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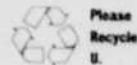
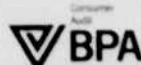
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Sumo wrestlers bump big bellies for beer

Two really large women wearing blue Lite beer diapers eye each other savagely from opposite sides of the mat, as the ponytailed announcer moves into the ring.

"Ladies annnd gentlemen — let's get ready to ruummbble!"

No, this isn't the World Wrestling Federation's "Ladies' Night" super heavyweight championship.

It's Sumo Wrestling Night at GatorMeisters (a Gainesville bar) where every Wednesday students compete at the ancient Japanese sport of belly bumping for a free bar tab while sucking down all the quarter beers they can swallow.

Two petite women, representing the U. of Florida and Santa Fe Community College, have strapped themselves into heavily padded, flesh-tone "fat suits," put on black-haired helmet wigs, cast disparaging remarks at each other and become Gainesville's first sumo wrestlers.

Want to settle that lingering dispute with your roommate once and for all? Has your date been acting like a putz?

Then maybe a sound thrashing is the answer.

"It's the ultimate in body contact without having to wear a



"I must break you." Get fat, get wrinkly and pummel your sumo opponent.

full body slam onto the unfortunate losers, who can do little but lie there whimpering like turtles stuck on their backs on the interstate.

Naturally, the owners require that contestants sign a release before competing, stating that they are willing to look like pancakes for the rest of the semester.

But even that fails to deter students.

"Every Gator has gotta try this," says Florida senior Ricky Valenzuela. "It's the best way around to beat the hell out of your friends without getting injured." ■ Paul Fox, *Independent Florida Alligator*, U. of Florida

Lost serpent on the Gogh

A three-week crisis sent shock waves across the U. of Florida, when a hungry fugitive took the campus television studios hostage. Students referred to the escapee as a "snake." Authorities called him Van Gogh.

"Van Gogh is still at large in our building," warned Ralph Lowenstein, dean of the College of Journalism and Communications, during the height of the crisis. "We're still waiting to see if any of our smaller students disappear to help us determine his whereabouts."

Van Gogh, a two-foot baby Colombian boa constrictor, escaped from its owner, sophomore Jennifer Stanton, when she was working in the building during winter break.

"She was very lonely, so she brought her 8-month-old boa constrictor with her," said Lowenstein. "While she was out of the office for a minute, Van Gogh disappeared."

Three weeks later, Stanton was preparing to shut down the power in the master control room of Weimer Hall when she found the beige reptile huddled in the same room where he first escaped. The crisis had come full circle.

Stanton explained that her surrogate snake-child was stressed out from shedding his skin and probably from malnutrition too.

"He gets an attitude [when he sheds]," Stanton said, affectionately stroking the half-pound snake. "He didn't want to leave. He was comfortable."

Telecommunications Chairman Gerald Smeyak said he was disappointed that the boa constrictor was discovered so quickly, especially since it meant the end of Dean Lowenstein's periodic snake updates.

"I'm a little saddened that they found him," Smeyak said. "Just think if in 10 years students were still talking about a snake that roams the halls of Weimer, occasionally picking off a student." ■ Megan Palmer, *Independent Florida Alligator*, U. of Florida

Nerds fight the power

With pockets protected, pants hiked up and glasses taped, nerds fall prey to quick judgments from passers-by. But thanks to Randall Osborne, a self-proclaimed nerd who teaches psychology at Indiana U. East, traditional views toward nerdness may be changing.

Osborne uses the recurrent theme of the nerd in his "Seminar on Self Concept and Self-Esteem" class, and uses his own textbook, *A Word From the Nerd*, to examine the development of self-esteem and ways to improve it.

"Nerdness, as any nerd can tell you, is not something that comes and goes," he writes in his book. "It is a potentially debilitating ailment and must be treated as such."

Proof of nerdness is not necessary to enroll in the course, and students include jocks and housewives as well as psychology students. Osborne often uses role-playing, demonstrations and humor to get his message across, despite what he calls the seriousness of his subject.

If they take nothing else away from the class, students will at least remember Osborne's nerd theme, a call-to-arms for nerds everywhere. Printed in the back of his book, it reads:

Nerds the world over rejoice 'bout who you are! And sing your praises everywhere both close to home and far! History reveals your wisdom and success rings true and loud! Tell the world around you, of your nerdness you are quite proud. ■ Robyn Holtzman, *Indiana Daily Student*, Indiana U.