of her,” says Mrs. Robinson’s close colleague, Mr. Maine. “I taught her daughter when she was five years old. We were friends and then she introduced me to the Beach High principal that was here 20 years ago, Mr. Ron Ferrer.”

After retiring, Mrs. Robinson’s only plan is to help her grown-up daughter, with her new baby. Spending about three decades at Beach High, there are definitely some things Mrs. Robinson will miss. “I’m going to miss my friends of many years, my fellow teachers. I’m also going to miss the school itself, I’ve spent most of my life here,” says she, her eyes tear up. “I’m not going to miss getting up at 5 in the morning for the drive to school, I live a far distance and I really detest the drive to and from Beach High,” she adds smirkingly.

Mrs. Salih Schwab, a Spanish teacher and close friend of Mrs. Robinson for over twelve years, explains what she will miss most of Mrs. Robinson. “I will miss Mrs. Robinson in many ways. I will miss talking to her on a daily basis, as a friend and a colleague, I consider her as a pillar of support. She was a true mentor,” says Mrs. Schwab.

Retiring and now planning to concentrate on her two daughters and three granddaughters, she leaves Beach High with an inspirational quote “Wherever you’re planted, flower.”

Mrs. Robinson’s yearbook Senior Picture from 1964

Electronic Gradebook Troubles
Physical Education Teachers

By Lindsey Gale

The new electronic grade book allows teachers to log onto computers and input all of their grades for their classes instead of writing grades into a gradebook. However, this creates problems for Physical Education teachers, who do not have computers with them while they are teaching.

According to Coach Dale Sins, “We do not have use of computers; we have to stay after school for two to three hours.” Miss Mary John, one of the P.E. teachers have to do the same thing. The P.E. teachers may go to the library after school to look at grades, or grade physical education tests in their cars. “I can plug the computer into my car and they’ll allow me to use the computer,” says Coach Leslie Granberry, one of the team sports coaches, states, “Since we do not have enough computers, I end up doing the grades at home.”

Once the school gets more computers, the teachers will be able to better handle the new grading system. According to Athletic Director Mr. Edgardo Botto, most P.E. teachers “want Palm Pilots so they can carry the Palm Pilot around with them while they are teaching.”

With a Palm Pilot, the teachers would be able to sit outside and input their grades into the palm pilot instead of writing them into a grade book and then inputting them in the computer. This would save much needed time for the coaches. Coach Santon states, “I stay very successful, but a few inconveniences came along for students without Beach High parking decals. On the Thursday and Friday of the Boat Show, students without permits were not allowed to park on campus. Many parked over in the golf course parking lot and had their cars towed.

PTA Raises Record Amount During Boat Show Parking Fundraiser
By Matthew Tomlinson

On February 15th-19th’s Boat Show and Exhibition, the PTA parked cars for the Miami Beach Show International and raised 142,000 dollars over six days, a record amount. Mike Perry, an active PTA parent and one of the principal organizers of campus parking commented “We raised our parking price from 15 to 20 dollars this year. The increase of price alone brought a 25% increase on profits made by the show last year.”

The PTA receives help from Beach High clubs, parents and students to supervise the five parking lots. Usually about three students work with one or two adults in each lot. According to Kathy Bass, a member of the PTA and veteran Beach fundraiser organizer, “more help is always needed. “Miami Beach Senior High is one of the only schools in the city, if not anywhere, with the opportunity to make so much money. We have had many of the students, while helping out each year, and it is a bit frustrating.”

This year’s boat show parking went very successfully, but a few inconveniences came along for students without Beach High parking decals. On the Thursday and Friday of the Boat Show, students without permits were not allowed to park on campus. Many parked over in the golf course parking lot and had their cars towed.

Anita Grossman, PTA president, issued an apology to the students, “We apologize to all students if they were unable to find parking, and we understand many students were unable to get the proper permits. We tried as hard as we could to solve the problem.”

For the last seven years, the PTA has raised money for our school through this particular fundraiser. Some of the money goes to security and police protection, and to custodians in charge of keeping the parking lots clean. The PTA tries to donate all the net proceeds back to the school and honor a teacher’s wish lists for equipment.

Principal Dr. Jeanne Friedman and sub-committees of the PTA are in charge of giving the money to the students school. “The PTA sends out letters to all teachers in the school, and teachers also receive letters from the school, which is followed by the sub-committee,” says Dr. Friedman. The PTA does its best to get the money to the teachers that are school organized and requests it. The money goes to calculators, cameras, scanners, and the instruments used by the rock ensemble. It even paid for the rock ensemble trip to Los Angeles last year. According to Mike Perry, “We use the money we made from the boat show and we give it to anyone who comes out and says they need it. We pay for all the departments, clubs, all of that stuff.”
Students in the Family, Career and are able to feel like real parents. Stephanie Santana has not yet started the project, but she is looking forward to it. “I am really excited to feel like a mother” claims Santana. Some students have been living with these babies, and felt that there is a certain time and space was being invaded. Joelle Acededo, 16, says “I have never been a mother before. I would never be a mother now. I would still like to see a mother but when I’m older. It’s too much to handle now.”

Many other participating students have agreed with this statement as well. This is a wake-up call for those students thinking of becoming young parents; it teaches them the struggles and challenges of caring for a baby. Ms. Bowen stated that this project was a great success and that she will definitely repeat this assignment next year.

Self Image Reality Check
By Alicia Sanchez

The portrayal today of the perfect teenage body is both real but a fantasy. Skeleton skinny models or muscular steroid-using men in the media are the images that health experts believe drive teenagers to develop low self-esteem. The message that is portrayed creates an idea that in order to be popular, confident, attractive, and happy, one has to have a “perfect” body.

Self-image problems can take drastic turns; teens may turn to performance-enhancing drugs like steroids or develop eating disorders. Two of the most common are Anorexia Nervosa, which involves limiting one’s food intake to a minute amount, and Bulimia Nervosa, which involves “binging” on food and forcefully “purging” the food-out of one’s body.

A young woman who wishes to stay anonymous dealt with Anorexia Nervosa. She says that the repetition of negative statements that were said to her began to take a toll on her self-image and made her develop Anorexia Nervosa. “The most important thing, at the time, was my body image and the fact that I was considered skinny,” commented the young woman, who is now a junior at Miami Beach Senior High.

At thirteen years of age, she weighed sixty-three pounds. Spending three weeks in the hospital, she was unable to eat for twenty-four hours, seven days a week. In addition, she had to attend family and individual therapy. Stories like this are becoming more common today. According to the article by Larry Rohter, the Sao Paolo fashion week organizers are demanding that models have their body mass index checked, and that if they do not meet the criteria, they will not be allowed to participate. According to the article by Larry Rohter, the Sao Paolo fashion week organizers are demanding that models have their body mass index checked, and that if they do not meet the criteria, they will not be allowed to participate.

Most of the anorexia-related deaths in Brazil occurred in Sao Paolo, which has led to media attention and criticism of “the international thinness obsession” by such celebrities as supermodel Giselle Bundchen. According to the article by Larry Rohter, the Sao Paolo fashion week organizers are demanding that models have their body mass index checked, and that if they do not meet the criteria, they will not be allowed to participate.

The Brazilian government is demanding that models present a healthy image and in accordance with these new regulations. This is the first time that an international fashion show has taken such measures in order to avoid promoting a distorted image of beauty.

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Less Legs, but More Spirit
By Corina Grazutis

Students who have pets, or students whose friends have pets, know how special owning one can be. Pets serve as companions, and are good listeners when nobody else is around. One student has a very special pet: Roger Leite, a Beach High junior, is the owner of a dog with three legs named Linda. The day that Linda lost her front right leg was a day that she and her family will never forget.

Leite was in his room the day of the incident while his two dogs were outside in his living room. "I heard a cry from her and knew that something must have happened. So I ran out of my room to see what had happened. I found her on the floor with her leg in a Z position. I knew right away that Linda’s leg was broken," he explains.

Leite and his family rushed Linda to the vet. At the vet, instead of performing the surgery needed, they decided to move the bone in her leg back to its natural position, and place a cast on it. Since the veterinarians did not perform the surgery, her leg did not heal correctly and began decaying. The family then decided to take the pet to another veterinarian. "It was a tough decision, but after the thought of Linda missing a leg, but they did. If they had arrived any later, the bone in her leg back to its natural position. When they found her on the floor with her leg did not heal correctly and began decaying. The family then decided to take the pet to another veterinarian. When they arrived, the veterinarian told them that they were lucky to have gotten there when they did. If they had arrived any later, the infection in her leg would have spread and she would have died. Leite described his feelings from that day. "Under these circumstances, I think that other people would think it would be too much of a hassle, and have her put to sleep," he explains. He recalls how upset he was and remembers wondering how Linda would be able to survive under these circumstances.

Peter Cubilete, veterinary technician at Pets and Vets on 71st Street, explains that most people living with handicapped pets love them just as much as they did before the problem occurred. "Basically, it’s as simple as this: if your child broke or lost an arm, would you throw him out on the streets? No, it’s your kid and you’re going to love him just as much as you did before," explains Cubilete.

Linda means everything to Roger Leite. "I love her. I would do anything I can for her," he said. "I have normal dogs around Linda a lot, and I look at another dog, I would think to myself, why does that dog have four legs?"

In Beach High, the story was passed around, and students felt despair as they listened to the details. "If that happened to my dog, I would be carrying her around all the time. I would probably buy her a dog wheelchair," claimed Brooke Hardi, junior. "I would be completely torn though. I don’t know what I would do. I can’t imagine that happening," she continued.

Leite gets along just fine; despite the loss of a leg, she never lets anything get in her way and does not need any extra or special treatment. She does everything that she needs to do by herself. "I don’t think that they should be treated completely different just because they’re handicapped, but you might want to give them a little extra care," states Peter Cubilete.

Linda is a amazing dog. One would never think that she, or her owners would be able to live with the thought of Linda missing a leg, but they did. She gets by in life better than most dogs living with all four legs. As Leite says, "only three legs, but she’s three times the dog."

Virtual Pets Make A Comeback
By Vanessa Fernandez

"Oh my God! I left it downstairs, my son is going to kill me!" shouts Mrs. Julie Klein into the empty hallway of the second floor in the 100 wing, while running at top speed to the other set of blue doors.

Most people would recognize a Tamagotchi when they see one. For those who don’t know, the Tamagotchi, which means “egg friend” is a virtual pet launched by Japanese toy company Bandai in 1996 by Bandai, the makers of the Power Rangers and the all-too-famous Hello Kitty egg shape, is a toy that simulates the life cycle of a pet, letting kids experience the full responsibilities of feeding, tending, and caring for their virtual pet. The advanced Tamagotchi Connection features new infrared communication functions that allow users to communicate with other Tamagotchis, visit its friends to give gifts or play games together, and eventually have a possible second, third, and fourth generation virtual pet.

“They are cute,” says Shalimar Moreno, a freshman and the proud owner of two Tamagotchis. “I had wanted one for a while, since I was almost traumatized when I lost mine the day after my mom had given it to me.” Natalie Reyes, another freshman at MBSH, mentions that got one when her 10-year-old sister received one as a gift. “It gives me something to do when I am bored,” says Reyes.

When asked if having the little pet around all day squeaking bothered her, Mrs. Klein said, “It’s great; my son and I give the toy to the kids on the weekends and at night, and all I have to do is pay attention to it if it starts making too much noise in the school day. It works out.” Her six-year-old son, Jonah, asked for one of the egg toys and she bought one, claiming that they are “fun”.

Japanese toy company Bandai introduced the Tamagotchi over 10 years ago, but lost its main market of most of us around the tender age of six or seven everyone had to have one, boys and girls alike. Now the toy is making a comeback among its original market. The toys’ price range is about $16.00 to $35.00, although some versions can reach up to $175.00 on eBay.
Controversial HPV Vaccine May Help Eliminate the Disease

By Nicole Zacroisky

Doctors recommend that females planning to get this vaccine should do so before they become sexually active because the vaccine is most effective when girls or women have not already contracted any of the HPV types covered by the vaccine. Studies have shown Gardasil to be 100% effective in preventing diseases caused by the four main types of HPV.

However, the Food and Drug Administration states in its Gardasil approval press release, “Gardasil does not protect against less common HPV types not included in the vaccine, thus routine and regular pap screening remain critically important to detect precancerous changes in the cervix to allow treatment before cervical cancer develops.”

Both men and women can get HPV and pass it on to their sexual partners without realizing it. It is still not known if the vaccine is effective in boys and men, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says it is possible that vaccinating males may prevent genital warts, penile and anal cancer.

The retail price of the vaccine is $120 per dose, and $360 for the full series. While some insurance companies cover the vaccine, others do not. Most large insurance plans usually cover the costs of recommended vaccines. Junior Dara Hersh states, “I think it’s too expensive and should be covered by every insurance company.”

Controversial vaccine. This new advancement in science. Religious conservative groups argue that this vaccine will detract from the message of abstinence. Science teacher Mr. David Guthrie states, “I see no connection between receiving a vaccine and sexual activity.” In response to the controversial questions facing the Gardasil vaccine, science teacher Coach Mart states, “Of course I am for the vaccine; I am a human rights activist, need I say more?” Some public health officials are also concerned that movements for mandatory vaccination are happening too soon.

This vaccine has been tested in over 11,000 females around the world, and causes no serious side effects, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More and more women are learning about the positive aspects of this new vaccine and are being vaccinated, this writer being of them. Senior Natacha Diaz states, “Gardasil is an excellent advancement in science; as a woman, I now have a chance to protect myself against HPV.”

Students Concerned About Global Warming

By Albert Chester

Global warming, according to “Webster’s Dictionary,” is defined as “an increase in the earth’s atmospheric temperature that causes corresponding changes in climate and that may result from the greenhouse effect.” Pollution is slowly deteriorating the O-zone layer causing the earth to warm up. If this continues, ice caps will melt in several oceans and our climate will regularly face much higher temperatures.

Senior JoAnne Keene is extremely concerned about global warming. “People need to understand that global warming is a real deal, and if we don’t start protecting our environment, we may have to pay the price later down the road. [We] need to spread the word and make global warming a regularly talked issue so that individuals start to care and take action to make this earth a better place in the future,” he says.

Senior Lauren Vargas also agrees that global warming can cause problems in the future. “People do not realize that all the pollution they create actually goes somewhere and affects the environment. All of these cars and factories do not exactly help the earth.”

Senior Joel Carr is also concerned. “Environmental Science teacher Mr. David Guthrie has a strong opinion on the problem of Global Warming. “There is overwhelming evidence that climate change is occurring.” In order to help slow the process down he believes people should “cut back on fossil fuel use, recycle more often, and develop green technology in order to produce other forms of energy.” Guthrie believes that it is not a question of whether or not Global Warming is happening, but when it is happening. “We need to try to come up with ways to adapt to new climates in case Global Warming initiates forms of extreme climates. If the United States can come up with new technology, other countries might follow which would create a more environmentally friendly world.”

Students have shown that they are more aware of the environment by doing things as small as Beach Clean Up Days. “I love the Ecology and Leo Club. This has in crease of awareness about Global Warming is a good thing to know because people need to step up and help prevent the deteriorating of the world.

Once Daily HIV Treatment Offers Hope

By Mary Johnson

HIV medicine companies have begun to release pills that only need to be taken once a day, as opposed to the four or five daily routines that have existed for years. Simplification of the reduction of the number of doses of pills a patient must take a day and the number of pills per dose, has changed the way patients take medicine for HIV. In the United States developed the evidence that climate change is occurring. “In order to help slow the process down he believes people should “cut back on fossil fuel use, recycle more often, and develop green technology in order to produce other forms of energy.” Guthrie believes that it is not a question of whether or not Global Warming is happening, but when it is happening. “We need to try to come up with ways to adapt to new climates in case Global Warming initiates forms of extreme climates. If the United States can come up with new technology, other countries might follow which would create a more environmentally friendly world.” Students have shown that they are more aware of the environment by doing things as small as Beach Clean Up Days. “I love the Ecology and Leo Club. This has in crease of awareness about Global Warming is a good thing to know because people need to step up and help prevent the deteriorating of the world.

The single pill taken usually three or four times a day with food is a ‘cocktail’, a capsule combining several different HIV medications. Many patients have difficulty adhering to a two or three times daily dosing schedule. For long-term treatment of the infection, these people need simpler regimens, with an easier schedule and lower pill burden.

Like other medications, HIV treatment only works with patients who dedicate to take the pills daily for the rest of their lives. Treatment processes were very limited before the development of once daily pills. The procedures were complicated, contradictory, and developed especially for each patient. Gary B. Cohan, M.D. from the Pacific Oaks Medical Group states, “In patients who have never been an on antiviral therapy, I think for the vast majority of those patients at least seventy or eighty percent of those patients, there are probably going to be good once-daily options available.”

With great technological advances come various problems. There is no room for leniency when missing doses; if a patient misses one pill it’s much more serious than before. The dose must be taken at the same time every day for optimum benefits. There is limited research on once daily pills, but so far side effects of these drugs include nausea, rashes, dizziness, and sleeping problems.

“We’re going to save lives because we’ve gone to once-daily therapy. When you have dose medications multiple times a day, there are very few patients who can sustain that very rigorous dosing regimen for the long haul,” says Dr. Cohan. “On a chronic manageable disease basis, we’re going to save a lot of lives with once-daily therapy.”
We’re Blinding You with Science
By Claire Austin

New technology shrinks the world and changes our lives in ways we might have never thought possible. Global problems like disease and climate change threaten our species and demand new solutions. String theorists and particle physicists tout a grand unified “theory of everything.” For scientists of the scientifically curious, it is a revolutionary time.

In this issue’s center spread, Beachcomber staff writes highlights both the unique opportunities and classes in science at Beach High, and some of the newest scientific discoveries and schools of thought. It is important for our generation to be aware of these revolutionary ideas, as they will affect our immediate and long-term futures.

The world of science offers lucrative and stimulating careers that go beyond working in a lab. Besides medicine, the reported top careers in science for the future are in pharmaceuticals, experimental care research, alternative energy, and computer science. Science is becoming more of an interdisciplinary area of study, as careers like environmental engineering and stem cell research involve public advocacy.

America, however, is losing its competitive advantages in research as fewer students pursue science-related career fields. Domestically, there is a smaller federal budget allocation to research unrelated to defense and difficulty acquiring visas for foreign scientists. While the number of American citizens taking science degrees is falling, China and India graduate thousands of scientists and engineers, who are able to take advantage of these countries’ growing opportunities.

Science, most importantly, is the means by which we can fix the world’s most pressing problems. Global warming comes to mind first and foremost. Despite recent coverage of this major issue, high school students are generally uninformed or apathetic about solutions. Major epidemics like AIDS plague people across the world, yet the search for a vaccine has been inexcusable thus far. By pursuing science, students may one day help solve world poverty with new food production methods or expand the dissemination of knowledge with new technology. There is an international need for creative and scientific thinkers.

Some students may feel bored or intimidated by science class, let alone the prospect of pursuing science in their futures. What these students do not understand is that we are all scientifically minded, whether we are more talented with the left side of our brains or with the right. As humans we have an innate curiosity about the world and a desire to know more about our environment and our existence.

SECME Aims to Interest Teens
By Arielle Vicaría

As the 23rd of March draws near, students competing in the Miami Dade County SECME competition are hard at work getting their project ideas finalized. Science Engineering Communication Mathematics Enhancement, or SECME, is an organization affiliated with the Georgia Institute of Technology that was originally designed to encourage participation in science and mathematics by under-represented groups such as minority, female, and handicapped students, and to get these students interested in math and science related careers.

Today, the program is no longer specifically geared toward minorities, and has increased its influence in public schools through clubs, summer programs, and competitions such as the upcoming one. “Basically, the program encourages students to become active in the sciences by showing them that they can be fun and rewarding,” says Mr. Carlos Rodriguez, sponsor of the Beach High students participating this year.

Students across the county will compete in events ranging from model building competitions to knowledge-based brain bowls. Beach High students will submit such projects as mousetrap powered model cars, bottle rockets that launch using water pressure, and model bridges.

The winning SECME students will be awarded scholarships or college credits, but not an actual science or mathematically inclined should not be discouraged from participation, as there is also an essay competition where students are asked to write about SECME and other science and math-related topics. This year’s theme is “SECME: Launch Pad for the Next Generation of Explorers.” Artistically talented students can also enter their artwork into a poster competition. There are different prizes for each event and the winners can move on to statewide, national and even international competitions.

The winners of the English composition can earn cash prizes as well as further recognition and opportunities to participate in SECME and the other science and math-related competitions. This is a great opportunity for those students who are interested in science and would like to explore the possibilities it offers.

Biological Technology Interests Students
By Rachel Stein

Biological Technology was offered this year as a course that includes an introduction to Forensic science, taught by Ms. Lusia Diaz, and another semester of Brain Research, taught by Dr. Rosemary Melnick. Students now have the opportunity to participate in both of these classes during the school year. “This class allows students to learn all aspects of the nervous system,” says Dr. Melnick. “Students will also have an opportunity to work with sheep brains.” There are many hands-on activities in both courses. Labs done in the Forensic science include analyzing DNA, bone identification, and identifying lip and finger prints. Activities done in Brain Research include vision labs, touch receptors, sheep brain dissection, and cow eye dissection. Along with hands-on activities, there are many exciting field trips and guest speakers being scheduled for the students.

This course is a regular course, not an honors course, and is only offered during 5th period this year. According to Dr. Melnick, this class is not a “coping” class. “I would say this is an academic science elective, complete with tests, homework, and stimulating discussions - very cerebral,” she states.

So far, most students have really enjoyed this class. Says Ms. Diaz, “Many students signed up for this elective not knowing what they were getting into, and now they love it. Only about two students have switched out.” Dr. Melnick says that the students have shown most participation in the dissecting. She feels students have really learned and absorbed a lot of knowledge from these labs. “I have concluded that the students like learning about things that affect them directly, like memory, sleep or even drug use,” Dr. Melnick states.

Apple Creates Revolutionary Phone
By Erin Albert

Apple is introducing a new product this year that includes Forensic science, taught by Ms. Lusia Diaz, and another semester of Brain Research, taught by Dr. Rosemary Melnick. Students now have the opportunity to participate in both of these classes during the school year. “This class allows students to learn all aspects of the nervous system,” says Dr. Melnick. “Students will also have an opportunity to work with sheep brains.” There are many hands-on activities in both courses. Labs done in the Forensic science include analyzing DNA, bone identification, and identifying lip and finger prints. Activities done in Brain Research include vision labs, touch receptors, sheep brain dissection, and cow eye dissection. Along with hands-on activities, there are many exciting field trips and guest speakers being scheduled for the students.

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Wrestling Club Helps Skill Development
By Jouberte Milfort

Miami Beach Senior High will soon have a wrestling club and all students are welcome to join. The new club will teach proper wrestling techniques to current and aspiring wrestlers.

On the first Tuesday of March, the wrestling club will be introduced to every Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the large cafeteria. “I will teach any kid who is willing to learn,” said Coach Juan Camarotti.

Unlike the wrestling team, this club is meant to promote wrestling and teach the proper technique. “We are trying to get rid of the myths that wrestling in high school is like wrestling on television,” assistant coach Eric Rodriguez says.

Unlike the World Wrestling Federation, high schools implement the Greco-Roman styles that originated in Greece over five thousand years ago. This style is known for its ability to develop body symmetry and grace though strenuous activity that requires extreme physical fitness as well as skill. Another myth Rodriguez would like to dispel is a common one. “People think that you come here and you’re going to drop 30 pounds,” he says.

Wrestling is an especially physical and brutal sport. Wrestling Coach Juan Camarotti hopes that the wrestling club will improve students’ skills and encourage them to join the team.

Photo courtesy Beach High Website

With a wrestler’s weight determined by weight classes, the weight classes are used to ensure that wrestlers will wrestle a person of about the same weight. Although wrestlers are physically fit, brains can often defeat brawn. As long as a wrestler can outmaneuver and outsmart his or her opponent, the opponent’s physical strength can be overcome.

With wrestling tryouts coming up in August, the wrestling club is a way for the current team to improve their moves as well as for newcomers to learn the ropes. Says Rodriguez, “I hope this club will help to popularize wrestling.”

The Miami Dolphins have hired Cam Cameron to be their next head coach. Owner Wayne Huizenga declared Monday that “the Dolphins’ offense was very stale. Senior Mario Frau stated that “the offense has always been inconsistent and very stale.”

The Dolphins have one of the better defenses in the league; this past season, defensive end Jason Taylor was named the NFL’s Defensive Player of the Year. The reason the Dolphins have not attained any success in terms of championships is that the offense has always been inconsistent and very stale. Senior Mario Frau stated that ‘the Dolphins’ offense was very predictable.’

This past season was supposed to be the season in which the Dolphins offense finally matched the success of the defense with the acquisition of quarterback Daunte Culpepper. Unfortunately, Culpepper’s knee was injured and he never recovered, sitting out the final 12 games of the season. Now the Dolphins will rely heavily on Cameron to improve the anemic offense. This is a great hire because Cameron has an extensive background as an offensive play caller and has developed and coached great players.

Cameron has an extensive history that serves as evidence to prove that he is the right man to fix the Dolphins’ offensive woes. Senior Greg Jones is emphatic about the hiring. He remarks that “this guy is going to make us an exciting team to watch.” I have to agree with Greg Jones, especially after doing a background check on Cameron’s coaching history. From 1998 to 1994 he was an assistant for the University of Michigan. He called the offensive plays for the team and constantly came down to south Florida to recruit players.

The state wants all students to learn how to lead a healthy lifestyle, even if they already play a sport. Many student athletes, however, feel that they deserve to get the credit and should be able to obtain physical education or personal fitness class.

“I don’t like it,” said Erica Graff, freshman swimmer and water polo player. “Student athletes are busier than anyone else in the school and that should count for something. If the school wants to motivate us, we could at least let us get out of a P.E class.”

Some parents do not like seeing their children wasting time in Personal Fitness when, instead, they can get credit for a required class. Many coaches also believe that student athletes should not be required to take the same classes. “If you take an after-school sport, you should get credit for P.E,” Coach Tenorio remarked.
This winter, there were three different sports played at Beach High: boys’ and girls’ basketball, boys’ and girls’ soccer, and baseball. “It was an average season” said Mr. Edgar Botto, the Athletic Director. “It was more competitive than fall with the exception of swimming. They put a lot of heart and effort though, and hopefully spring will be much better with water polo and baseball.” While winter teams played better than fall teams this year, it wasn’t the most successful season for some sports. The varsity boys’ basketball team had a four win nineteen loss season while junior varsity was 8-8. “We were very disappointed this season” said Coach Diego Garcia, the basketball coach “But we have a young team, so hopefully we will be a lot better next year”.

The team is losing three seniors this year, but only one of them was a starter. Four other players, including one starter, were kicked off the team. The best players were junior Alberto Biazon who was the leading scorer and senior Danilo Alveranga who was the top defender and second leading scorer.

The girls’ varsity basketball went wireless this season, while the junior varsity won only one game out of eighteen. “It wasn’t their best season” said Ms. Regueria, the girls’ coach. “But they finally came together as a team”. It is Ms. Regueria’s first year as both a teacher and a coach in Beach High. She replaced Mr. Enfield who stepped down after the 14th game of the season. Enfield took over for Ms. Gilzean as the basketball coach this season when she went on maternity leave.

Coaching girls’ basketball for the first 14 games of the season was a challenge. “I enjoyed the experience but I decided that it was best for someone to let the girls coach finish out the last 4 games” said Coach Enfield. Commenting on her first year coaching, Ms. Regueria said, “I feel like I gained a lot of coaching experience this season and I could improve on it.”

The squad is losing five seniors this year, including four starters. The best players of the squad were seniors Aymara Diaz who was the leading scorer, Shakhevia Carr for her defensive power, and Reina Thompson for her excellent ball handling skills. “I want to see their physical conditioning and their sense of belonging in the future. They will be the girls and coaches and expect more wins,” says Ms. Regueria.

The boys’ soccer team went 8-5-2 this season, and made districts where they lost a very close game to Hialeah 1-0. It was coached in the fall by Ely Vetter and assistant coach Mike Galeas who is a senior at St. Thomas University and a soccer player there. He had a great deal with the players’ skill development.

Last season they lost ten out of eleven starters so they were in a rebuilding mode. “Losing the whole squad, you are forced to rebuild as the newer players has to acquaint with each other as they have different skill levels” said Fisher. Most of the players return next season as they are only losing three players. Six other players left the team for several reasons including a few starters, which affected the team’s skill level. “It would be hard for them to come back to the team next season” said Fisher. The best player this season was junior defensiveman Rafael Costa who was also the team captain. Freshman Gonazalo Corbo led the teams in assists while senior Emiliano Gioffre was the top goalkeeper.

The girls’ soccer team had the same record as the boys this season. They also reached the playoffs but they lost to Miami Springs. They are losing five seniors next season so they are rebuilding. They lost a main player at the beginning of the year when senior Fatima Flemati went down with an ankle injury in a pre-season game against American Heritage.

Because we had so many young and new players, we didn’t have the same intensity as the previous year”, said Mr. Edgardo Botto, the intramural girls’ soccer coach. “We are hoping that the freshman and sophomores will learn from this experience and increase their standard next year.”

The best players this season were seniors Fernanda Conceicao and Maria Perdomo who had the most goals, and team captain Elizabeth Camarotti.

The wrestling team had a poor season this year. Most of the senior wrestlers, including captain Manuel Tejada and all the seniors, left the team. The reasons are unknown. It was the first time in the 33 years I have coached wrestling that the team captain quit. They finished the season with six wrestlers. Two of them, sophomore Kyle Riego and junior Calvin Russell, went for regionals, where they lost. About the season, Camarotti was very disappointed, “It was a disaster of a season. I’m glad it’s over,” he said.

A sport doesn’t always have to be a game, such as football, baseball, or soccer. A sport can also be an athletic performance such as track, pole-vaulting, rowing, and swimming. Individual activities like kickboxing, aerobics and cycling, are also considered sports. Bearing in mind that all of the above mentioned fall under the “sports” spectrum, consider that there are also differences among people who participate in these sports. These differences occur between ethnic groups, ages, genders, and even sexual preferences.

All right, the one thing that everyone can agree on is that anyone who makes a sport their main hobby is considered an “athlete”, correct? Therefore, an athlete is an athlete. Even if they’re gay. America got over African Americans playing sports. America got over women playing sports. America gave up on the whole equality thing. Now we have an entire nation of people who are8 gay athletes. They ranked 9th in some varsity games her freshman year. From her sophomore year on, she was a starter, able to really feel the intensity of the game. Current soccer coach and athletic director, Mr. Edgardo Botto, states, “Lauren is very dedicated, a hard worker, and has a very positive attitude.”

“Everyone has always been supportive of me,” says Vargas. “But my friends sometimes get upset when I have to blow them off for soccer. Soccer is very time consuming, but it is good time that is being taken up.” Lauren says that the constant practices have helped her stay in shape. Playing a sport reminds her to eat right, and be healthy. “Soccer keeps me extremely fit,” says Vargas.

Lauren’s most memorable moment from soccer was winning the district championship with the team her first year. “You remember them taking off their jerseys, running around the field with the trophy, singing, dancing, and being completely overcome with joy. The exceptional that she and her teammates felt was one of the greatest feelings she has ever had. Lauren comments, “That was a really great time in my life.”

Lauren loves being on a team. She is an only child and feels that her teammates are like her sisters. Soccer helps her to learn how to communicate and share with her teammates, as if they really were her sisters. Freshman Claire Moody, one of Lauren’s teammates, claims, “She has been the best captain! She’s nice to everyone on the team, including the freshmen. Lauren is a very good player as well.” Another fellow senior teammate, Fernanda Concciecao, adds, “Lauren is very caring and helps everyone with their needs on and off the field. She never yells at anyone and doesn’t get mad when people need help. She can be very rational and easy to compromise with.”

Vargas loves almost everything about soccer. Her favorite part is playing in the games. She also loves feeling the intensity and passion she puts forth while playing. She loves the feeling of strength she gets through playing, and of course she loves winning.

Vargas is able to balance academics, activities, and sports. As captain of the Girls’ Soccer team, she is a role model and a very strong leader. Her four years on the team were very successful and enjoyable.

Homosexual Athletes Deserve Respect

By Alex Rodriguez

If a straight man can play football equally as well as a gay football player, and if a gay man can win the gold four times in a sport that is open to people who are straight, gay, bisexual, or sway in any direction, then it should be obvious that being a gay athlete has nothing to do with performance. Homosexual, bisexual, and heterosexual athletes share something with most people in American society: a love of sports. Despite the fact that a gay athlete’s attraction to someone of the same gender, what the public needs to understand is that an athlete intends to do his or her job, and is not looking for relationships with other people. A gay athlete who is a career out of a sport is to play the sport well.

In Tim Hardaway’s recent radio interview, he proclaimed his hatred for homosexuals. The NBA player for the Orlando Magic clearly stated that he is afraid of gays and that he didn’t think they should be in the NBA. “I’m not Hardaway, but a homosexual can’t help who they’re attracted to anymore than a heterosexual can. That is what makes everyone different! And if anyone can’t accept a difference, then he has some growing up to do.”

I’m afraid that if we’re worried about things like this, we’ll fool the bigger picture. What would happen if Michael Jordan told everyone in tomorrow’s morning news that he was gay? Some former fans would burn their Jordans; others would boycott every team he’s ever played for. Few would actually take the time to think about the fact that his being gay never bothered anyone while he was in the closet. I’m afraid that if we’re worried about things like this, we’ll fool the bigger picture. What would happen if Michael Jordan told everyone in tomorrow’s morning news that he was gay? Some former fans would burn their Jordans; others would boycott every team he’s ever played for. Few would actually take the time to think about the fact that his being gay never bothered anyone while he was in the closet.

**Lauren Vargas: Star On and Off the Field**

By Rachel Stein

Lauren Vargas, a seventeen-year-old senior, is an idol when it comes to school sports. Future student of the University of Florida, she is an active member of many organizations within the school and takes honors and A.P. classes. On top of all this, Vargas is the captain of the Beach High Girl’s Varsity Soccer Team. As captain, Lauren helped lead the 2006-2007 team to the Miami-Dade district championships. Although this is her last year on the team, it has been a very successful and her performance on the field showed it. Vargas has left big shoes for future captains to fill.

Vargas started playing soccer in her freshman year. With no previous experience, she stepped on the field ready to learn. She has always been very dedicated, passionate and eager to play. The coach realized Lauren’s potential as an athletic, and she was able to start in some varsity games her freshman year. From her sophomore year on, she was a starter, able to really feel the intensity of the game. Current
Drum Line Students Get Chance to Compete

By Javieria Hernandez

Band Director Mr. Noel Bellamy is also the director of the Winter Drum line. Contrary to what many people would think, the Winter Drum line is nothing like what is portrayed in the Hollywood movie Drum Line. It is not an easy, quickly learned task. “Not only are my students memorizing over four and a half minutes of music, they are also memorizing over one hundred sets of marching maneuvers,” says Bellamy.

Winter Drum line is much like a marching band. However, the Winter drum line puts the drum line in the limelight as it along with a sideline, plays challenging music while marching.

Sonya Brown, a senior and sideline musician confesses, “I love experiencing energy into something very positive and worthwhile,” comments Mr. Bellamy.

On January 20 at Flanagan High School, the Winter Drumline had its debut. The group scored seventh place in the performance section of the criteria, sixth in visual effect and second place in general effect, an overall sixth place. On February 24, they competed at the “Winter Guard International Palm Beach Regional” at the South Florida Expo Center and won fourth place. The Winter Drumline has a competition planned for March 10th at Travella High school as well as a very important Circuit Championship on March 31st at Barbara Goleman High school.

The Winter Drumline is not only an opportunity for students be able to march when they could not this past fall, it is also an activity with a competitive edge. It teaches students responsibility and tests their work ethic. As Bellamy warns, “Many people do not realize the difficulty involved in the sport today.” During the summer, Winter Drumline hopefuls will be able to have practices. Mr. Bellamy hopes for 30 Winter Drumline hopefuls to be able to compete.

Ashlie Handy’s Award-Winning Poem

By Claudia Pereira

The Ultimate Electronic Music Festival

Returns to Miami

By Claudia Pereira

Ultra Music Festival this year, a two day event, will be held in Miami for the ninth year at waterfront Bicentennial Park on March 23rd and 24th.

More than one hundred DJs, bands, and producers will be there. The music fest is also on tour in New York; Sao Paulo; Brazil; Puerto Rico; and Los Angeles, California.

This new more progressive event that took place on South Beach in 1998 and 1999 caters to thousands of Electro, Drum & Bass, House, Techno, Breakbeats and Trance fans.

In the year 2005 it sold out and since then the festival has grown in popularity so much that the venue was moved to Bicentennial Park. This year, the festival will have twelve stages for artists.
**Opinions & Editorials**

### A++ Plan A ‘Major’ Problem

The state’s Department of Education under decided in June that students needed a focus in high school and instituted the A++ program.

The program mandates that the incoming class of 2011 will have to indicate a career field of interest either in high school or in the beginning of their freshman year. When the current freshmen enter tenth grade, they must also indicate a college bound field of interest. Students will be able to change their selected field and will also not have to need a major when they graduate.

Essentially, the purpose of having a thirteen-year-old select a major is to get him or her interested in potential careers and goals. The state wants students to avoid dropping out or graduating without any plans.

While it is a nice idea to get kids to think about the world of work earlier in their lives, it is highly unlikely that a thirteen-year-old would choose a major best suited to his or her interests and talents. They are far more likely to go for the major that seems to be the most fun or to require the least work.

One of the main benefits of having the major program introduced is to allow a greater number of students to be able to afford college through the Florida Bright Futures Gold Seal Scholarship. This grant requires only a minimum GPA and community service hours, and three courses taken in a particular subject area. However, this is only a small gain and may not result in more students receiving Gold Seal scholarships. A better approach is to inform students of scholarship requirements early in their high school careers, but let them decide their own paths.

For this to work, students and counselors need to have a good relationship and learn to monitor a student’s high school career effectively. With such a large student population to deal with, Beach High counselors are not readily to handle the influx of paperwork and tasks that the A++ program will undoubtedly bring. The state has promised an online counseling and tracking system, but this cannot serve as a substitute for a real counselor.

For students, having a major will prove to be an additional burden. They will have to be selected a major before taking them or changing them; the program will put useless pressure on those already struggling with community service and GPA requirements.

At present, the Department of Education has approved 442 majors, which will not be offered at all high schools. The program, like many others, has no proof of effectiveness; teachers and administrators are unsure that the plan will work.

Instead of enforcing early career choices and putting students on a flexible but tangible track, the Department of Education needs to emphasize hard work as the key to success regardless of one’s future plans and focus on improving regular high school education.

**FCAT Annoying, But Impossible to Avoid**

In the years since the FCAT was first administered in 1998, criticism of the test has out shadowed praise for it. Most teachers and administrators, and certainly all of the students who are unfortunate enough to have to take the FCAT, agree that the test is at best an imperfect method of measuring students’ progress and at worst a completely waste of time.

In 1996, the Florida Board of Education adopted the now familiar Sunshine State Standards as a system of benchmarks that students need to meet in order to graduate, and drew up a contract with McGraw-Hill to use the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test to measure how well students meet those benchmarks.

The contract requires only a minimum of state supervision. A plus plan expanded the number of students tested to include grades three through ten in 1999 and 2000. This year, another group of students have to pass the test with scores of 300 in reading and math to graduate.

Students dislike the time spent on FCAT preparation that could be used for teaching regular curriculum, administrators take issue with the pre-test exercises and interruption of normal school schedule, parents disapprove of the way test scores help determine allocation of funds to schools, and students hate the FCAT either because it is too easy or too difficult. Even Floridians not involved with the school system are catching on: The Miami Herald’s Carl Hiaasen recently called the public school system’s relationship with the FCAT an “unhealthy obsession”.

Yet it is imperative that students put forth their maximum effort on the test. It may not be fair, but their performance determines whether Beach High is rewarded with more money or punished with extra hours of FCAT prep class time. MBHS wants to avoid being a zone school at all costs. Remember that the scores of only one classroom of students can tip the scale in either direction; this is especially important for juniors, whose science scores will contribute 100 points to the school’s grade, to consider.

A better solution is to have state-administered exams that relate to specific core subjects and are given at the end of the year, like a less challenging AP test or the New York Regent’s exams. In any case, the state needs a system of high school competency benchmarks, and a more effective one, Miami Dade County students are “stuck” with the FCAT.

For now, the best students can do is to take the test seriously, and follow the lead of Lauderdale Manors Elementary, which received an “A” after an incomplete last year; get into the mind frame that the FCAT is a villain to be defeated, and “kill it”.

**Props to Dear Harry**

**Dear Editor,**

Last issue, there was a letter sent into Dear Harry asking why only the girl that throws the first punch gets suspended, for fighting at school. I cannot but agree with you when he says that violent tickles should be left behind at Nautilus. Although it might not be considered “cool”, there are so many other ways to resolve problems like mediation, walking it out or even walking away. In confrontation, you have to be mature and be the bigger person to not throw the first punch. It’s not worth it, all you get from fighting is a bad rep, a fat lip and suspension.

Viviana Yerex

**Reality for Marijuana Users**

Dear Editor,

In the last issue of the Beachcomber, Brianna Hernandez wrote the article “Marijuana Use Increases on Campus.” She speaks of the many negative effects and how it is a gateway drug and will lead to other drugs. In her article she states that many marijuana users are even smoking in school and if caught will get arrested and/or expelled. Personally, I like this article. It informs the marijuana users on campus and opens their eyes. It helps you look past the “fun” and the momentary high. In reality, marijuana is bad and I think this article is a positive way to show that.

Tiffany Gonzales

**Death Penalty Wrong**

Dear Editor,

I came across the article “Death Penalty Morality Questioned” in the human rights section of the Beachcomber and was intrigued. Capital punishment is a big issue in this country and many people have argued that the executions aren’t any better than the criminal’s act. This article mentioned that the death penalty is both irreversible and more severe than lesser punishments, and I agree. If you are given life you can be acquitted much easier than if you are on death row. Wrongful convictions have happened and if you die before being acquitted, there’s no coming back.

Chris Mayorga

**Grades are Students’ Responsibility**

Dear Editor,

The title says it all, “Web Program Allows Parents to See Grades.” Since January, parents have been able to see the grades of their children on a website called the Parent Portal. In order for parents to access this program, they have to go through a series of involved steps.

The writer of this article, Julia Carflagno, implies that the students should know their own grades since it’s their responsibility to achieve it. It is through their own determination and hard work that students are successful.

Although I understand the parents’ point of view, the parents do not go to college with their children. They cannot watch their grades there. High school is a great opportunity for students to be assertive and take the initiative to be in charge of their own education.

Brittany Adler

**Give Slack on Rainy Days**

Dear Editor,

In “Rain Causes Increase in Turdies” by Melody Poncio, an article in the December 2006 issue, I agree one hundred percent with the article. It makes it really difficult for students to make it to school on time when it rains, no matter which way you come into the campus. You will get soaked and then sick leading to absences. Yet, the school does not do anything about it. Some teachers are very strict with tardies, and you are only allowed a certain amount. Rainy days just make everything really complicated. Here in Miami Beach, the weather is unpredictable, so the school should seriously make an effort to create some kind of roof where they can drop off the students. If that is not possible, then at least allow the students to be a few minutes late on rainy days, but something must be done.

Brittany Adler
Brazilian Carnival Anticipated

By Alexa Vasconez

The Brazilian Carnival is going to happen despite the delay due to the FCAT. The carnival was originally supposed to be held in February, but because of FCAT testing it will be held in March and only students who have passed the FCAT will be able to attend the multi-cultural festivities. It is to be held on Wednesday, March 28 from 11:15 to 12:15 in the gym for invited classes only.

Auditions are still being held to find students who can show off their talents at the show, and the Brazilian Club is also looking for students who can dance Samba to be the next Mr. or Ms. Carnival. “The purpose of the carnival is to promote the Brazilian culture and unite students with diverse ethnicities”, said Mrs. Anete Arslanian, the creator of the Brazilian Carnival and recent winner of the Beach High Teacher of the Year award.

The carnival was first introduced in 1996; it was held in the gym because no one thought it would be that good. It turned out to be a success and has been a Beach High tradition ever since. Mrs. Arslanian was awarded the City of Miami Beach Key for the show’s success in 2002.

The carnival will have entertainment consisting of various Brazilian pieces of music, professional Samba and Capoeira dancers, and the school Rock Ensemble and Marching Band. The club also welcomes whoever else wants to perform at the carnival. There will be games and prizes for winners of a dance competition; prizes range from a spa treatment to limo rides and a round trip ticket to Brazil.

For two consecutive years, the winner of Ms. Carnival has won the round trip ticket to Brazil. Mr. Carnival has not because there were no students who would run for the position. The Brazilian Club and Mrs. Arslanian are trying to encourage students to try out and have fun and learn about the Brazilian culture.

Not only has the Brazilian Carnival made a diversity difference in this school, but Mrs. Arslanian’s hard work and dedication has also resulted in Beach High’s receiving donations of $1,500 for Portuguese textbooks in 1996 and more than $3,000 worth of novels, encyclopedias, atlases, and more for the school library.

Furthermore, Beach High students have received scholarships through Mrs. Arslanian’s partnership with the local Brazilian community. This year’s Brazilian Carnival is going to be a show that no one will want to miss.