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Public pushed aside for debate

With tickets limited, UCF students are mostly shut out of campus confrontation between Bush, McBride

UCF brands Broncos

Tiffany Repecki
Staff Writer

What students anticipated would be an open public debate between gubernatorial candidates Jeb Bush and Bill McBride at UCF on Oct. 22 will now go forth as a statewide televised debate that will exclude most of the general public.

Debate coordinators, who originally planned to distribute tickets to the public on a first-come, first-served basis, eliminated half of the tickets and decided to divide the remainder among campus administrators, trustees, student government leaders and political organizations.

Please see Coordinators on 4

Graduate students counsel community

Adam Rosche
Staff Writer

For the last three years, UCF has provided free individual, couple and family counseling sessions.

Graduate students work with professors and licensed professionals in helping clients who need counseling. There are six counseling rooms at the Counseling & Testing Center. The rooms are equipped with cameras, earpieces and a voice box that connects to a control room, which allows the licensed professionals and faculty to assess and advise the students with their techniques.

"It's a very hands-on experience for our students and it's a service to the community," said Mike Robinson, director of the center.

The Counseling Center's main focus is to serve the community. All the students have taken the appropriate classes and have some insight about counseling before entering this class and working with patients," Robinson said.

"I've been able to apply what I learned in class to real life," said Jill Tomlinson, a graduate student in counseling.

However, there are certain requirements before a student is allowed to work in the Counseling Center, whether they have taken appropriate classes or not. The student goes through an interview process to make sure they meet the qualifications, which include having a good incentive to want to counsel others, being able to establish a relationship with clients and are able to be professional.

Students also must have a mini-

Please see Clinical on 4

INSIDE SPORTS

UCF brings home first MAC win of the season

Game day coverage: See Page H1
MAC Scoreboard: See Page H1
Inside the Numbers: See Page H4

Rotten eggs
College student struggles with extreme morning-day in and day out.

LIFESTYLES, 16

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Senators ditch last meeting of term

Shelia Nieves Staff Writer

Members of the 34th Student Government Association Senate marked their last meeting last week by playing hooky.

Only nine of the 30 senators showed up for the Senate's regular weekly meeting scheduled on Oct. 10. Anticipating such a poor turnout, Sen. Jared Schiller had called for a vote a week earlier in a Senate committee meeting that would have required only five members to attend the Senate's last meeting.

Yet even Schiller himself skipped the last session, opting instead to attend the annual political "hobnob," an off-campus gathering of political candidates sponsored by the Orlando Regional Chamber of Commerce. Several other cabinet members attended the same event.

"I decided to show my support for UCF by attending the hobnob," said Schiller. "I apologize to anyone and everyone."

Schiller was also in late "vote for the good to be purchased for Senate's last meeting, said he mixed up dates and wanted cabinet members to appear at the first meeting of the newly elected 35th Senate on Oct. 17.

SGA Vice President Brian Battles told the Senate on Oct. 5 that many cabinet members planned to attend the hobnob and would miss its last meeting.

However, Battles said he expects all cabinet members to attend the first meeting of the newly elected Senate. "The climax of the 34th Senate was really disappointing without any official business," said Sen.

Sen. Deborah Tashkuda, who went to the Senate's last meeting.

Those who did attend addressed student concerns. Students who faced more snags than others during the just-completed Senate elections agreed that in order to improve future elections, procedures must be clarified.

Problems that arose during included students who were ORC to run but were later disqualified, and criticism from SGA Brevard officials who felt the election was run improperly on their campus.

The election commission had approved Jennifer Mattickes and Sen. Shadiya Thomas to run for office, but SGA's Judicial Council later disqualified them because of unsigned paperwork.

Mattickes and Thomas said confusion existed when they showed up at the SGA office to make their candidacies formal. Both agreed that SGA officials should better explain the rules to candidates and adhere to them to prevent future confusion.

SGA officials need to designate one spot where students can go to declare their candidacies, said Thomas. That way, SGA officials running elections could correct students who do anything wrong while declaring their candidacy.

SGA officials from the Brevard campuses voiced concern over no communication and supplies from the election commission stationed at the main campus during the primary elections.

Because of this plan to allow the SGA coordinator to purchase poll materials, election posters and other required material is being worked on, said Sen. Jenna Delk.

Loophole lets some skip summer classes

Florida universities require summer credits, but students can graduate without them

Laura Stevens Staff Writer

In order to keep the state universities running year-round, Florida requires UCF students to enroll in at least nine hours of summer courses before they can graduate.

But thanks to a loophole, a lot of students are finding a way to bypass that requirement.

Students who have not taken any summer classes, but who still have enough credit hours to graduate in December or May—before the next summer term begins—are permitted to declare one requirement, said David Dees, UCF's dean of students.

"Students are encouraged to meet the requirement," said Dees. "But those who haven't can petition for a waiver of the requirement.

State lawmakers put the requirement into law in 1987 when the state's universities were concerned state campuses appeared mostly vacant during summer semesters.

"The purpose of this state requirement was to efficiently use state university graduate resources," said Dees.

Freshman Megan Cerasale said her UCF orientation leaders emphasized the summer requirement, but there was no discussion about what she could do if she did not fulfill it.

"My orientation leaders didn't say anything about getting a waiver," she said.

Although Cerasale was not informed about the petition option, she said her parents were told about it during a parent's orientation session.

Despite urging students to complete the summer classes, Dees said it is the least important prerequisite for undergraduate graduation.

"It has little to do with the demonstration of knowledge, levels of academic performance or the mastery of important skills," he said.

Compounding the matter for many students is that the classes are no longer covered by the Florida Bright Futures scholarship program. Bright Futures scholarships currently subsidize the education expenses for about 80,000 students statewide.

State Sen. Don Sullivan, R-Largo, was partially in charge of starting the Bright Futures program, and pushed through the legislation that cut scholarship funding by $14.9 million and eliminated the summer scholarships.

But that's not the only bad news for Bright Futures scholars. Previously, scholarship amounts rose with the cost of college tuition. Under the changes approved by the Florida Legislature, the amount of scholarships will no longer be increased to cover those tuition hikes.

The purpose of this state requirement was to efficiently use state university system resources.

—David Dees

All this and brains too

"What's the girl's name from the Broadway Newsweek? "The Scarlett Pimpernel,"

Miller competed against nine other UCF men and won a $3,500 cash scholarship, a class ring and a two-semester book from the campus bookstore.

All the UCF men who fell prey to art programs in public schools by speaking and performing at elementary and high schools in the local area. After graduation, Miller wants to move to New York and pursue a career in musical theatre.

Former UCF Rep. Bill Miller convinced Miller to enter this year's contest. "I'm glad I told you to audition one day in between classes. First was hesitant, but now I'm so glad I did."
Clinical experience in a controlled setting

FROM PAGE 1

mum GPA of 3.0, score of 1000 on the GRE; the graduate admissions school exam, and have three letters of recommendation. The professors have high expectations because they want to see each student succeed and do well, Tomlinson said.

"A really quality program has a good clinic facility," Robinson said. It is mandatory that students in this program attain an orientation in which different techniques are discussed. They are also required to keep all cases confidential. If this confidentiality is ever broken, students will be dismissed from the program.

This clinic offers a free service directed at patients. Though these sessions are open to patients who suffer from anxiety, depression, family issues or a loss, cooperation is ever broken, students will be dismissed. There have been situations where a current client has become suicidal or even a substance abuser, but they are dealt with carefully and sent to a certified counselor, said Rasmussen.

"We screen to the best of our ability, but if they go off their meds or something happens during the semester and they become suicidal, we have to assist them."

Graduate students Jennifer Fine (left), Shannon Ray (center) and Jennifer McCaffrey (right) ran a mock counseling session to practice techniques they plan to use in their next counseling sessions.

From Page 1

UV 4: NEWS 75 tickets, from someone. Though these sessions are open to patients who suffer from anxiety, depression, family issues or a loss, cooperation is ever broken, students will be dismissed. There have been situations where a current client has become suicidal or even a substance abuser, but they are dealt with carefully and sent to a certified counselor, said Rasmussen.

"We screen to the best of our ability, but if they go off their meds or something happens during the semester and they become suicidal, we have to assist them."

Coordinators design debate to resemble ‘Meet the Press’ program

FROM PAGE 1

UCF’s administration will receive 35 tickets; the Student Government Association will get 15. Another 30 tickets will be evenly split between UCF’s College Republicans and College Democrats, for a total campus allotment of 80.

Event sponsors WESH Channel 2 and the Orlando Sentinel will each receive up to 75 tickets, and each candidate’s campaign will get 15 tickets.

Coordinators of the debate decided to exclude the general public to make the event more formal, said Kent Morton, managing editor of WESH.

"A smaller audience was more preferable than a large audience," Morton said. "It’s going to be more [of] ‘Meet the Press’ style program."

"There wasn’t going to be thousands of people to begin with," Morton said. NBC’s Tim Russert will moderate the debate, which Morton expects will be a “live, give-and-take on issues” of major importance.

A room in the Student Union will be open to the public to watch the live debate. Those at home can watch the same broadcast on WESH.

"Education is such a key issue during this campaign [that WESH] thought UCF would be a good fit," Morton said.

"UCF is happy to have it here because it brings good attention to the university," said Linda Greg, director of university relations. "We’re delighted to get that kind of attention."

Senior Kyle Considder, chairman of the UCF College Republicans, said that the event would serve as a great experience for club members who have never attended a debate.

Considder said the club’s members have spent most of their time working on behind-the-scenes campaigning — holding fundraisers, press events and barbecues for volunteers.

Considder and UCF College Democrats President Lindsey Ellerbich both said they will distribute their allotted tickets to club members who have participated the most in each organization’s service projects.

These projects have included phone banking, canvassing or precinct walking and organizing social events.

The Central Florida Future • October 14, 2002

The Crow

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Playing the dating game

"Elimidate" comes to town seeking courting candidates

BECKA KULCHAK
STAFF WRITER

Senior Ramona Thomas has a boyfriend, but that didn't stop her from trying to date four guys at once. Thomas wants to serve as the object of desire for four available guys who would shower her with compliments and wine and dine her at the trendy clubs and bars in downtown Orlando.

While the boys will be working to impress, Thomas will eliminate, or rather eliminate, her dates, until she's left with one. The last man standing becomes the winner of the dating television show "Elimidate" and his prize is an evening alone with Thomas, or so she hopes.

While Thomas hasn't made the cut for the dating television show, she is thrilled that "Elimidate" has finally come to Orlando and wants nothing more than to be an elimidator.

"I'm not looking for love, just a good time," she said.

Thomas says if she makes the show she knows her limits and the thin line between right and wrong that she'll have to tread.

"If I go on the show, I wouldn't make out with anyone," she said. "I'd be the девушка girl. You don't have to strip or get all freaky-deaky with the guys for the show to have good ratings."

"Besides, the guys are usually ugly and not worth doing anything I'd regret later," she said.

Thomas's boyfriend may be relieved that his girlfriend will remain faithful if she becomes a contestant on the dating show, but like Thomas, senior Beth Barton said the show for most people isn't about finding love or hooking up. It's simply about winning a game.

"Sure I have a boyfriend, but it would totally be OK for me to go on the show," she said. "I know I'd be making him proud. It would be like taking one for the team."

Even though Barton is happily involved with a boyfriend too, the hard-core "Elimidate" fan, who has compiled hours of the dating show on tapes, is only there to practice her flirting techniques and beat three other women to win the dating show.

Barton is confident she can win based on the tactics she has learned from watching past episodes of the dating show.

"If you are going to be on the show, you have to know the tactics (the other contestants) are going to use," she said. "I know I wouldn't have to make out with a guy to win. I would win based on tactics alone."

The thought of being on the show surrounded by four attractive ladies at once is enough of a thrill for senior Ellie Lilly, even though he admits he probably won't find a serious girlfriend.

"You get to have a lot of chicks just chilling and following your every whim," Lilly said. "But from what I've watched, people don't fall in love on this show."

"It has definitely gotten to where all the guys on the show think that they can get the chicks naked — they're just looking for a booty call at the end of the night. I think I'd have a lot more fun than the other guys," Lilly said.

"Elimidate" airs at 5 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. weekdays on the WRUF network, and at 5:30 p.m. and 2 a.m. weekdays on WRUF Channel 18.

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NEW YORK — Richard Rasbottom, Waldorf, left Jamaica, Queens, to study Business at Georgia Southern University and quickly learned a lucrative, illegal lesson in the process. He supplied cheap guns down South and helped the demand for weapons on his home turf.

He was part of a group of students at the Staten Island gun-based university who bought at least 45 guns to New York, authorities say, and a member of a growing fraternity of college gunrunners.

Men and women who escaped the city's bullet-ridden neighborhoods to attend college in the Deep South have brought hundreds of cheap firearms back to New York for sale to thugs who have used them in burglaries, an attempted home invasion robbery and other crimes.

In less than two years, authorities say, some 800 guns were transported to the city by students with no prior criminal records who bought the weapons in Georgia, Alabama, Texas and other states.

The alarming trend was uncovered in the last six months.

One student from Oakwood College in Huntsville, Ala., took orders for 9-mm. and .380 semiautomatics for Brooklyn gun peddlers. Another Oakwood student drove a car with a trunk load of guns around East Flashburn, Brooklyn, looking for customers.

Another case involves 20 guns trafficked by a student from Brooklyn who attends Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta. Agents tailed the man from a pawnshop where he bought 10 guns to the campus, where he left the weapons in his car while he rushed to take another exam the following day.

Agents seized the guns.

These types of cases may have been rare in the past, but not to the extent that we have uncovered recently," said FBI agent in charge of the New York office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

The patterns we've seen developing where New York City residents enrolled in colleges and universities across America are buying guns and bringing them back to New York, must be addressed and stopped.

So far, 40 of the weapons have turned up in crimes here. The task force is not satisfied.

Authorities believe they will link scores of the defaced guns recovered from the city's crime scenes to students on loyal Southern campuses.

The transplanted New Yorkers quickly saw a way to make a profit, spending $100 on a gun that could fetch $600 here.

"I think the real rub is guys from the hood, the first couple of times they buy one, two or three guns, then realize how easy it is, and get a business-going," said supervisory agent Billy Frederick of the Joint Firearms Task Force run by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the NYPD.

The students told investigators they bought guns with money from tuition or student loans.

The task force has six cases pending, and several investigations in early stages involving New York and New Jersey students who attend Southern and Midwestern colleges.

The tally of guns they brought to the metropolitan area since early 2001 could top 1,000, agents said.

The probes began in March, when a United Parcel Service worker in Huntsville discovered seven defaced guns in a package addressed to a home in Canarsie, Brooklyn.

The serial numbers were raised, and the firearms were traced back to Dean Gage, 27, originally from Canarsie, and David Cassinny, 22, of Valley Stream, L.I.

They were attending Oakwood College, a Seventh Day Adventist school in the buckle of Tennessee Valley.

"I needed book money," was Gage's excuse, according to NYPD Sgt. Charles Giglio of the task force.

At one point, Gage allegedly drove around East Flashburn with a car trunk full of firearms, openly soliciting customers, agents said.

When confronted by investigators last spring, Gage and Cassinny "were worried if they'd be able to graduate," said Detective Peter Shambal.

Gage, Cassinny and a third student were indicted in August in Alabama on federal trafficking charges for purchasing 71 firearms and bringing them to three Brooklyn men who resold them on the streets. So far five have turned up on suspects arrested throughout the city.

There was a second set of gunrunners at Oakwood. A Bronx man known as "John Doe" in court papers because he has not been charged yet, allegedly bought 79 guns and removed the serial numbers with an engraving tool.

His alleged accomplice, Kenneth Keenan, 23, an Alabama man, purchased 25 guns. Of the 118 guns ended up here, 17 have been recovered so far.

"John Doe" allegedly bought guns for two New York men, Bryan Williams and Duwayne Fryfield, who were arrested on Sept. 9 and charged with firearms dealing.

One of the guns was used by a gang planning a home invasion.

Please See Georgia on 8
Georgia’s lax gun laws main cause

FROM PAGE 7

robbery in Coney Island in May, another in a suicide in Long Island City in June, and one was used by a burglar on the upper East side in October.

The Oakwood groups "know each other but worked separately," said bureau Special Agent Cameron Conklin.

He said "John Doe" is still in school, but Benson graduated in the spring with an accounting degree. When Conklin went to arrest Benson in May, there were balloons with messages of congratulations, and graduation gifts in Hubert Edwards, 25, of New York.

"It’s really problematic," said Fredericks. "I think we’ll get more cases out of Huntsville." Meanwhile, other defaced guns were turning up here, and when the serial numbers were traced, they pointed to more college students.

Hubert Edwards, 25, of Brownsville, Brooklyn, a student at Texas Southern University in Houston, allegedly enlisted three fellow students who lived in the area to act as straw purchasers. The three, Tyrone Osby, Kyran Savage and Reginald Joiner, bought at least 53 guns, which Edwards drove to his old neighborhood.

Eight of the guns have been recovered so far in Brooklyn. Special Agent Howard Stern said one, a Bryco 9-mm, made a remarkably quick time-to-crime trip. It was bought in Houston on July 1, and wound up in the hands of a 13-year-old youth in Canarsie, Brooklyn, on July 7.

The youth told cops he had bought it from another teen, who had purchased it July 4, allegedly from Edwards in an apartment where 20 shiny new guns — with serial numbers removed — were displayed in factory boxes.

Edwards and the other three Texas Southern University students were indicted Sept. 19 by a Brooklyn federal grand jury. "Students must be made aware of the consequences of buying guns for someone else," Domenech said. "They don’t think they’ll get caught, but restoring defaced serial numbers will have been a crucial step in our investigations."

The ATF plans a campaign in conjunction with the federal Department of Education, using the slogan "Don’t Lie for the Other Guy" to discourage college graduations.

But the trend shows no signs of abating as long as some states have lax gun laws.

Georgia, which does not restrict the number of firearms in a single purchase, has been dubbed "the iron pipeline" because so many guns flow from there.

Atlanta bureau Supervisor Agent David Fields said it’s been a perennial problem: Students in Georgia feeling the black market is the temptation is greater. "But if you’re from a market area like New York, the temptation is greater," Fields said. "We’re seeing more of them more frequently now."

Georgia Southern student Waldburg, 24, had lived in the Peach State for more than 90 days, had no criminal record and a Georgia identification card.

He quickly passed background checks at the local pawnshop. He bought one gun in January, then went back and bought nine more in February, according to Fields. Two of his co-students who live in Georgia allegedly bought 30 firearms.

Waldburg’s January purchase, a HiPoint 9-mm, pistol, was recovered June 15 in Atlanta, agents said.

Waldburg didn’t foresee that a defaced gun could be traced right back to him. He pleaded guilty in June in Atlanta to firearms trafficking. He was expelled and is awaiting sentencing, Fields said.

"In their minds these students are just doing it for the money, they don’t think about the consequences," said Shanahai.
National Briefs

UC-Berkeley students rally against war in Iraq

BERKELEY, Calif. — University of California-Berkeley students kicked off the campus’s first anti-war protest of the school year Wednesday and promised many more as the United States moves closer to invading Iraq.

"We would like to stop the war before it happens," said junior Michael Smith, a member of the Berkeley Stop the War Coalition, who passed out leaflets to classmates streaming by him. "And if we can't do that, we would like to end it as quickly as possible."

Roughly 200 students gathered holding several signs that read "Say No to War." Organizers had hoped for more people.

Observers predicted the student protesters' numbers will grow beyond what the nation saw earlier this year when it bombed Afghanistan. In that case, the United States responded militarily as the victim of a terrorist attack, said UC-Berkeley Prof. John Searle. In this case, the United States would be the aggressor, much like in Vietnam.

"If we go war in Iraq, there will be much more protest," Searle said.

The Bay Area's hard-core activists are already in full tilt. Thousands gathered in San Francisco's Union Square last Sunday for an anti-war rally Wednesday that encouraged students to attend another in the city Thursday organized by numerous anti-war coalitions. Plans call for an all-night candlelight vigil and then non-violent civil disobedience to shut down the Federal Building at the Civic Center on Friday morning.

Freshman Naveed Ahmed watched the Sproul Plaza protest from a slight distance: With all his homework and activities and time spent getting used to college, he hasn't paid much attention to the news recently. He picked up the paper and was shocked to see how close the nation is to war. He thinks a lot of students are like him, just waking up to the situation.

Shooting intrude on University of Maryland

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — A campus is an insular place, but not even the columns and brick of the University of Maryland's buildings could keep out the feeling of incivility brought by the serial shootings that shook the region in the past six days.

Eight people have died and two others have been seriously injured in gunned attacks that began last Wednesday evening and continued Monday when a Bowie, Md., middle school student was gunned down. The Bowie incident was 16 miles away from campus in the same county. University authorities have improved security since, with uniformed officers stationed at all campus entrances.

"I feel pretty safe on campus," said junior Maryland is sort of in a security bubble," said senior Tiffany Harris.

Some students don't understand the geography around the campus and do not realize how close the university is in reference to some of the shootings.

Benjamin Tanker Middle School in Bowie, the site of one of the most recent shooting, is, with the College Park campus, in Prince George's County, the campus is also about 10 miles from where James D. Martin was shot at the Shoppers Food Warehouse in Wheaton, Md., and 6.5 miles from where Pascal Charlot was shot standing on the corner of Georgia Avenue and Kalmar Street in northwest Washington.

"We are an attractive target. Looking at the victims that have been shot, a college student or a police officer are probably high on a list of targets," said University Police Maj. Paul Dillon.

Maryland's counseling center said no student has come in with serious concerns about the shootings.

"The shootings have created a level of anxiety especially being out in the open on campus, and the fact that one happened in Prince Georges County makes it even worse," said junior Rashadsha Ahmed.

A statement on the university's Web site said officials feel the campus is safe and all students should "exercise due caution and be aware of their surroundings at all times."

Maryland's campus would not be a good choice for a gunman because all escape routes are being watched, police said.

"The positions they could take up are endless, and any escape route covered will discourage someone who did make it onto campus," he said.

Police are expected to stay on alert and all activities will go on as planned unless individual organizers decide to cancel them. Dillon said.

Security measures already in place include a walking escort service, door-to-door shuttle service and security cameras located in high-traffic areas on campus.

(Compiled from wire reports by STAFF WRITER ADAM WIRE REPORTS BY STAFF WRITER ADAM)

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Majors by James D. Martin was shot at the Shoppers Food Warehouse in Wheaton, Md., and 6.5 miles from where Pascal Charlot was shot standing on the corner of Georgia Avenue and Kalmar Street in northwest Washington.

"We are an attractive target. Looking at the victims that have been shot, a college student or a police officer are probably high on a list of targets," said University Police Maj. Paul Dillon.

Maryland's counseling center said no student has come in with serious concerns about the shootings.

"The shootings have created a level of anxiety especially being out in the open on campus, and the fact that one happened in Prince Georges County makes it even worse," said junior Rashadsha Ahmed.

A statement on the university's Web site said officials feel the campus is safe and all students should "exercise due caution and be aware of their surroundings at all times."

Maryland's campus would not be a good choice for a gunman because all escape routes are being watched, police said.

"The positions they could take up are endless, and any escape route covered will discouraged someone who did make it onto campus," he said.

Police are expected to stay on alert and all activities will go on as planned unless individual organizers decide to cancel them. Dillon said.

Security measures already in place include a walking escort service, door-to-door shuttle service and security cameras located in high-traffic areas on campus.

(Compiled from wire reports by STAFF WRITER ADAM WIRE REPORTS BY STAFF WRITER ADAM)

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The death penalty is a major issue in the Florida governor’s race. Although both candidates support capital punishment, Democrat Bill McBride supports a moratorium on the death penalty, while Republican Jeb Bush continues to sign death warrants.

A recent U.S. Supreme Court decision, Atkin's v. Virginia, outlawed executing mentally ill murderers. Yet last week, Florida executed a woman, Aileen Wuornos, who appeared to be insane.

Wuornos killed six men in the early 1990s. A panel of psychiatrists appointed by Bush judged Wuornos to be legally sane. Yet independent mental health experts disagreed. Her last words suggest that she was not sane.

"Yes, I’d like to say I'm sailing with the rock," said the daughter of one of Wuornos’ victims. "Use the electric chair. Let her legs klick and strike come out of her ears.”

Convicted killers deserve harsh punishment, but killing them only propagates hatred.

Keep murderers imprisoned for life, take away the amenities that prisoners enjoy, and put them to work. There is a better way to deal with violent criminals than killing them.

Bush should stop the hatred, and ensure that no more innocent or mentally ill prisoners die at the hands of the state.

A moratorium on the death penalty is the only proper response.

OUR STANCE:

**Killing us softly:**

State’s views on death penalty

The death penalty is inhumane. Killing people is wrong, no matter who does it. As evidence continues to surface proving that people have been wrongly convicted, particularly in Florida, the time has come for the state to stop executing people, at least until it can establish clearer guidelines for execution.

In addition, the death penalty starves the victims’ families. Normally good people become vengeful and vitriolic as the execution approaches.

"I think she should have suffered a little bit more," said the daughter of one of Wuornos’ victims. "Use the electric chair. Let her legs klick and strike come out of her ears.”

Convicted killers deserve harsh punishment, but killing them only propagates hatred.

Keep murderers imprisoned for life, take away the amenities that prisoners enjoy, and put them to work. There is a better way to deal with violent criminals than killing them.

Florida should stop the hatred, and ensure that no more innocent or mentally ill prisoners die at the hands of the state. A moratorium on the death penalty is the only proper response.

OUR STANCE:

**Raise the bar for student leaders**

The Golden Rule Review Committee wants to raise the minimum GPA for student leaders from 2.3 to 2.5. The committee should make the increase and permanently keep it at 2.5.

The GPA requirement applies to students who run student organizations and to students who participate in student government.

Although student leaders have very hectic schedules and bear a lot of responsibility, that does not give them an excuse to neglect their studies. A student’s GPA is not indicative of his or her leadership ability, but student leaders must remember that they attend UCF to get an education first and lead second.

Academics must remain student leaders’ top priority.

Besides that, the current minimum GPA of 2.3 barely stands above the 2.0 GPA that students must maintain to attend UCF. Raising the GPA by 0.2 points should not affect that many students, and those student leaders it does affect should not hold leadership positions anyway. If student GPAs are that low, they should focus their attention on their studies rather than leadership. A 2.5 GPA is a solid C average; most students should be able to attain it.

Although the proposed increase in GPA should not affect too many students, UCF should give student leaders some warming and slowly make the change. Give student leaders a semester or two to raise their GPAs. If they cannot make the grades, they should not lead others.

UCF should not raise the GPA any higher than 2.5. Raising the minimum GPA above 2.5 would disproportionately too many students. UCF should not make leadership positions unavailable to average students.

The university should implement the change beginning next fall. That would allow current student leaders on the brink to get their acts together and find a balance between academics and leadership.

UCF should hold student leaders to a higher standard. Leaders, by definition, should set an example for others to follow. If they cannot maintain a 2.5 GPA, they should not lead.

The important thing is not to stop questioning.”

—Robert Ewen

The important thing is not to stop questioning.”

—Robert Ewen

Letters to the Editor

Please see Letters on III

**Women’s rights thrive under Bush**

In your last editorial "Women’s rights Backward" published Oct. 2, you offer a study conducted by the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League as evidence that women’s rights suffer under Gov. Jeb Bush’s policies.

"Raising a radical production group, whose sole definition of how successful women are is how many abortions a woman can get the government to pay for, is a hardy evidence of how well women are prospering under Bush administration."

Finally, you can ask the President for better service if they actually recognized the women in Florida over the last four years.

Relating on serious issues, pro-choice radicals and anti-religious bigots for your editorials who do a great disservice to the reading public.

—David Stoffer

Florida College Republicans

**Correction**

The caption that accompanied the photos of the "bottomless office supplies" experience" published Oct. 12 is in error. Jason Kong is not Jason Kong. The caption should have read, "Jason Kong is one of two students participating in a Wi-Fi program designed to help (cancel High School readers) build their own stations."
The melting pot calls the kettle black

HORSE WITH NO NAME

I was wrong. No, your eyes did not deceive you. I actually admitted I was wrong. Read on, because such admissions are rare.

A few months ago I wrote a point column stating that I felt that the very idea of multiculturalism was wrong. I now realize that the refusal to conform to become a part of the melting pot that our society was as bad as being a black sheep.

At that time, I believed that the notion of multiculturalism could be defined as something of an affront. The peons never wanted to jump in the same pot as the soon, because each one wanted nothing other than to treat their own policy and their own agenda.

No single culture would ever work for the benefit of society as a whole in the same multicultural salad bowl, and thus a melting pot was the best solution to avoid conflict and promote conformity. I thought multiculturalism was a laughable notion because we were only willing to accept it into our society as a novelty, like Chinese restaurants, Irish pubs, and the likes of dance clubs.

Sure, we were happy to have fresh egg rolls that we could buy at the local Ping Pong Center, or down a pint of Guinness at a local Irish tavern, and brag that we enjoyed it.

That's what culture is, after all. Import beer, egg rolls, and the one night a week where we can tune the meeting to some ethnic and vibrant Spanish song. We enjoyed it because we didn't have anything remotely similar to those things in our own home.

But we would never allow anyone of those traditions to have a final say in anything that really mattered.

I used to think multiculturalism massaged the notion that all policies and education should be based on certain culture's ideas and morals. So what would happen if our multiculturalists suddenly gained power?

Spanish music would dominate the radio waves, the same way country music does, low or worse. Spanish might even become the official language of the United States.

The Chinese would leave their restaurants to run for governors or Congress, and promote the same merciless morals--gov­ernors in their former China, have demonstrated for decades by withholding human rights from their own people.

So we decided that the best way to keep American strong and safe was to mix all our cultures and ethnic identities together and create an entirely new one--a culture born out of all cultures--the great, white America.

That way no culture or identity would stand more prevalent than the other, but really no outsider would threaten the American way of life. And that was just fine with me. I didn't need any foreigners moping up the ideals that I had grown accustomed to.

I was a counterpoint author, a former staff reporter called me ignorant. She admitted that while we were good friends and always got along, my eyes remained closed to the truth about multiculturalism and why it is so important that it exist.

I must apologize to her and admit that she had a very valid point because the celebration of one culture or diversity is a wonderful thing, and multiculturalism is a way for this nation to acknowledge that.

Multiculturalism I realize nothing to do with a power struggle for leadership or dominance.

Multiculturalism eliminates heritage, culture, roots--some­thing minorities desperately hold on to, but Euro-Americans have discovered, meshing into a single identity known simply as white.

Why should this nation have to be a melting pot of cultures? Why should anyone who moves to this nation have to assimilate to American ideals? Assimilation equates to racism.

The melting pot philosophy suggests that all people who move to this country should become like me--accept my beliefs, my feelings, my fashion and my music.

Diversity and the differences that make each of us individuals are the very things each of us should celebrate.

Diversity recognizes the differences that make this country so great and underscores the notion that non-conformity is permitted and guaranteed as one of our immutable rights in this nation.

Multiculturalism embraces all cultures and allows them to exist without infringing on the freedoms of another. It opens the minds and eyes of people like me, who are very unlikely to ignore other cultures, to change my mindset and erase the myth that multiculturalism exists to bring American down.

Columnist Joy Myers can be reached at joy@ufmu.edu

Letters to the Editor

I enjoyed your editorial "Time runs out for focus on PETA," published Oct. 2. However, you were mistaken on one very important point. The reason I killed was a news conference, not an open forum.

It was a press conference about the decision, which is why all the campus media outlets were notified. I spoke about our project and as such the press could be informed about them so that I didn't have to separate interviews with every­one. However, it was not the site for general students to discuss other issues, which would be the case at an open forum.

We will still be here, however, about the open forums. We will never promote it around campus.

---MARIO PERA

Student Body President

Six weeks to fight bio-terrorism! Try four

Our reading your article, "Students{" needed to fight bio-terrorism!" by Ashley Adams (opinion Oct. 11), I am saddened that the seiter could mess up something as simple as the length if a story. mimicking the same pattern has been advertising the story for weeks. In the article, there are two specific sources whenever the duration of the article is fixed as six weeks.

So a participant in this study is expected to stay in the facility for six weeks or more specifically 30 days at that a per­son finishing this study is under observa­tion. If you cannot get just a simple fact.

I suggest you just get writing after that someone can read this.

---Jami Nieving

Editor's note: The Orlando Clinical Research Center has been advertising the study for six weeks, and includes a one week warning period before an individual can receive a placebo, following by four weeks of observation. The study status is to report.
Emily Watts (13) had 14 kills, 13 days and four blocks in UCF's win over Gardner Webb.

UCF continues streaking

Craig Brooks
Staff Writer

The Golden Knights extended their winning streak to eight matches with wins over Campbell and Gardner-Webb last weekend. UCF improved to 7-0 in the Atlantic Sun and 13-9 overall.

The Knights needed the minimum three games to defeat A-Sun newcomer Gardner-Webb on Saturday. The Knights won the games 30-19, 30-21 and 30-27.

Leyre Santaella San and Emily Watts led UCF, which out-hit the Running Bulldogs .440-.174. Watts hit .619 with 14 kills, 13 digs and four blocks, while Chaz Anah had eight kills with no errors.

Bethune-Cookman still wireless against Knights

The Golden Knights continued their dominance of Bethune-Cookman with a 3-1 (30-24, 27-30, 30-16, 30-17) win Tuesday. The Wildcats' one win was the first time they'd taken a game from UCF.

Jarvis stole the show, recording a season-high 17 kills and 16 digs.

"It takes all of us to make it work," Jarvis said. "We are confident in each other."

Sante led UCF in kills with 19 and put up five service aces, with four to finish off the last game.

Frank just missed a triple-double with 19 assists, 11 digs and nine kills.

Knights return to Orlando

The Golden Knights return home for a pair of games. They play South Florida on Tuesday and Belmont on Friday.

"We are prepared, playing more as a team now," Sante said in reference to the string of wins that UCF has been enjoying.

Andrea Curry (above) scored a rushing touchdown in the first quarter. Ryan Schneider (right) threw for 341 yards with three touchdowns.

UCF takes home its first MAC victory

Kristy Shonka
Staff Writer

Kalamazoo, Mich. — With 45 seconds left in the game Saturday, UCF led Western Michigan by four points, but the Broncos were on the Golden Knights' seven-yard line.

That's when cornerback Asante Samuel made the biggest play of his career. The senior over ran Bronco quarterback Chad Minson's pass, but still managed to pick it off on the two-yard line, preserving a 31-27 UCF win.

"Big, big, big play. They don't come any bigger than that. The closing seconds of the ballgame with the game on the line."
Samuel helps Knights to their first road win

To make an interception, you hope your seniors come up big. In those situations and he did. That's why we won the football game," said defensive coordinator Bill D'Ottavio.

"When the defense was on the field on that last drive, there wasn't one offensive player sitting on the bench, he said. "We had everybody up, lined up, yelling at the defense. Even had a little chant going I was down at the corner praying." The win gave the Knights their first Mid-American Conference win after joining the conference before the start of the season. It was UCF's first road win since Sept. 22, 2001 when the Knights beat Tulane 36-21 in New Orleans.

WMU got on the board first with a seven-yard touchdown reception on a nine play, 77-yard drive on its first possession.

"I think our kids were feeling their way out a little bit on that first drive," said D'Ottavio. "It was a little bit slick. I didn't think we played as crisp and sharp as we could have coming out of the block."

The Broncos scored again just over a minute later following a fumble by UCF wide receiver Tavaris Capers. Sam Reynolds returned it 97 yards to the UCF five-yard line, two plays later, Mandison connected with Phillip Reed for a touchdown.

The Knights found themselves in early 14-point deficit, but out it seven on their next drive. Schneider connected with Fryzel when the drive for 15 and 12 yards, the last catch put the ball at WMU's seven-yard line and a roughing the passer penalty gave UCF the ball on the three-yard line.

On the next play, Andreal Curry ran the ball in for a touchdown. It was UCF's first rush of the game. Schneider connected with Luther Huggins and Fryzel in the second quarter and the Knights went into the locker room tied 21–21.

UCF failed to score in the third quarter for the fourth time this season, but with 14:50 left in the game Schneider and Gabriel connected on a 12-yard touchdown score to give the Knights their first lead of the game, 28–24.

After giving up a 50-yard catch on WMU's next drive, the UCF defense held the Broncos to a 22-yard field goal and preserving a 38–27 UCF lead. The Knights added a 12-yard field goal with 3:45 left in the game in a 15 play, 71-yard drive that took almost seven minutes off the clock. The Broncos marched down the field on their final drive and with less than a minute to go and WMU on UCF's seven-yard line it looked like UCF was going to lose another close one on the road. Then Sam recorded his second interception of the game and all Schneider had to do was knock down to run out the remainder 36 seconds.

"If gets hairy like that, but we've been in enough of those games, it's unfortunately not anything new, but we came out on the positive side and that's what great," D'Ottavio said.

Added Fryzel: "I hate these kinds of games, but you like them when they come out like this."

Schneider completed 31-of-45 passes for 341 yards, three touchdowns and two interceptions. Fryzel led UCF with seven catches for 113 yards and a touchdown. Gabriel totaled 218 all-purpose yards between rushing, receiving and returning yards.

Kuhlman records sixth shutout

Kristy Shonka
Staff Writer

UCF goalie Jessica Kuhlman recorded her sixth shutout of the season Friday with a 5-0 win over Mercer. The Knights continued their dominance over Atlantic Sun teams, remaining undefeated in the conference this season. UCF is 4-0 in A-Sun play and 10-3 overall.

The Knights out-shot the Bears 17-4 and Kuhlman needed just one save to record her 10th career shutout and move into sixth all-time in career shutouts.

Kenzie Ebekong scored the only goal of the first half on a left-footed chip shot over four keepers Karolina Kowalska. That goal would be all the Knights needed, but Amanda Skees and Jennifer Montgomery would add goals in the second half.

Sissors scored off a deflection on alobbed shot to the top left corner of the net at the 64:19 mark. Montgomery scored on a pass from Courtney Barnes in the 98:56 minute. The Knights remain in first place in the A-Sun, while the Bears drop to 6-7 in the conference and 1-13 overall. UCF welcomes Jacksonville University to Orlando at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

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The number of combined receiving yards by senior wide receiver Dee Brown was 122 yards. His 12-yard fourth quarter gave the Knights a 28-24 lead. He returned six kickoffs for 12 yards and a reverse for 12 yards. He caught seven passes in the second quarter at the back-to-back home games under Gary Stachnik.

Western Michigan's defense held the Broncos to 36 points. The number of picks by the Knights was seven. It was a career game for fifth in school history. The defense blocked 28 tackles, giving the defense a 23-21 lead.

Dee Brown rushed for 44 yards against Western Michigan. The number of tackles by safety Jonathan Ashkinaz and Doug Gabriel. The number of times before against Marshall.

The number of tackles by the Knights was seven. They faced Akron 49. They continued their three sacks and four pass breakups.

The Knights had more. They had a chance to pick off two other passes and seven of those came in with 17 sacks on the year. They faced Akron 49. They continued their three sacks and four pass breakups.

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Light 'Em Up torches competition

Combine the 2001 men's flag football champions with the 2002 women's winners and what do you get? The perfect recipe for a co-ed tournament title. Light 'Em Up stunned and cooked the field last week to win the inaugural KnightsManupidated Bowl, which was a two-day right-on-right co-ed flag football event.

Pool Play kicked things off on Saturday afternoon, as Light 'Em Up went undefeated in the first round. This Ain't PE and 4.15s 4 Chix joined them as the top-seeded teams after the first round of action.

Light 'Em Up kicked it up a notch in the elimination round on Sunday, beginning with 704's shelocking Burning Zeppelins. Next they faced off with the Center...

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Faux reunion,
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Linnea Brown
Staff Writer

"Dude, I am all over this spinach dip," my former high school classmate shouted drunkenly, taking a sloppy swig of beer.

Twenty years after graduation, he was still wearing his cheesy purple and yellow Fighting Flounders letterman jacket, carrying around a tat of beer.

Fighting Cheesy Purple and Yellowation, he was Blaine sprawled across thetered football seat next to me and shoveled d'oeuvres,

Almost two hundred Orlando residents and tourists pay $25 each weekend to attend the staged reunion where they can wine, dine and party reunion-style at the fictional United Brotherhood of Yaks Lodge in Lake Eola Vista. Friday and Saturday nights.

All my rowdy friends are coming over tonight

Craig Brooks
Staff Writer

Like everyone else, UCF freshman Brandon Parfington is a puritan when it comes to sports.

He has his favorite teams, players - even broadcasters.

"They should have never lost Dennis Miller," he said. "He was the glue that held it all together."

Every Monday night, it's not Miller, but rather football itself that draws UCF students together.

Craig Parfington, Florida State fan, was attending the show and was just as excited as the rest of the students who attended the reunion.

"It's a good excuse to party," said freshman Jen Marks.

That excuse also allows sports fans to continue their weekend obsession into the work week.

The frenzy starts at 9 p.m. Mondays, as it has every Monday night of the National Football League season for the past 33 years. "Monday Night Football" is the longest running, prime-time sports broadcast in television history.

UCF students are no different than any other fans when it comes to clearing their weekly calendar and settling down with friends and food for the televised ritual.

PLEASE SEE Roommate ON 19

Kristin Davis
Staff Writer

I expect, consideration and courtesy are the only things junior Karen Vincent expected of her roommate. Instead she got stuck cleaning up after parties that she never threw, paying bills that belonged to someone else and living with a cat she was allergic to.

When Vincent decided to move in with a high school friend of 10 years, she had no idea her roommate would become her worst enemy.

"Remember being in tears cleaning up after one of her parties when I was expecting my parents to come and visit that same day," she said. "I ended up paying 5,000 of debt from having to pay all the bills most of the time. While Vincent covered her roommate's expenses, her roommate's boyfriend lived in the apartment rent-free.

Please See Roommate ON 19
GET INVOLVED!
The Office of Student Activities at UCF

Upcoming Activities

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14
CAB Spectacular Knights: Miss UCF Tryouts begin Tuesday October 15.
Info packets available in the Office of Student Activities, SU Rm. 208.
Applicants must sign up in advance for an audition time.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15
3 pm Homecoming Organizational Meeting, SU 316D
11 am - 2 pm VUCF: Green Ribbon Day, SU South Patio
4 pm - 7 pm CAB Spectacular Knights: Miss UCF Tryouts, Mod 5 Rm 105
8 pm Tuesday Knight Live - Comedian Flip Shultz, Wackadoo's

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16
12 pm - 2 pm Cultural Arts: Concert at the Union, SU South Patio
4 pm - 7 pm CAB Spectacular Knights: Miss UCF Tryouts, Mod 11 Rm 105
7:30 pm EKCEL: "Being a Leader Others Want to Follow." A Diversity Week Event. SU 224

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17
4 pm - 7 pm CAB Spectacular Knights: Miss UCF Tryouts, Mod 5 Rm 105
8 pm - 12 am Cultural Arts: Thursday Knight Live, Academic Village 1 & 2
5 pm - 7 pm VUCF Best Buddies - Carpool in front of Millican Hall at 4:30

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18
4 pm - 7 pm CAB Spectacular Knights: Miss UCF Tryouts, Mod 11 Rm 105
9 pm - 2 am Late Knights, Rec and Wellness Center. Featuring Doug Bradley "Pinhead" at 10:30 pm and the movie HellRaiser at 12:30 am in the Wired Cafe.
9 pm - 2 am Haunted Arboretum, UCF Arboretum

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19
5 pm - 10 pm VUCF Kids' Knight Out at the UCF Football Game.
Carpool in front of Millican Hall at 4:15.
9 pm - 2 am Haunted Arboretum, UCF Arboretum

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21
Homecoming Week Begins

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25
3:30 pm VUCF Chill With Children Halloween Edition, Lake Claire

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26
4 pm VUCF Halloween Spectacular.
Carpool in front of Millican Hall at 3:30 pm

Visit us on the web at osa.ucf.edu
For more info on any of these events contact the Office of Student Activities, Rm. 208 in the SU, or call 407.823.6471

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Roommate matching a game of chance

From Page 16

"After living with her for about a year," she said, "I had enough."

For many students, going off to college means more than just their first time away from home. It’s also their first time sharing living quarters with a virtual stranger. Adjusting to another roommate’s way of life can be impossible, even if that person is a close friend. While some differences are a matter of learning to adjust, others find their roommates to be insufferable because they are just plain nuts.

Some living situations are so bad that they ruin friendships. Senior Jessica Edmonson experienced this firsthand when she moved in with someone who was her close friend at the time.

While moving in with her friend may have appeared to be a good idea in the beginning, in retrospect, she admits it was a huge mistake.

That nightmare included a dog that wasn’t housebroken; a boyfriend with a key to their apartment that came and went as he pleased and a series of rent checks that bounced like rubber balls. It was unbearable, Edmonson said.

On top of everything else, Edmonson’s roommate stole money from her. Upon moving out, the landlord gave the return deposit to the roommate. Edmonson never saw her share.

“At the time I went to Florida State University and I came to UCF just to get away from her," said Edmonson. "We were eligible, but I’m not sure anymore."

Sometimes the battle between roommates can become quite heated. Literally.

Senior Victor Leonard’s roommates are constantly jockeying the air conditioner controls. First hot, then cold and then back to hot again. Back and forth the dial swings. It is a never-ending battle that Leonard endures through every day.

“One minute you’re freezing to death, the next you’re sweating your butt off. There is never a consensus,” he said. "The situation with the air conditioner would be minimal if my boyfriend, who also suffers through the apartment’s drastic climate changes, would not stand up for her all the time."

That is not the only problem Leonard faces, though. Another of his roommates has come close to destroying their entire apartment.

Leonard’s apartment is equipped with gas appliances; one of those appliances is a gas range.

"I came home after being gone for the weekend and was hit with an overwhelming stench when I walked through the door," Leonard said. "Turns out my roommate had left one of the burners on our gas oven running all night when she left to go to her boyfriend’s. It took nearly four hours to finally get the gas and its horrible odor out of our apartment. It’s a good thing I don’t smoke otherwise I’d be dead."

Other students face problems of a more serious nature. An illegal nature.

"At the time I went to Florida State University and I came to UCF just to get away from her," said Edmonson. "We were eligible, but I’m not sure anymore."

The fact that his former roommates were obviously bad was the least of All Mazid’s problems.

Mazid’s roommates were doing drugs inside their apartment on regular basis.

“The cops actually came in at midnight to do an inspection,” said Mazid. "They searched all of our rooms. The cops found one of my roommates with them in their possession so they later removed and separated them."

Senior Anna Ambrose also had to summon police to arbitrate a violent argument that her former roommate and Ambrose had one evening two years ago after several months of bickering.

“She was crazy,” Ambrose said. "My roommate was a 17-year-old, alcohol-dependent." "She came home drunk and high all the time. She would never, ever knock on my door. When you get mad and threatened to key my door," Ambrose said. "Our hostility for one another all began when I wrote her a note and told her to ask permission before she ate my food and replace what she ate."

Ambrose said the evening she was forced to call the police was the same day her roommate was finally evicted.

“She barged into my room, hung up at me and tried to punch me in the face," Ambrose said. "I finally called the police, and they arrested her in our apartment."

"She was drunk and kept yelling at me as police handcuffed her. They have them arrested me, see if I care," Ambrose said.

After months of pleading with her apartment complex’s leasing office to remove her roommate for throwing parties, physically threatening her and smoking inside their non-smoking apartment, Ambrose was only able to convince leasing managers to remove her roommate with a copy of her police report.

“The leasing people did nothing to help me, which was really frustrating,” she said. "I was so miserable living there, and I kept every threatening note she left me, recorded everything when I did try to get her evicted, and the most they [leasing managers] offered to do was hold a mediated meeting between her and I and a leasing manager."

"Meetings don’t get the message across to people who are drunk and high and throwing spitball on the wall."

- Jeff Tierney
- Emily Hahn
- also contributed to this report
A formerly deaf woman organized a "million-pound march" for Ottawa in October to protest the Ontario Parliament's proposed funding cutbacks on stomach-stapling surgery. (Attendance was about 100,000 pounds short.)

And to protest unemployment in Escravos, Nigeria, in July, about 600 women held hundreds of workers captive inside a oil terminal and threatened to take off their clothes, which Nigerians regard as gravely shocking. And in Rajasthan, India, protesters opposed to distribution of the allegedly min-fueled movie "Kante" said they would release poisonous snakes into the darkened theaters showing the film.

Boredom, Illustrated

A 15-year-old boy was sent to Sherman Hospital in Elgin, Ill., in September with second-degree burns after he and two pals started playing a game in which each would splash gasoline on their shorts and set themselves on fire before rolling on the ground to try to extinguish the flames. One of the boys told police they agreed to three rounds each as sort of competition.
Audience, performers an entertaining combo

FOR $25, reunion guests enjoy a children Punmanian entree and choice of key lime or chocolate pie, as well as unlimited supply of wine and beer.

Co-producer, co-creator and co-director John DiDonna explained that the show is more of a party than a theatrical experience, since the characters eat at the guests' tables and interact with them directly.

"The sets are given tremendous freedom within their roles," he said. "Each cast member has a three-page character biography and 30 pages of relationship history with the other characters, so all of them can vary in character and remain quite easily with everyone else."

The two-hour dinner show is meticulously designed in mock seriousness to resemble a campy reunion for the class of '82, cursed ever since the gym burned down at their prom.

The presentation includes a slide show, a goofy awards ceremony, a karaoke contest and the crowning of prom king and queen—20 years later.

More important than the storyline, however, is the colorful ensemble of 14 characters who participate in the festivities alongside the guests. Those characters include Fabulous, a cinnamon-skinned, wickedly perverted drag queen who formerly was known as a high school geek named Horace. Also among the cast are Phooily, a lovable Hawaiian-shirted karaoke host who was the high school's 12-year-old valedictorian, and Kenny Honor, the high school slacker who became a successful pursuing a career in informatics.

As old rivalries surface, the characters clash and confront each other. They climb on chairs, strip, yell and delight the audience, making everyone realize how petty and ridiculous high school really was.

"Anyone who has been to high school will appreciate this," said cast member Kimberly Shader. "These people might have different faces and names from the people you know, but everyone can relate to them."

The audience's level of enthusiasm and willingness to play along remained surprising the entire night. The ageless audience seemed to be having an equally effortless time slipping into laid-back party mode.

So effortless in fact, that the cast members say they are constantly surprised at how seriously the audience perceive their performances.

Steve Hurst, who plays party-animal Blaine, said that couples in the audience have propositioned 'Blaine' to go home with them.

"I think it happens because the Blaine character is always up for a good time and he attracts people looking for that same situation," he said. "I also had a guy a couple of weekends ago who wanted Blaine to find some pot and go smoke it with him after the show."

Shader, who plays fast-talker-babe Azalia, said a choreographed fight that takes place between two characters in the middle of the dinner show instigates many guests to interfere with the performance.

Directors have incorporated bodyguards into the scene to hold back the zealous audience members who try to break up the brawl.

On occasion someone's become jealous when characters flirt with audience members, while other tablemates have taken drinks away from characters who appear to have had a drink too many.

"People buy into the possibility that it could be real and lose themselves in it for a couple of hours," Shader said. "Returning from the show later that evening, I stopped at a gas station still wearing my class of 82 nametag that I forgot to remove. A much older cashier inquisitively asked me, 'You won't from your reunion or something?'"

A slow smile spread across my face, remembering how I too had lost myself in the ridiculous high school reunion that wasn't even my own.

"Yeah," I replied. "...or something!"
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Monday, October 21
Movie Knight: "Ocean's II"
Reflecting Pond, 8pm

Tuesday, October 22
Carnival
UCF Arena, 6pm

Wednesday, October 23
Skull Knight
UCF Arena, 6pm

Thursday, October 24
Comedy Knight w/ Bill Maher
UCF Arena, 8pm

Friday, October 25
Spirt Splash w/ 7 Mary 3
UCF Reflecting Pond, 8:30pm
Haunted Arboretum,
UCF Arboretum, 8pm

Saturday, October 26
Homecoming Parade
Downtown Orlando
11 am

Football Game
Citrus Bowl
4 pm

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Church Street,
after the game

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