FEMA grant guarantees new screen system installation

By ALEJANDRA DIAZ
Editor in Chief

On an average day, residents of the University Park Apartments would awaken to the quiet sounds of birds chirping and the wind blowing. But, thanks to the installation of new hurricane screens, screaming construction workers, droning and clunking lad- ders have replaced the peaceful sounds of nature.

For many residents, the UP Apartments have become a haven for students looking to live in a serene environment远离 from the traditional noisy dorm rooms of the neighboring housing complexes.

The installation, which began in Nov. of 2004, brought a newfound appreciation for the silence that had once inhabited the Apartments after the beginning of the Fall 2004 semester. “The noise was really loud,” said Maya Ozery, a freshman resident. “It got so annoying that I had to leave to study for finals.”

Housing officials sent a letter to building residents about the possible disturbance, and some students still had concerns about the noise and the timing of the installation. “As the installations continue throughout UPA, letters will be sent out informing students about what is going on and why the screens are being put up,” said Aanika Camp, residence life coordinator for the Office of Housing and Residential Life. “Students can contact us with any concerns they have.”

According to James R. Was- senaar, executive director for Student Affairs, resident assis- tants were asked to tape a letter to every apartment that would be affected by the installation.

The letter, which stated that the university would begin the installation of hurricane pro- tection screens on all exterior windows, also informed students that workers were scheduled to work from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. For some students this proved to be an inconvenience but many felt it was necessary. “I know that [the screens] are necessary, but the workers are loud,” said Braden McCall, a first year resident. “It affected my sleep- ing habits, but because it’s on campus, I just left and came back when the work was done for the day,” said McCall.

In the letter, housing officials also informed students of the necessity of hurricane screens and explained that the screens were paid for by a million dollar grant from the Federal Emer- gency Management Agency, a division of the Department of Homeland Security. “Several years ago, the univer- sity submitted an application with assistance from Miami- Dade County for a FEMA grant to enhance the protection of the student housing facilities. Four years later, we now got the grant and the screens are being funded through [the grant from] FEMA,” Wassenaar said. “No student fees are going into [the installation] … [the project] is solely funded by FEMA.”

According to the FEMA grant, the university has agreed to accept the $1,886,862 grant in order to “retrofit the hous- ing units to meet the American Red Cross shelter standards and install storm shutters in accordance with the drawings and specifications of mesh panel shutters, roll-up shutters and accordion shutters.”

As part of the agreement, the university also extended by the required signa- ture and approval of the Miami- Dade County Fire Marshall.

According to Gloria Gazon, the senior project manager who secured the hurricane screen grant, Phoenix Architectural Products, Inc. won the bid to install the screens in early January of this year as per the Miami- Dade County specifications. As part of the grant, the uni- versity had to agree to evacuate students to a shelter in case of a hurricane evacuation, because FIU is located in a High Velocity

Pell Grant formula changes may put greater financial burden on students

By PATRICK KERKSTRA
Knight Ridder

As a freshman, Temple University student Armo- non Solomon needed to borrow just $5,000 to cover col- lege expenses that were not met by grants, some limited family help and a part-time job. Three years later, Solo- mon has added a night shift as a bank teller to her day job - and still mount- ing costs have forced her to double her student loan load, to $10,000 a year. Her financial burden may be even greater next year, when the Bush administra- tion goes ahead with a plan to change the Pell Grant funding formula.

I already work full- time to supplement my grants and loans,” said Solomon. “But I guess I’d just work more.”

If the formula is changed, it would be in accordance with the drawings and specifications of mesh panel shutters, roll-up shutters and accordion shutters. All financial-aid admin- istrators agreed their cam- puses would feel the pinch especially public uni- versities such as Temple.

The Pell program, which was authorized in 1972, is the principal fed- eral grant program for higher education. About five million students a year now receive Pell grants, splitting $12.5 billion. Congress has invested heavily in the program in recent years, but the Pell applicant pool has grown so quickly up 27 percent in the last decade appropriations still routinely lag behind demand.

Consequently Congress has frozen the size of Pell awards for the last three years at $4,050 annually - an amount given only to the needyest students. Nobody froze college-related expenses. “Tuition and the cost of living are going up, and this program is stagnant on the grant size, and now it’s actually going backward on eligibility,” said Richard Woodland, the financial-aid director at Rutgers-Camden. “We hate to see a retreat from this cornerstone program.”

The combination of stagnant federal grants and spiraling college costs has made stories such as Solo- mon’s common at Temple, said Timm Rinehart, the university’s associate vice president for enrollment.

“We have a high popu- lation of needy students who are dependent on state and federal money to attend Temple,” Rinehart said. “But the govern- ment is meeting that need with grants and more loans … that’s alarming because students are coming out with more debts.”

The government is meeting that need [students depending on state and federal money] less with grants and more loans … that’s alarming because students are coming out with more debts.”

“Timm Rinehart

Temple University’s Associate Vice-President for Enrollment

See BILL, page 2

See SCREENS, page 2

See BILL, page 2

See BILL, page 2
Bill puts students in jeopardy

by Congress. Republicans in Con-
gress have argued that the changes so students do not suddenly see their grants drop precipitously or, worse, discover they are no longer eligible.

“It’s a one-time shock,” he said.

Students in many other states are in for an even bigger shock. Unlike Pennsylvania and New Jersey – which currently use their own formulas when awarding state grants to Pell formula, said Keith New, a spokesman for the state’s Higher Edu-
cation Assistance Agency. Whatever changes are made to the Possibilities formula likely would not take effect until the 2006-07 academic year, New said. And unlike the Pell program, Pennsylvania has allocated $40 million to smooth the transition by “grandfathering in” students already in college, preserving their existing grants until they finish their undergraduate edu-
cations, New said.

Although there will be a visible change on the familiar face of the four UP housing complexes, Biscayne Bay Campus housing residents can rest assured that the hurricane screen installations will not affect their housing units in any way. [BBC] did not meet the criteria for the hurri-
cane screens, because they are within a manda-
tory evacuation zone, so there were no provisions to equip that facility.

“Evacuate that building regardless,” Wassenaar said.
Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz is internationally regarded as one of the leading scholars and rabbis of this century. Rabbi Steinsaltz is best known for his interpretation, commentaries, and translations of the Babylonian Talmud, a monumental task that he began some 25 years ago. Thirty volumes of Rabbi Steinsaltz’ Hebrew edition of the Talmud have been published; two million books are in print.

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TRAGEDY STRIKES THE EAST: The death toll from the tsunamis that hit Sri Lanka stands at 30,000 with another 16,655 injured. Those who have survived have been left homeless as their homes could not withstand the devastation of the tsunami.

COURTESY PHOTO
Democrats must focus on youth

By BEN WAXMAN

Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service

We college-aged youth are being blamed by some for allegedly failing to show up at the polls. Supposedly, this was a major factor in the Democratic loss of the presidential election.

But in several closely contested battleground states, the youth vote made all the difference. According to the Associated Press, 46 percent of voters aged 18-29 went to the polls in Pennsylvania. They selected John Kerry by a margin of nearly 20 percentage points.

The same is true for several other blue-going battleground states, such as Minnesota and Wisconsin. No other age group overwhelmingly rejected the conservative policies of George W. Bush as reliably as youth.

Instead of blaming my generation, the left should consider sharpening its strategies for recruiting America’s youth. If the Democratic Party wants to rebuild its political infrastructure, nurturing a vibrant and organized progressive movement among students should be a major priority.

Put the emphasis on “organized.” Conservatives have understood the value of investing in students for a long time. As much bellowing as the GOP does about “bias” on campus, conservative student activists are incredibly well-supported and financed.

For example, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI), which funnels nearly $1,000,000 a year to conservative campus newspapers across the country and spends an additional $40,000 on summer fellowships for promising student leaders. These investments have paid off. Former ISI fellows have gone on to become presidents of major public policy organizations and senior advisors in several Republican administrations.

Ronald Reagan’s National Security Advisor, Richard Arlen, was an ISI graduate, for example.

Key to conservative success has been the movement’s willingness to make long-term investments. Instead of recruiting students to do grunt work, conservative organizations mold promising youth into effective leaders.

Progressives could steal a page from this playbook. And there are fledging efforts to reach out to young people. The largest union in the country, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), held a “Student Solidarity Summit” during its last convention to recruit students to be labor organizers. While there is nothing wrong with this objective, it misses the mark if the goal is to build a strong progressive movement.

Unions need more than organizers. They require sympathetic policymakers and allies in the mainstream media to win their campaigns. Therefore, the labor movement would do well to train policy wonks and talking heads, not just future staff.

There are a number of reasons to focus on building the intellectual capacity of young activists. Most students, even those who don’t become particularly politically engaged, shape their world views at college.

Despite the stereotype of overly “liberal” campuses, youth are more influenced by the ideas of their peers than teachers. Forceful advocates among the student population are needed to win over the next generation.

Youth must be trained to clearly articulate a progressive vision for the future.

Conservatives on campus have been able to synthesize complex ideas into easily understood concepts. Republican organizations at the University of Virginia organized a bake sale to protest affirmative-action policies. They sold cookies for $1 to white students and then discounted them for people of color.

Sure, this grossly oversimplifies the issue, but it is an effective way to communicate their message: affirmative-action policies are unfair.

These bake sales took place at several colleges across the country. And how did liberal students respond? By shout- ing down the conservatives and demanding the practice be banned. This created sympathy for the Republican activists and added to the perception that progressives are unwilling to listen to anyone who disagrees with them.

If progressive students had the kind of support and infrastructure that conservatives did, we’d dominate the campus wars.

There are a variety of ways to strengthen the student left. A network of blogs could monitor various conservative efforts on college campuses and develop plans to counter them.

Taking a cue from the anti-apartheid movement of the 1980s, students could pressure college administrations to stop investing their endowment into companies that give money to over-the-top conservatives, like Coors Brewing Company or Sinclair Broadcasting.

Finally, progressive organizations could establish a network for student interns, providing financial support for summer programs.

Many organizations that supported Kerry seem genuinely committed to a long-term struggle to rebuild progressive power in the United States.

If the left would like to come back from the wilderness and actually govern at some point in the future, it will need a strong stock of leaders to carry the banner.

By preparing young people for careers in political organizing, journalism, and public policy, the left automatically builds a lasting infrastructure for the future.

The millions of dollars being spent by George Soros, MoveOn.org, and several other organizations represent a capital infusion for the future of American liberalism.

However, unless these groups invest in student activists, they will deprive themselves of a critical resource.

Ben Waxman is a sophomore at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa., and was the media spokesman for the National Youth and Student Peace Coalition. He can be reached at benwaxman@gmail.com.

Phew! [FIU]

By LLIS NIN

OVERRIDDEN

I’m sorry, but I’m totally impossible to get into on FAU.

I only walk down to FAU, if you wouldn’t have a place to eat, I’d strategy doesn’t hold the seat of the class most of the time anyway.
GOP still searching for candidate to tame Clinton

By DOUGLAS TURNER
Knight Ridder Tribune

WASHINGTON – Hillary Rodham Clinton’s long-term prospects brightened considerably in recent weeks, not counting John F. Kerry’s return to this city as a U.S. senator. It should be noted no member of the Senate, including Democratic vice-presidential candidate John Edwards of North Carolina, worked harder than the New York Democrat to elect Kerry president. Kerry was an awful candidate, and he is history. The largest potential threat to Clinton’s re-election to a second six-year term in the Senate the year after next, GOP pipe-dream candidate Colin L. Powell, bowed out of state politics during a European farewell trip as secretary of state.

Powell’s strategic retreat leaves it mostly up to former New York Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani as the big threat to Clinton in 2006. But Giuliani announced he is going to Wall Street.

Giuliani Partners, his private consulting firm, announced it was buying the investment-banking arm of accounting firm Ernst & Young LLP as part of a deal to set him up in a brassy-plated counting house.

Hizzoner’s reincarnation as J. Pierpont Morgan doesn’t take him out of consideration, but it poses a number of liabilities to his becoming a serious Senate candidate.

The image of a war-mongering, self-seeking broker of influence with President Bush will not endeared Giuliani to New York’s minorities, most of whom still resent what they saw as his draconian police-state tactics to “take back” the streets of New York.

Competing with the other Manhattan cutthroats would limit Giuliani’s opportunity to become better known in upscale New York. By contrast, Clinton, after just four short years, knows the back roads, the satraps and the institutions of upscale New York like the back of her hand.

Which bring us to her best news. Clinton has become immensely popular upscale. A recent Quinnipiac Polling Institute survey shows her viewed favorably there – where Republicans and independents hold sway – by 56 percent of those polled. Only 30 percent viewed her unfavorably, with 14 percent undecided.

Statewide, according to Quinnipiac, Clinton’s favorables are 63 to 26, her highest, and a stunning reversal of her standing in early 2001.

And it is done the hard way.

By discipline, a talented back shop and a lot of hard work. It has been observed elsewhere that she has in four years produced a torrent of legislation. She has reached across the widening political divide and enlisted Republican support – often backing GOP bills.

The most recent example is a bill she co-sponsored with Montana Republican Conrad Burns to help states and localities upgrade the 911 systems. Tucked into the omnibus appropriations measure, Bush will sign the Clinton-Burns bill into law in a few days.

Finally, there is always the chance that Gov. George E. Pataki, who can’t be savaging a race for governor against Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, may decide to run against Clinton as a last option. Chances that Bush would name Pataki to a Cabinet job are narrowing to almost zero.

Right now, however, Pataki is at the nadir of his popularity. Faced with the onerous choice of opening a door to the legendary lady or the tiger, it Pataki likely to take on a lady who is also a tiger?

About the Writer


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Health care issues prove relevant, even to young adults

By DREW AVERY
The Seattle Times/NEXT

Like oxygen and fire escapes, health care is something you rarely think about until you need it. I am going to postulate then that most NEXT readers don’t spend much time considering health care. I can promise this writer hadn’t – until an incident involving my belly button and a few incredibly high hospital bills.

Most of us in our teens and 20s take good health for granted. We assume that disease, infection and serious bodily harm will be put on hold at least until we can find a job with health benefits.

So while politicians and senior citizens talk about health care, we shut down our sense and wait for the talk to return to education and the job market. In fact, people ages 18 to 24 should be listening more than seniors when the topic is health care.

Why? Because in Washington state, 18 to 24-year-olds are twice as likely to be uninsured as older nonretired adults, according to The Health Policy Analysis Program.

Count me in that group.

As a recent college graduate in the process of looking for a job (i.e., one with benefits), I was just planning to healthy. Then I got an abscess, an infected or irritated area that collects pus, often for no real reason. (I hope you’re not reading this at the breakfast table.) I just happened to get one in my navel.

Though I tried to see if time really would heal all wounds and even attempted to find cures on the Internet, it wasn’t long before I was in the emergency room, with an IV, getting prepped for a CAT scan.

The real fun started when I got the hospital bill, which made me cuss out loud and wonder if I had signed my belly button up for a semester of college.

Several programs in Washington state help the uninsured. Basic Health is a state program that helps low-income residents get coverage, though the waiting list is frighteningly long.

Several groups offer short-term insurance. Check with your university’s alumni association or the University of Washington’s association offers such help. And don’t forget to check out doctors who work on a sliding scale.

If worse comes to worse and you are in the hospital before you could think about health insurance, there’s always charity care. Charity care is offered in most hospitals and works similarly to a scholarship program. You apply for the service after your visit and if you meet the low-income criteria, you will most likely receive help paying your bill.

Health problems are bad enough.

Wondering how you will pay to have them fixed is even worse. Start thinking about health care now.

Drew Avery is a writer for NEXT, a Sunday opinion page in The Seattle Times, and a 2003 graduate of the University of Missouri. E-mail: NEXT@seattletimes.com.

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LOCKDOWN
Back at home

Readjusting to family life, not an easy task

By C. JOEL MARINO
Senior Staff Writer

While visiting his parents on his holiday break between the Fall and Spring semesters, junior Mike Del Rey left his family’s house in Tampa to visit some friends.

At 2:30 a.m. when he returned a few hours later, he found his parents watching TV in the kitchen, waiting for him with a disapproving frown and a lecture.

“They told me it wasn’t good for me to be driving around the city that late in the night without telling them,” he said. “I told them that in college everyone’s up at that time walking or driving or hanging out. They got me upset, even though I knew they would be waiting for me.”

For many FIU students living away from their homes, returning to their families after months of separation for the holidays can prove to be a hard trial.

Students used to a more liberal atmosphere and personal freedom may find it difficult to again abide by a strict parental code.

“My parents freaked out when I told them I was going to Denny’s with my boyfriend after midnight,” said Monica Canteron, a sophomore who returned to her house in Jacksonville during the winter break.

“Going out with him already freaked them out, but I think us being up so late also scared them a bit.”

Curfews, however, aren’t always the problem.

Nicole Bransley, whose daughter attends FIU, said she noticed severe changes when her daughter returned to her Ft. Lauderdale home.

“Even though she took out the garbage sometimes and watered the plants, there were a lot of chores she wouldn’t do,” Bransley said. “When she lived here, she used to make snacks for her brothers. But when I asked her to make them sandwiches during the break, she had a fit and told them to do it themselves. It’s like she was another person.”

Tension between students who feel they’re already living independent lives and parents who assume their mature children will now respect the laws of their house can bring stress not just during the breaks, but anytime a student visits the house.

“I go home on the weekends to visit my parents because they live in Hialeah, and at first, I was really annoyed when I went,” said Ricardo Ardanos, a sophomore.

“My parents would give me a hard time, because I had to work, and then I’d see my girlfriend late. It took a while, but we finally made a compromise.”

Ardanos knocks on his parents’ bedroom door when he gets home after 1 a.m. to let them know that he has returned home. This gives him plenty of freedom to go out while still letting them know he is fine.

“My parents finally understood that I need to live my own life and do my own things, but I still wanted to tell them what I was doing so they wouldn’t worry. The deal we made solved everything,” Ardanos said.

Some students felt that similar compromises saved their families from getting into many tense situations during the three weeks of winter break.

“This wasn’t the long summer break, so it’s not like I could go out and get a job to keep me busy,” Del Rey said. “And since there’s not much to do around my neighborhood, I knew I would be spending a lot of time home. Even though there was some trouble with my parents at first, I just took it easy for the time I was there and tried to see eye-to-eye with them.”

Del Rey states that his family was the primary reason for returning home in the first place.

“They’re my parents. I’ve got to enjoy them while they’re still around,” he said.
Argentinians know Italian cuisine like no other

ITALIAN FLAVOR: Patrons at Graziano's Next Door enjoy an afternoon meal while the tasty gelato selection awaits them for dessert [above].

By CARLOS OLAECHEA
Staff Writer

I have a rule of thumb when it comes to Italian food in Miami: If the restaurant is Argentinian owned, then it is probably good and most likely inexpensive. This has been the case for almost every Argentinian owned eatery to which I have been. Pasta is usually very fresh, sauces are savory and creative, and it is often reasonably priced compared to the boring boxed pasta you may find at other pricier Italian or “Mediterranean” restaurants in Miami.

It has also been my experience that Argentinians are more attuned to subtle flavors, a typical characteristic of European palates, without losing the flavor of a dish altogether, something many Americans tend to do when handling such a tricky cuisine as Italian.

Most Argentinians also have retained a sense of old world sophistication and elegance, and it can often be found in their restaurants. They don’t call Buenos Aires the Paris of Latin America for nothing.

On Bird Road there is a charming bistro and wine shop that perfectly characterizes the Argentinian standards of gastronomic sophistication. Graziano’s Next Door is a complete surprise from the moment you walk in the door. Not to be confused with the famous Graziano’s steak house, which has recently gained national acclaim as one of the best Hispanic restaurants in the nation, Graziano’s Next Door is a place where you can get a small bite to eat, perhaps with a bottle of wine from their superb selection, in a casual yet chic setting.

Once you walk into this bistro, you think that you have been transported to Coral Gables until you peer outside the window and see the congested traffic, people hawking newspapers and mannequins (Spanish limes) and the adult bookstore across the street. Nevertheless, with the stylish tile floor, cheerful pink colored walls, elegantly chosen decor and excellent service, you soon forget the vulgarity or ghettotness of the surrounding neighborhood and start to feel as if you are in Buenos Aires or Florence.

Graziano’s Next Door boasts its own wood burning oven from which perfectly crisp European style pizzas are churned out daily, as well as homemade empanadas and tender lamb chorizo doused with Spanish sherry. On our last visit, my dining partner and I savored the lamb chorizo ($6.99), called Chorizo al jerez on the menu. This came sizzling from the oven in a skillet with a pool of deep, sweetmeat sherry and delicious pan drippings – perfect for dipping their freshly baked bread into. The sausages were cut into bite-size pieces and were tender and meaty with a slightly gamy flavor from the lamb along with other spices, including thyme.

As a second dish I ordered a vegetarian pizza for one ($8.59), while my dining partner ordered an Involtata de pollo ($5.99), or tuna salad. The pizza was the perfect size for someone with a moderate appetite and could easily be shared by two people with smaller appetites. The crust had a perfect equilibrium of crispiness and chewiness, as well as an adequate amount of fresh tasting red sauce. The cheese was, refreshingly, fresh mozzarella, which stretched for about half a foot with every bite. The toppings – red and green peppers, good quality black and green Italian olives, Portobello mushrooms, onions, and artichoke hearts – were generously added without weighed the pizza down. The tuna salad was closer to a salad Nicoise than the American mayonaisse and relish concoction. Mixed greens were topped with thick slices of beefsteak tomato and imported Sicilian tuna. It was all dressed in a vinaigrette.

This dish is perfect for a light dinner or lunch, and the portion, like the pizza’s, was perfect. If you like beef with your pizza, Graziano’s Next Door offers a wide variety of domestic and international beers. I recommend the Argentinian draft beer Quilmes, which is light and refreshing and pair perfectly with a vegetarian pizza. Peroni, an Italian beer, tends to be a bit heavier on the hops, with a more bitter flavor, making it more suitable for meatier dishes.

Graziano’s Next Door also offers a variety of panini – grilled Italian sandwiches. Varieties are named after European cities and regions and contain ingredients like Serrano ham in the Iberico panini and Brie cheese in the Paninino.

Graziano’s Next Door is one of those restaurants where you simply cannot pass up dessert. Forget the New Year’s resolution for just one day and savor the luscious artisan gelatos that this bistro offers. All varieties from Swiss chocolate and hazelnut to nutmeg and honey dew melon are on display, and all the flavors can be sampled before making a decision. The servers will bring the gelato to your table, so there is no rush to leave the restaurant with food still in your hand.

A meal at Graziano’s Next Door is perfectly finished with a demitasse of espresso or cappuccino. After such a tasty and elegant dining experience, you are ready to venture out into the world of bad driving, botanicas and El Rey de Las Fritas, satisfied in knowing that somewhere in Miami you can eat and be served like a king without having the budget of one.

The restaurant is not informed of the reviewer’s affiliation with The Beacon, and the reviewer pays for all meals.
Actors singing: What’s their motivation?

By JIM FARBER
New York Daily News

Everyone has a voice. But does that mean everyone has to cut an album? Hollywood stars think so.

The record-store cut-out bins and private kitsch collections are bursting with releases from actors who, in a blur of hubris, mistook themselves for singers.

Even Phyllis Diller. Wait, it gets better. On her album, she covered the Stones’ “ Satisfaction.”

Equally surreal moments include a recording of “Proud Mary” by Leonard Nimoy, a spoken-word take on “Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds” by William Shatner, and a version of “Stand By Me” by Muhammad Ali. (Partial excuse: The fighter was still Cassius Clay at the time.)

You can hear all these inadvertently brilliant recordings on Rhino’s “Golden Throats” CDs.

But now a trio of prominent thespians _ Robert Downey Jr., Minnie Driver and Kevin Spacey _ have all risked critical ridicule this season with debut CDs.

Spacey is taking the most daring leap by doing his own singing as Bobby Darin in the movie “Beyond the Sea,” which opens this month. And the movie inspires you, it really sound:

Those who watch late-night talk shows know Spacey as a terrific mimic. But why listen to what amounts to an “I Can’t Believe It’s Not Bobby Darin” CD when you could just as easily play the actual thing? Viewed this way, Spacey’s recording becomes something of a stunt, if a relatively accurate one.

Spacey has the rhythmic chops to navigate Darin’s brisk phrasing _ no mean feat _ though he clearly lacks the earlier star’s elan.

You can measure the limits to his voice in the ballads. His take on “Mack the Knife” has more smarm than charm. The album’s producer, Phil Ramone, set Spacey’s voice in some nice arrangements and surrounded him with enough echo to give his singing a bit of shimmer.

Of course, if you’ve never bought a Bobby Darin album, and the movie inspires you, it would be a sin to start here.

ROBERT DOWNEY JR., “THE FUTURIST”

Joni Mitchell fans probably still haven’t forgiven Downey for his mewing cover of “River,” which he moped through on “Ally McBeal” some years back.

And they shouldn’t. But that recording was a sweet memory compared to Downey’s solo debut, which appears, puzzlingly, on Sony’s snazzy Classical imprint. Downey leans into the husky end of his voice, then shoots up to his record unlistenable. It’s his “Hungry Heart” threaten to lapse into a coma.

MINNIE DRIVER, “EVERYTHING I’VE GOT IN MY POCKET”

Driver owns an offy instrument with little wind power and less distinction. Her pale tones aren’t done any favors by her dowzy country-tinged tunes.

The album has so little momentum, it makes the Cowboy Junkies seem manic. Even her cover of Springsteen’s “Hungry Heart” threatens to lapse into a coma.

Ultimately, her record isn’t as much ear-achingly bad as it is a stone-cold bore.
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Steroids have become the shortcut to success

STERIODS, from page 12

endorsements by barely averaging double figures in points. In baseball, these team players don’t exist. There are only a handful of baseball players who could serve as poster boys for the sport by being a singles hitter. For every Derek Jeter though, there is a Gary Sheffield or Barry Bonds.

The lack of a salary cap system allows owners like George Steinbrenner to have a team payroll of $250 million a year, and players such as Rodriguez to get paid $25 million per season (that’s over $17,000 an inning!).

With price tags like these, it’s no wonder players must resort to unnatural ways to keep up with the competition.

IT’S ALL ABOUT GETTING AN EDGE

For years, players have been hitting the weight room to try to get an edge on the competition. In 1951, the incredibly talented 20-year-old Willie Mays built what many consider to be one of Major League Baseball’s first chiseled physiques. This helps him to hit 660 homeruns in his career and receive a first ballot into the Hall of Fame.

In 1966, Boston Red Sox great Carl Yastrzemski hit 18 homers and drove in double figures in points. It’s always been known that in order to take your game to the next level, you have to do more than just batting practice. Back then it took hard work and dedication to post big numbers. These days players have opted for the steroid shortcut.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

There exists only one democracy in the sports world, and it resides in baseball. Thanks to the strongest player’s union ever created, commissioner Bud Selig can’t pass very strict laws on the use of steroids.

Any law proposed for Major League Baseball must be agreed upon by both the league and the union. This is why players constantly take steroids with little worry of suspension or heavy fines. It’s ridiculous how the sport with the biggest illegal substance problem is the one that has tipped around the issue and allowed it to escalate to dynamic proportions.

Drug testings are done randomly and secretly in the majors. The results are not given to the media, and therefore the public doesn’t hear about most of the occurrences of drug use.

It’s pretty scary to think that the things we do know are only because they were somehow leaked to the media. Imagine what is going on in baseball that its fan base does not know about. This is why Selig’s feet still tremble at the mention of Canseco’s soon-to-be released book.

The loyal fans of the game deserve to know what is going on. We can’t keep following the game if officials are going to keep us sheltered from its negative aspects. We need to hear the whole story.

THE FUTURE

These are some very crucial times for the game of baseball. A lot of questions will arise in the next coming months as Barry Bonds edges closer to Hank Aaron’s all-time home run record of 755....
Physical defense keep women winning

By ANDRES CORDERO

FIU Women’s basketball (11-3) opened Sun Belt Conference play on Jan. 6 with a 70-63 overtime victory over the visiting Trojans. FIU has now won all 11 of the previous games against Arkansas-Little Rock and improves to 5-2 in SBC openers, including two wins at the expense of UALR.

While most FIU students were enjoying the holiday break, the Golden Panthers basketball team was hard at work. Coach Cindy Russo’s squad has been doing a lot of winning since Dec. 15, when the fall semester officially ended.

Women’s basketball carried a three-game win streak into the holiday break, and after defeating Northwestern University, Marshall University, The University of Central Florida, Stony Brook and The University of Dayton in consecutive contests, the Golden Panthers are off to their best start since going 15-2, to open the 2001-02 season.

This eight-game win streak is the longest so far this season and has been attributed to stingy, physical defense. Anchored by 6-foot-3 Latvian sophomore, Lasma Jekabsone, the Golden Panthers have allowed an average of 32.8 points per game while scoring 62.6 on the season. Jekabsone’s 2.5 blocks per game rank 24th in the nation. Milena Tomova continues her strong all-around performance, averaging 18.2 points per game (37th in NCAA) and 8.2 rebounds.

The win streak was snapped on Jan. 3 with a 54-60 loss at Alabama. The new year proved unkind the Golden Panthers as they recorded a season-high 24 turnovers and just 20 first half points.

The chance for redemption came just three days later and the Golden Panthers bounced back as Tomova’s 30 points and five rebounds were enough lead FIU past the lady Trojans in the first overtime victory over the visit-

BIKETBALL, from page 12

The loss dropped FIU to 5-5 heading into the much anticipated FIU Holiday Classic featuring Colgate University, The University of Central Florida, Stony Brook and The University of Dayton in consecutive contests, the Golden Panthers are off to their best start since going 15-2, to open the 2001-02 season.

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The Golden Panthers pulled away late and assured themselves a place in the final of the tournament with a 72-56 victory.

With Ohio’s defeat of Binghamton, the stage was set for the championship game.

With Mattias out for the second game in a row, the weight was once again, on the shoulders of Almonte and N’Diaye.

Almonte answered the call connecting on 8-of-11 shots and 9-of-11 from the stripe on his way to 25 points and 10 rebounds. N’Diaye, on the other hand, struggled all night shooting just 6-20 from the field for 14 points.

Sheldon Bailey added 11 points of the bench for the Golden Panthers.

However, point guard Jayce Lewis made the difference with two of his points.

With FIU leading 72-70 with 29.8 seconds left to play in overtime, Ohio guard Mike Green hit a clutch three-pointer to put the Bobcats up one.

Following an FIU time-out, Lewis drove the lane for the Golden Panthers and drew the foul, sending him to the line for the first time all night.

In front of a silent crowd, where a pin drop could have been heard, Lewis nailed both free throws, giving FIU its final lead of the game.

With the 74-73 win in the books, it was not only time to celebrate the win, but also the all-tournament nominations.

Almonte was not only named tournament MVP, but was also nominated to the all-tournament team, along side teammate Jayce Lewis.

Following the win, Coach Sergio Rouco was all smiles.

“It was a great game for us, and we beat a great team in Ohio. Like us, they are a tough, aggressive team, and they’re physical.”

FIU’s current record now stands with seven wins and six losses. With the seven victories, the Golden Panthers have already surpassed last years dreadful 5-24 record.

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Steroid use hurting America’s past time

Not too long ago, you could look at a Major League Baseball player and see a role model—a charismatic, humble individual who worked hard and came out to play every day.

Among the money hungry Pete Roses and drug using Darryl Strawberries, there was always a dedicated Cal Ripken Jr. and a humble Tony Gwynn on which you could model yourself.

You don’t see many of those players now, at least not in the spotlight. These guys spend their summers in the dugout watching the games or on buses driving across the country in the minor leagues.

They can probably play just as well as any of the other players in the Major League as far as skills go, but their balls don’t carry over 500 feet and they definitely can’t take a curve ball low and away and drive it out to left field with their 20-inch biceps.

Believe it or not, these guys do things the right way. But what do they get in return? Less playing time and unfair, underrated evaluations.

This sends a very bad message to players and admirers: The only way to get paid the big bucks and have your face in a magazine is to take steroids and crush ball over the fence. Make two errors a game, and that’s OK. Strike out three out of five at bats, don’t worry about it; just get the ball in the cheap outfield seats.

Former Atlanta Brave Cy Young Award winners Tom Glavine and Greg Maddux said it best: “Chicks dig the long ball.” But it’s not just women who feel this way. It’s your five year-old tee-ball playing son, or your baseball-crazed little brother.

How many times is America’s youth going to be heart broken when the player they admire comes clean about using steroids or admits to taking some sort of performing enhancing substance the year they won an MVP? It just keeps getting worse every season, and there seems to be no stopping it.

STEROIDS OUT IN THE OPEN

Now that we’re looking back, we could probably pin-point the year this became a craze as 1998. Who would’ve thought that something so bad could arise from such an extraordinary season?

Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa were on the brink of greatness and provided two heroes at the time baseball needed them most. During the year, “Big Mac” hit 70 home runs and a reporter found a bottle of androstenedione (“andro”) – a supplement that some consider a steroid. The reporter found it in McGwire’s locker room, and the player later admitted to taking it. So the carousel of drug testing and asterisks by the player’s record began to take its course.

Not too long after that, Ken Caminiti, former all-star third baseman, admitted to using steroids the year he won an MVP and estimated that at least half of today’s ballplayers use them as well.

Shortly following Caminiti’s admission, Jose Canseco, former all-star outfielder, stated that he was using steroids and threatened to release a tell-all book, entitled “Juice,” about his life and the steroid issues he dealt with in the clubhouse.

This leads to this past fall, when Jason Giambi, New York Yankee first baseman, admitted to a jury that he used steroids during his MVP season and Barry Bonds, San Francisco Giants outfielder, claimed he unknowingly accepted a steroid from his trainer.

As the pieces of the puzzle keep coming together, the image is becoming clearer, and it’s not a pretty one.

MONEY TALKS

No sport focuses more on individual statistics than baseball does. In football a guy like Tom Brady, who came through in two Super Bowls and plays conservatively, makes seven figures even though he throws half as many touchdowns as the league leader.

In basketball, a center like Ben Wallace can play good defense, be a presence in the paint and make millions of dollars off their performance without using any performance enhancing substances.

STEROIDS OUT IN THE OPEN

RECORD BREAKER?: Barry Bonds is close to breaking the all-time record of Major league home runs. Some people think his use of performance enhancing substances gives him an unfair advantage.

Basketball picks up key victories over winter break

By ANDONI GONZALEZ-RUA

After back-to-back losses to the University of Connecticut and the University of Miami, the Golden Panthers were looking for a golden Christmas break. They found what they were looking for.

The FIU men’s basketball team finished the out-of-conference Christmas schedule with a winning 4-2 record. With a victory against rival Florida State University in Tallahassee, the team entered the break with good momentum.

FIU got off to a good start, defeating Florida Tech on Dec. 9. FIU never trailed en-route to an 81-66 victory.

Just three days later, FIU traveled to Tallahassee for the first of two road games. Surprisingly, the Golden Panthers, led by junior Isaiah N’Diaye’s 22 points, upset the Seminoles, a Sports Illustrated preseason top-30, 65-60.

Following an eight day break, the Golden Panthers were on the road again, this time in Tampa to face the University of South Florida. FIU played sloppy in the state televised game and stumbled with 19 turnovers. Coach Sergio Rouco’s team lost to USF by eight, 74-66.

The start of a three-game home stand for the Golden Panthers looked bleak as they faced off with No. 20 George Washington University at Pharmed Arena.

After leading by as much as seven points with under a minute and a half to play, the Golden Panthers stumbled into halftime tied with the Colonials at 34.

During second half, the Colonials showed their key shooting strokes, as they connected on over 58 percent from the field and 62 percent from behind the arc.

The Golden Panthers clearly missed their captain, Junior Matias, who just played 11 minutes due to a lingering back injury. FIU lost 81-71 and dropped its second game in a row for the second time this season.