valentines Schmalentines!

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However, according to the GC staff, the ends justify the means. Though the construction progress has been slow, the Graham Center Arrium, as well as many of the new offices, are up and running. However, like many buildings on campus, GC does not have enough space to temporaril place offices while they continue putting the finishing touches on the arrium.

“This building is being worked on in phases,” said Ruth Hamilton, director of the Graham Center. “Recently we are just now finishing the arrium, and now the other challenge we have is the old third floor [Panther Suite], which needs to meet the fire safety regulations and have sprinklers installed … We cannot move to another building. Now we need to relocate the third floor offices to the game room, so they can finish the entire sprinkler system.”

If students would like to see what the game room used to look like, the Portis Davis Game Room website is still a part of the Graham Center website. Many are still dissatisfied with the “replacement” game room currently set up next to Gracie’s.

“A lot of people were really upset the game room shut down, especially when after six to seven months, dominos gets pretty boring [outside the Game Room]. I like to play pool. It also is hard for people trying to watch the televising.

See GAME ROOM, page 2

Health and Wellness Center promotes AIDS awareness

By ANA RIBIERO

Contributing Writer

Alison Gertz from New York City had her first sexual experience at age 16. Six summers later, right after her college graduation in Manhattan, she became mysteriously ill. Doctors performed every test except the one for HIV – until a month later, when all other disease possibilities were eliminated.

The HIV test brought a surprising revelation: Gertz, a white heterosexual woman from a well-off family, had AIDS. She had, indeed, contracted HIV during that first sexual encounter, a one-night stand six years before. However, the virus had been dormant in her system until the life-changing summer of 1988. Gertz dedicated her final years to promoting AIDS awareness among young Americans. She died in 1992. The health professionals at FIU hope to educate students as well, in order to avoid cases like Gertz’s.

“Most students do not perceive themselves at risk for being infected by the HIV virus,” said Elvira Velez, the associate director for FIU’s Student Health and Wellness Center. “Part of it is because they see [the AIDS pattern] as someone outside their social milieu … They see [them] as people who may be in the streets, poor people who are drinking and boosting all the time … [or as] gays, lesbians, and people from other countries … It just takes one encounter, the right time, the right conditions, and you could be infected.”

The financial support for the Health and Wellness Center comes from the $54 health fee added to each student’s tuition every semester. This ensures students won’t need to pay for their visits to the center. Also, at reduced prices, they can help us take it to [the personnel in charge of reopening Game Room],” Torres said.

FIU students, particularly commuters, used to have a place to go after an extremely long day of school. Many, however, don’t notice the little corner in the back of the Graham Center as they rush past it to go into Gracie’s Grill.

Because several offices in the building moved, the former Porter Davis Game Room has been closed since the summer of 2004. It is now spring 2005 and various students are speaking out about the fact that the school has not gave them back their hang-out.

“This was a place for many students to enjoy the different games and other activities the game room had to offer. The pool club [met there] as well as the students who always play dominos. That was their place to go after class,” said sophomore Gilbert Torres, a main activist for what he calls a “very important student cause.”

Torres has given various petitions to friends and former game room workers to hold Graham Center building officials accountable for not keeping their promise in completing the new GC area.

“We have at least five to six hundred signatures, but our goal is to reach 2,000 signatures and then bring [them] to Student Government Association, so they can help us take it to [the personnel in charge of reopening Game Room],” Torres said.

Most students do not perceive themselves at risk for being infected by the HIV virus.
Commuter students face another semester without game room

GAME, from page 1

“We support their endeavors, and our role is to be that voice that allows the link between the students and the administrators,” said Rosario.

Commuter students were especially affected by this change. This was an area for all students, but particularly for those who did not want to drive all the way back home just to come back to school.

“No one is everyone in a fraternity or sorority or certain other organizations on campus and yet, these were the ones participating in tournaments of chess, pool and ping pong … For some this was the only de-stressing moment they had to relax and just hang out. It almost feels like we’ve truly now become a commuter school without this community,” said Lisa Alvarez, the former game room coordinator.

The game room also participated in the ACUI regional tournaments. This organization is known for the activities they offer schools who are active members. In past years, FIU has received first place in many of their game room competitions such as chess, pool and table tennis.

According to Hamilton, there hope that the game room will reopen.

“We envision [the] game room being open for the fall term, and hopefully then, our next project will be looking at the needs of the students regarding improvement on their indoor recreation to bring it up to par with other universities,” she said.

WEATHER

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CONFLECTIONS

In the “Halting of program results in protest” story, the names should have read: Lemmieta McNeill and Eliane Ramos.

The Beacon will gladly change any errors. Call our UP office at 305-348-2709 or BBC at 305-919-4722.

STAFF

The Beacon is published on Mondays and Thursdays during the Fall and Spring semesters and once a week during Summer B. Advertising inquiries for classified, local and national ads may be addressed to our advertising department in our newsroom. One copy per person. Additional copies are $5 each. The Beacon is not responsible for the content of ads. Ad content is the sole responsibility of the company or vendor. The Beacon is an editorially independent newspaper partially funded by Student and Services fees that are appropriated by Student Government.
Students wouldn’t come near a condom. We had to teach them how to have some comfort level with condoms, how to handle them, to play with them, because that’s part of it.”

Velez said that in the 1980s, when the Health and Wellness Center was still restricted to a little room in the Wolfe University Center at the Biscayne Bay Campus, women would come in and refuse to talk about their sexuality partners, or what was in their genitals.” A patient’s main concern was pregnancy. The Student Health and Wellness Center periodically organizes events around the university to address the issue of AIDS and other STIs.

This week is their Sexual Responsibility Week at BBC. The kickoff was Feb. 10, when Wellness Center assistants Melissa Michel and Chris Elvira Velez, Student Health and Wellness

AIDS, from page 1

and Wellness Center first when they feel depressed or have been sexually assaulted.

In Velez’s opinion, a lot has changed since the 1980s. “Students are much more likely to use barrier protection [now] than they were [then],” she said. “Students wouldn’t come near a condom. We had to teach them how to have some comfort level with condoms, how to handle them, to play with them, because that’s part of it.”

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Casey Hill Graver, the Wellness Team Leader at the center said that the purpose of the event is to promote awareness about safe sex. “We want to let students know that it’s okay to have sex as long as they do it in a healthy way. We want to make sex less taboo,” said Graver. On Feb. 14 there will be an activity named “Sexual Health Jeopardy,” from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Panther Square. Winners will receive prizes with a Valentine’s Day theme.

Meanwhile, free condoms continue to be given out, along with information on healthy sex and relationships. Sexual Responsibility Week ends Feb. 16.

The Student Health and Wellness Center offers free male and female condoms year-round, and free HIV-testing on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. It even offers free 10-minute massages to relieve stress.

Besides Sexual Responsibility Week, the center will host its annual expo, with more special activities and resources, March 15 and 16.

For more information on the events, including this week’s, students can go to www.fiu.edu/~wellness.

Free condoms and HIV testing stir up AIDS awareness

By CHESTER ROBARDS Contributing Writer

Florida International University was presented with a new treat on Feb. 9 when the African New World Studies Department along with the Black Student Association held FIU’s first African American History Month Luncheon entitled “Discovering Past Heroes.” The affair took place at the Wolf University Centre Ballroom at the Biscayne Bay Campus.

The luncheon kicked off with a few welcoming words from the vice provost of BBC, Dr. Raul Moncarz.

Then performing arts student Latrissa Lockhart sang the Black National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” Following the anthem, Dr. Carol Boyce Davies, director of African New World Studies program, promptly took the microphone and thanked the individuals and departments that came together to make the luncheon possible.

She then introduced the afternoon’s first guest speaker, Ed Williams, a host and announcer for WPBT show entitled “Slavery and the Making of America.”

Elvira Velez, Student Health and Wellness Students wouldn’t come near a condom. We had to teach them how to have some comfort level with condoms.

February 14, 2005 WWW.BEACONNEWSPAPER.COM The Beacon - 3

THIS WEEK AT BBC

MONDAY • FEBRUARY 14

International Student & Scholar Services presents a Valentine’s Day Discussion: 12 p.m., Panther Square, WUC

Valentine’s Day baking competition: 12 p.m., Panther Square

SPC Belly Dancing Class: 6 p.m., WUC 155

TUESDAY • FEBRUARY 15

Health and Wellness Center presents HIV testing: 10 a.m.

International Student & Scholar Services presents an Immigration Attorney Session: 3:30 p.m., WUC 363

SPC Salsa Dancing Class: 6 p.m., WUC 157

Biscayne Bay Society Film Series: 7 p.m., WUC, Mary Ann Wolfle Theatre

WEDNESDAY • FEBRUARY 16

Student Government Council Meetings: 3:30 p.m., WUC 159

Free Massage: 11 a.m., Panther Square

THURSDAY • FEBRUARY 17

SPC Ballroom Dancing Class: 6 p.m., WUC 159

African New World Studies program presents a performance by Toni Thompson: 6 p.m., WUC, Mary Ann Wolfle Theatre

Catholic Student Association presents weekly Mass: 12:30 p.m., WUC 157

FRIDAY • FEBRUARY 18

SJC general meeting: 4 p.m., WUC 159

School of Hospitality & Tourism Management presents: Friday Luncheons, 11:45 a.m., HIM 129

SATURDAY • FEBRUARY 19

Iglesia Mision Carismatica Assembly/Service: 5 p.m., WUC Ballroom

ANGELICA DONATE / THE BEACON

AFRICAN-AMERICAN LUNCHEON HONORS PAST HEROES

By CHESTER ROBARDS Contributing Writer

The short clip, narrated by Morgan Freese, captured the luncheon audience with a look at post-Civil War reconstruction.

Williams invited everyone to watch the program’s debut later that night and assured them that it would be “a riveting time in television.”

After that, guests adjusted their seating positions and leaned forward to fully absorb the Afro-Brazilian dance performance of the BrazDance Theatre, coordinated by Gustavo Soledad. The performers, Mama De Victory (percussion) and Willy Brown (dancer), put on a heart-pounding show with a world-class drum beat. Soledad’s dance style, which he describes as Afro Fusion, is one of the only to offer a FIU’s curriculum. “Afro dance has been hidden in modern dance,” said Soledad.

He also expressed his desire to help his students develop their creativity. “I hope to bring forth the strong presence of African culture in dance, with an eye for freedom to create,” he said.

As guests sat down to lunch, acclaimed actor Larry Robinson gave a short performance. It was supposed to be the grand finale, but technical problems (mostly from malfunctioning audio equipment) plagued it. Soledad performed a masterful solo on a heart-pounding drum beat.

For more information on the events, including this week’s, students can go to www.fiu.edu/~wellness.
SURVIVING A LOVELESS VALENTINE'S DAY

By DARIA BRAMSON Staff Writer

Going into hibernation for the entire month of February is certainly enticing. Some may ask, “Why do you desire to spend the month acting like some kind of furry animal?” There are only two words to say to these people: SHUT UP. You will never understand. To put it simply, if you have a valentine, I hate you.

Had I signed up for a dating service two weeks ago, I would never have written this indignant article. As I reminisce about those times, I wish I could somehow find clothes that flaunted her lean figure, rather than accentuating all the wrong places, like the clothes the rest of us wore. Certainly all the inferior girls had some jealousy toward her, yet it was more of an infatuation with her flawlessness.

As we got older, we visited the dermatologist more often and the orthodontist less. Evidently, this worked wonders for most girls. But it only wasted oodles of my parents’ money after we all realized that there was no hope for me. So now, there are numerous “hot girls.”

Luckily, I have grown out of my childish infatuation and graduated into something more mature ... namely, jealousy. Of course, my life would solely revolve around flaunting myself if I had their figure. Lose the tube-tops and mini-skirts — bring on the Brazilian bikinis!

Until the day I can bounce a penny off my abs, and my ass somehow gains a spheric curvature, I will complain endlessly. Some part of me has always hoped that one year the cute boys would get bored of the pretty girls and take a break, if only once, for the homely ones. It still has not happened.

This brings up an eternally perplexing question: would you rather fool around with a homely person who knows what they are doing or a hot person who just lies there? While you ponder that, I have a present for you. In honor of all of the other valentine-less college students, I’ve compiled a Valentine’s Day survival guide for all of us:

• Make sure you look hot. In case you run into an ex or your crush magically shows up on your doorstep, you do not want to look like a pre-rehab Robert Downey, Jr.

• Visit a Hallmark store and rope off the card area. Threaten to light yourself on fire if someone buys a card without giving you one too.

• Visit a homeless shelter. Make sure you are dressed to impress and bring pictures of your summer home in the Bahamas. Bring along some Cisco to get them in the mood.

• Do not associate with anyone in your life who has a significant other or hot hookup. If you must, be pickier now-a-days, but it’s a must.

• Compile a list of phone numbers of every crush who ever turned you down. Spend at least two hours prank calling them and making the most annoying sound in the world” according to Lloyd (Jim Carrey) in the movie “Dumb and Dumber.”

With any luck, these guidelines will lead you in the direction of payback for not having a valentine. However, please do not ignore the fact that there are other crucial things to focus on during Valentine’s Day this year – like snagging the hottest homeless person and making him or her swear to be your valentine before I do.
Past war efforts share similarities with recent war on Iraq problems

By ANDRES NATALINO
Contributing Writer

During last October’s vice-presidential debate, moderator Gwen Ifill asked Vice President Dick Cheney what the Bush administration’s specific plans were for dealing with the then-growing insurgency in Iraq.

The following is an edited transcript of Cheney’s response: “Twenty years ago we had a similar situation in El Salvador. We had a guerrilla insurgency that controlled roughly a third of the country, 75,000 people dead and we [still] held free elections. I was there as an observer on behalf of the Congress. The human drive for freedom, the determination of these people to vote, was unbelievable… Today El Salvador is a whole lot better now that the American people can learn from the subject, because we held free elections, where the people of Iraq are not.

I was a bit confused. I vaguely knew the sad history of El Salvador but needed to learn more about the subject, so I could understand what the lessons were that Dick Cheney gloated about in front of cameras during the vice presidential debate.

Over 70,000 civilians were slaughtered in El Salvador by CIA-trained Salvadorian government troops during the 1980s. The CIA should talk to the people who lived through these “successful” CIA policy lessons. In El Salvador alone, U.S.-funded paramilitary forces killed leftist peasant rebels, killing about 70,000 people. Journalists, students, leftist sympathizers and the occasional U.S. citizen were massacred by CIA-trained death squads (sound familiar?).

On Dec. 2, 1980 four nuns were killed by U.S.-sponsored troops. The people of El Salvador, burdened by poverty, remain unwilling relics of the Cold War. How could Cheney consider the U.S. involvement in El Salvador a success?

Another key lesson that the United States learned from dealing with the counter-insurgency of Central America is the importance of shielding the American public from the ugly realities of U.S.-funded secret wars through its use of public relations techniques.

Within the Reagan administration, this was referred to as “perception management.” A key component of this technique is to focus on a defined enemy (the USSR during the 1980s and currently Iraq), so that the American people will give carte blanche to the government’s military agenda.

Having a defined “bad guy” builds support for the government, while the people of the third world tremble in fear. If the Bush administration tries to recycle the counter-insurgency policies that the Reagan administration used in Central America and apply them in Iraq, Iraq will explode into civil war.

The Central American regimes of the 1980s were similar to America in culture, language and religion; the people of Iraq are not. Iraq also has a long, proud history of repelling foreign invading armies, the last army being the British one in the 1920s. According to the January issue of Newweek, the Bush administration is actively seeking to employ the “Salvador Option.” According to the article, one Pentagon proposal would send Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads, most likely hand-picked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiites militiamen, to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, even across the border in Syria.

By employing the Salvador Option in Iraq, the U.S. military would increase the pressure on the Iraqi people to submit to democracy, especially in Sunni Muslim areas where resistance to the U.S. occupation has been the strongest.

In effect, the Bush administration would assign non-Sunni Muslims the job of leading the “death squad” campaign in Iraq against the Sunnis. So in the name of defending the U.S. against Iraq’s terrorists, the CIA will train our own brand of Iraqi terrorists.

If the Bush administration is allowed to sponsor interstate terrorism, a civil war will ultimately break out and the American people will end up with even more of its sons and daughters coming home in body bags.

One macabre lesson that the American people can learn from El Salvador is that the body dumps unceramed from El Mozote are not that much different from the mass graves blamed on Saddam Hussein in Iraq, except that they represent the tip of the spear of American foreign policy, and they received much less time in the mainstream media.

Quotables

“The day my parents accepted I was an actor, was the day I told them, ‘I get insurance.’ ”

— Jennifer Garner, actress, during her acceptance speech for a SAG award for her role in “Alias.”

“What! came from my favorite sport at the time, which was horseback riding. Whoa.”

— Henry Winkler, actor, during a reunion special for the TV show “Happy Days,” on how he came up with his trademark catchphrase.

“Well, ideally, Cary Grant reincarnated. He’s the ultimate. Off the cuff, I can’t think of anybody I’d be particularly thrilled with. The world of movie stars today is not what it was 50 years ago.”

— Donald Trump, real estate mogul, on whom he would ideally choose to play himself in an upcoming movie about his life.

“What is the name of the memory book you just got me? It’s a catchphrase.”

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By RAQUEL COOL
Contributing Writer

Valentine’s Day is a holiday that demands binging. You are either gobbling up its shrink-wrapped romance or projectile vomiting over all this sappy idiocy.

To both sides, I say: It does not have to be this way! This year I urge you to think out the know about post-holiday discount frenzies, listen up. The day after major holidays, convenience stores, like Wal-Mart and Target, chop their prices by 50-75 percent. This means you can buy cheesy Hallmark paraphernalia at prices so low, they transcend logic. Such is the way of Shamlentine’s day! (Speaking in rhymes is not required, but recommended.)

But say you aren’t fully comfortable with straying from the ordinary. Say you want to spend $50 on roses. Why not try my romantic variation on this popular tradition? Skip the rose petal bath tub or bed sheets.

Surprise your beau with a soft path of rose petals that start at the front door and then trail up the stairs and down the hall to a candle-lit bathroom and a very naked you on the porcelain throne.

Get your heart humor – probably the sweetest of Schmalentine’s day treats. A variation of this is a similar rose petal path through your house that actually leads to your bedroom, granted your whole family lives with you. With a little Celine Dion in the mix, you will undoubtedly feel the love. And the sexual tension.

If that is not enough for you, perhaps hacking at a cake that bleeds will do the trick. That’s right, a Bleeding Heart Cake. Chocolate that bleeds raspberry syrup? If you can say no to that, check your pulse, man.

Ask yourself: Does my heart pump raspberry goodness? Probably not. But if it does, the sexual tension. You should have gone to Wal-Mart and picked up your very own children’s style valentines, a-la second-grade.

Feast on discount lollipops and chocolates and your Bleeding Heart, but remember to thank me for such a totally awesome Schmalentine’s Day.

VALENTINE RECPEPIE FOR THE CHEAPSKATE GOURMET

CHOCOLATE-MOCHA SWEETHEARTS

Total Time: 45 minutes
Makes 17 servings, about 2 hearts each

• 4 squares unsweetened baking chocolate
• 3/4 cup [1-1/2 stick] butter or margarine
• 2 cups sugar
• 4 eggs
• 1 tsp. vanilla
• 1 cup flour
• 1/2 cup coffee, mocha flavor, or any other flavor
• 6 squares semi-sweet baking chocolate, melted

PREHEAT oven to 350°F if using a 13x9-inch baking pan (or to 325°F if using a glass baking dish). Line pan with foil. Grease foil. Microwave unsweetened chocolate and butter in large microwaveable bowl on HIGH 2 min. or until butter is melted; stir until chocolate is completely melted. Stir in sugar. Add eggs and vanilla; mix well. Add flour and flavored instant coffee; stir until well blended. Spread into prepared pan.

BAKE 30 to 35 min. or until toothpick inserted in center comes out with fudgy crumbs. (Do not overbake.) Cool in pan.

CUT brownie into heart-shapes using a 1-1/2-inch cookie cutter. Reserve scraps for snacking or another use. Dip the top of each brownie heart into melted semi-sweet chocolate. Refrigerate until chocolate is set.

THE BEST GIFTS POCKET-CHANGE CAN BUY, FROM THE FIU BOOKSTORE

• $29.95 – “101 NIGHTS OF GREAT SEX” BY LAURA CORN
• $29.98 – POKER SET
• $14 – SPOILED GIRL SPA KIT
• $13 – JOURNAL
• $12.50 – GODIVA CHOCOLATES
• $10.95 – QUOTABLE MUGS
• $10.98 – 8X10 BLACK FRAME  
(DON’T FORGET YOUR PHOTO!)
• $10.98 – CHAMPAGNE STYLE, SCENTED CANDLE
• $7.98 – “INVISIBLE GAME CARDS” (THEY’RE COOLER THAN YOU THINK)
• $5.95 – HOT SEX COUPONS
Revenge, the legal way

By BETSY MARTINEZ
Assistant Life! Editor

Author Alison James provides dva advice.

Practicing the Kleenex to the side, ladies. Pull out the luscious lip gloss the ex-boyfriend didn’t let you wear and pick up her book, “How To Get Even... But My Aim Is Improving: Not Your Ordinary Breakup Survival Guide.”

The uniquely titled guide offers a variety of tips to help you get even with your ex without risking arrest.

During my interview with James, she gave me a few tips on how to deal with an ex. The advice: programming his number into a fax machine, tossing a few weed seeds on his front lawn or clipping the air conditioner wire that keeps his place icy-cold.

In chapters such as “Lose the Guy, Keep the Jewelry” and “Grieve-a Like a Diva,” James states that mistreated girls can learn to channel their fury and self-pity into revenge and eventually, recovery.

For example, the soon-to-be-married author recommends repaying any debts to your ex with James’s advice is to forget about him’s favorite football jersey to a total of full shiny pennies.

“...“He’ll never know.” wrote James in “I Used to Miss Him...”

As perverse as her advice may seem, it’s just what a diva in distress needs. There aren’t many books that reflect the feelings of this new generation of women.

In her chapter “Look Sexy, Feel Fabulous,” James, who considers chocolate the perfect breakup food, provides a recipe for a low-calorie strawberry-banana smoothie.

While you’re picking up the ingredients for the smoothie, drop by the store’s deli section and bribe the person behind the counter to stash a long greasy hair in your ex’s meatball sub.

James suggests having a fabulous “me” day to get the loser out of your head.

Go the whole nine yards. Treat yourself to a new hairstyle, manicure, pedicure, full body massage and wax. When the ex catches a glimpse of the new you, he’ll feel sorry he ever lost you.

After cutting up all of his pictures and getting rid of his belongings, it may take at least a month to put him completely out of your mind.

“Do everything you can to stay busy,” said James during our interview.

“Bearcrawl your room. Go out with people who don’t know him. The busier you stay, the faster you’ll forget him.”

So what should a single diva do this Valentine’s Day? “Have a little fun. Stick that ex’s photos on a pink piñata at a party and give it a swing,” wrote James in “I Used to Miss Him...”

“...‘He’ll never forget me.”

As perverse as her advice may seem, it’s just what a diva in distress needs. There aren’t many books that reflect the feelings of this new generation of women.

James, who comes across as a subtle humor and empowers divas to be the center of their own lives. No person you meet in your life will ever be as important as yourself, so treat yourself accordingly.

“...‘He’ll never forget me.”

The thirty-year-old author is set to be married May 21 and is currently promoting her new book, “The 10 Women You’ll Be Before You’re 35,” release in March Valentine’s Day.

Copies of “I Used to Miss Him But My Aim Is Improving: Not Your Ordinary Breakup Survival Guide” are available at the FIU bookstore.

New chance at V-day for Marine girlfriend

By MARYN MENDRO
Contributing Writer

Matthew Conway dreamed of becoming a U.S. Marine since childhood.

He enlisted in December 2003, three months after he became his girlfriend’s boyfriend.

When Matt left to boot camp, he was depressed, not only because of his departure, but because my grandfather had recently died. My grandfather meant everything to me, when he died I felt lost and alone.

Matt helped me in the beginning but quickly had to leave. I was not going to see him for three months. Then, he would come back home on a 10-day leave and return to Marine combat training and to his military academy for four months.

I felt that Matt chose the worst time to join the Marine Corps. But I knew it was his dream. I supported him 100 percent, even though it depressed me. We’d been together for a year and a half, and we’d known each other for two years before we started dating. It is hard to have a boyfriend who comes and goes frequently, but in our hearts we are always together. There are times when I really want to see him and hear him, but can’t, and so I look through our pictures and feel a bit better.

While Matt was away I found a boot camp schedule and a chat place for a people whom loved ones are in the Marines. I checked the schedule daily to see what he was up to. I educated myself about the Marine Corps. I spent my time exercising, studying and working. I barely went out with friends.

As soon as I got his mailíng address I wrote him my first letter a week after he shipped off. I would write two or three times a week. In the letters, sometimes written on special stationary paper, I included poems, cards, pictures, Marine Corps jokes and extra stamps and envelopes. I sprayed them with my perfume, thinking it would make him feel closer to me.

He told me the smell of my perfume on the letters reminded him of hugging me and other moments we shared.

Matt said that he received letters at night on the day they arrived. He would get on his rack, go under his covers and carefully read the letters with a flashlight. He did not have any other time to read them and pretended to be sleeping. He was never caught. Usually, he wrote back to me after reading the letters, but sometimes could not, because he had to get some sleep. He said that receiving letters felt like “a piece of home.”

I sent Matt a Valentine’s Day card a few days before Valentine’s Day, so it arrived on time. I included confetti hearts and pictures of me sending him a kiss.

On Feb. 14, I was lonely and sad, but I knew that he was following his dream and that I would see him soon. I knew I had more years to celebrate Valentine’s Day with him. I stayed home that night and did homework. Matt did not know what day it was but knew Valentine’s Day was coming up when he received my letter. He told me that he thought of the things he would have done if he were back home with me and how being alone on Valentine’s Day made him miss me more.

My boyfriend has not told me his plans for this Valentine’s Day, because he wants them to be a surprise, and I can’t wait.

Later this month he will leave to jump school, and after he returns he will go to Iraq for seven months. He’s happy to go, but laments leaving me again.

The Marine Girlfriend Hymn advises: “Tell him that you’ll always love him and respect what he must do, when he’s fighting for this nation to protect the red, white and blue...”

The original copy of the Declaration of Independence is lost. The copy in Washington D.C. is what is referred to as a hologram. That is a term for a handmade copy of a document.

– www.kellys.com/know.html
Some people call it an illusion. Others see it as a curse. I think it is both.

Love can bring happiness and joy as it slowly transforms your life into a powerful storm that is both beautiful and disastrous.

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Addition to this, you might even become extremely sensitive to things like nature, music and family and see the world as a more beautiful place. If only it would stay like this forever.

In the second phase of love, the feeling has grown and gained strength. It has become more stable and now promises a future. Your expectations increase and you begin to imagine a wedding, a beautiful home and kids.

Some light damage starts to occur, but you do not seem to notice. Love has started to invade different areas of your life and you start to adopt not only your partner’s good qualities but his or her bad habits as well.

The unknown excites you, and your goal is to find out more. Your principles and ideals begin to shake. By now you have decided to risk it all and accept everything because “Oh, it’s nothing.”

The third phase reveals more than what you can handle. Love has conquered your body and mind. You seem unable to do your job or enjoy an afternoon, because all you think about is romance, and all you want to do is be with the person you love. You have forgotten to secure windows and doors, and when people criticize your behavior, you ignore them.

By now you have become a slave to passion and desire. Your goals and vision of the future become obscure, and suddenly your judgment, which used to be definitive and precise, vanishes according to your partner’s views.

Suddenly you cannot think or see for yourself. Instead, you see everything through the eyes of the other person. You begin to have moments of clarity in which you consider the possibility that love will indeed harm you if you do not have control. Your mind sends you messages. STOP! WARNING! CAUTION! But even when you see them you refuse to believe you are wrong.

Once you reach stage four, you realize the chaos that is ruling your life. You finally become aware of the situation and understand that something needs to be done. Yet, you hope there might be a way to save the relationship.

At this point you have suffered severe damage. You cannot concentrate or perform any other activity if your partner is not involved. The roots of your foundation are being destroyed, and you feel lost in the middle of the storm. There may be frequent strong arguments, many stupid fights and some broken windows and glass.

You refuse to abandon the feeling that once made you feel so happy. Love indeed makes us blind.

It is too late if you have reached the fifth phase. Now you are in the center of the storm, and there is no escape. You have lost all sense of time, identity and space. You are completely dependent on your partner, and happiness only seems to be possible with him or her. It is time to face the consequences of your irresponsibility.

Love is now your worst nightmare. Your partner’s every action or gesture irritates you. You have grown selfish, irrational and paranoid. Heated arguments over an unanswered phone call or a lunch with friends are now daily events. The storm is now a fact, and all you can do is wait. Days pass. Weeks pass. Months pass.

Suddenly the storm is gone, and has left behind a ruins and a world of regret. Now you contemplate the devastating damage. You are left with nothing but a great sense of emptiness and isolation. You can see the mistakes you made so clearly now. There is a lot of anger. You realize how stupid you were and cannot forgive yourself for trusting someone thinking this love was perfect. You tell yourself next time you will be more prepared and promise not to trust again.

What follows is a process of recuperation in which you will regain confidence in yourself and learn that the world is not always a dark place.

Life will start to show cokes again, and just when you have forgotten the consequences of love and how badly it hurt you, you will find yourself in the face of another storm.
Guys remember stats, not Valentine’s Day

By XAVIER VILLARMARZO
Staff Writer

How does sports tie in with Valentine’s Day? Well, it is no coincidence that Valentine’s Day is right in the middle of February. With the NFL season two weeks past and MLB spring training about a month away, this is the slowest sports month of the year.

Now, I know what you’re thinking: “That idiot forgot about the NBA and NHL!”

Of course I didn’t, but who watches the NBA anyway? Honestly, can you name me two people you know who would drop whatever they’re doing because the New York Knicks are playing the Houston Rockets?

And as for the NHL, even if they weren’t in a lockout, can you name six teams for me? I didn’t think so either.

When I asked my friend Miguel how sports and Valentine’s Day are connected, it led to this exchange:

Miguel: Why would you ask such a random question?
Me: Because Valentine’s Day is in 5 days.
Miguel: Oh [fecal matter]!

Now, if I were to ask Miguel how many passing yards Dan Marino had in his career, he’d answer 61,361 before I even finished the question. This is a dilemma that has bugged women for ages, or since the beginning of televised sporting events.

So when greeting card companies invented Valentine’s Day, they chose Feb. 14 in with the hope that men’s minds would not be polluted by arbitrary sports statistics.

They lumped Valentine’s Day together with birthdays and anniversaries as things guys are most likely to forget about their significant other.

But why is it that guys can remember that Barry Bonds’s MLB debut was on May 30, 1986, but can’t remember their anniversary, even if it falls on the exact same day?

For one thing, neither Dan Marino nor Barry Bonds have ever made a man stand outside a Victoria’s Secret holding shopping bags. They also have never asked a man if their new pants make them look fat. Nor have they ever gotten upset, because you didn’t notice their new hair style.

The funny thing is, women don’t really care that men forget those dates, even though it doesn’t seem like it. They know that the man must make up for it, which means that a plain gold bracelet becomes a diamond tennis bracelet.

The gift-giving, however, should go both ways, and if by some highly unlikely chance you girls forget Valentine’s Day, have no fear. We men are simple. Just cook for us in the nude. On second thought, screw the cooking.

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Intramural sports connect FIU students

By C. JOEL MARINO
Senior Staff Writer

Most afternoons, freshman Dimitri Daddoud puts on his cleats and runs through the muddy soccer fields with his teammates, practicing the sport even though the official soccer season ended last semester.

However, these students are not members of the FIU soccer team. They are the members of Junglis Massize, one of several student-run groups that compete in the annual intramural sporting events.

The intramural events, sponsored by Campus Recreation, include a variety of sports each semester. The department offers flag football and volleyball in the Fall term. Soccer, basketball, softball and the newly added dodgeball are played in Spring. Teams are divided into male and female groups, the only exceptions are volleyball and softball.

“Soccer’s the best sport. I play [in intramurals] because it’s a good way to be part of the game I like and to keep up practice,” Daddoud said.

As part of the open league, Daddoud’s team competes every week against other teams made up of volunteer players from all years from all over the campus. Other leagues include the fraternity and sorority leagues and the newly established housing league.

“One of the biggest things in housing is that we want to continue offering services that would make students feel connected to the university, and we believe intramurals is one of the many programs we can offer to the residents, so they can feel that connection,” said Murillo Soranso, assistant Resident Life coordinator for the University Park Apartments and head of housing intramurals.

In the residential version of the games, inaugurated during the 2002-2003 school year, sports teams from such UP residence halls as Everglades and the Towers compete against each other in order to reach the final tournament.

“Resident students find that playing an intramural game is fun and healthy,” Soranso said. “If you’re a little competitive, it’s a great way to get involved and meet new people.”

Though students from the Biscayne Bay Campus participate in the open leagues, the Bay Vista residence halls have not been incorporated into the housing league, though Soranso said their inclusion is being planned.

“I’ve been playing for a lot of semesters, and I could keep on playing even more,” said James Wang, a sophomore who plays soccer in the open league.

“There are always injuries, but that’s just part of the game.”

Students must pay a $30 entrance fee and attend tryouts and all practices in order to compete towards their respective league’s championships. Despite all the effort, though, some students see intramurals more as entertainment than competition.

“There are people who can’t run, and they go out there and play. There are also people who are good enough to be on the FIU soccer team,” Daddoud said. “Everyone goes out there and everybody has fun.”

For more information regarding intramural sports and tournament dates call (305) 348-1054.
Jose Canseco exposes steroids in book

By ALDEN GONZALEZ
Staff Writer

The baseball world really does not have much to say these days. Two weeks before pitchers and catchers report to spring training, the hierarchy of Major League Baseball is doing a lot of listening.

Former six time all-star and 466 career homerun hitter Jose Canseco is finished with his tell-all book and is set to release it.

It’s just an anthology of tattletales, snitching and backstabbing.

The book has an air of whining and jealousy that can only be generated by the biggest and most juiced-up baby the city of Miami has ever produced.

AND A CREDIBLE SOURCE

Maybe we’re being a little too quick to judge, but how can you not? This is the same person who used to charge his fam $625 to hang out, because he was dead broke.

Lense it, Canseco has never been well liked in the baseball world. Throughout his career he’s been passed around in ball clubs like Madonna in the 80s (with whom he claims to have made out in his book).

He has been a problem on and off the field at every point in his career and has never showed decent character.

On his resume of homeruns, all-star appearances and balls hit off his head for homeruns, there are charges of felony, assault and battery and rape. There was also that incident where he was caught racing 120 miles per hour in his Jaguar with a loaded gun.

I have to tell you, watching Canseco after his prime with the Oakland A’s has been gut wrenching as a Cuban living in South Florida.

The sole pride of our Cuban community was suddenly becoming the punch line of jokes and the disgrace of our culture.

THE BOOK

After all that Canseco is (or isn’t), I still find it hard to believe that all of the book is a lie.

The former general manager of the Texas Rangers said on “Sportscentury,” “One thing I have never been able to say about [Canseco] is that he’s a liar.”

It’s hard to shy away from the truth. Here’s a guy that admitted to taking steroids and has been around in the baseball world for a long time.

If anybody knew what was going on, it was him.

His allegations in the book include that he introduced steroids to Rafael Palmeiro, Ivan Rodriguez and Juan Gonzalez of the Texas Rangers organization.

After hearing about all the allegations, Rodriguez has lost twenty-two pounds. He says it’s because it helps him to be more mobile behind the plate, but I think somebody is scared of failing a drug test or two.

Canseco also mentions that he actually shot up Mark McGwire with steroids in the bathroom stalls at Oakland.

I know McGwire is not the cleanest baseball player. After all, he did admit to using illegal substances, but I never imagined Canseco actually injecting him with steroids.

WHY THE BOOK?

What has MLB done to him? Why somebody tarnish the relationships they’ve made and get on so many people’s hit lists just to get the truth out?

It’s very simple question with an even simpler answer.

When Jose Canseco limped out of the minor leagues and finally called it quits, he carried a rather large chip on his broad shoulders.

He was just 34 homeruns away from the exclusive 500-homerun club and probably short-ended from Cooperstown.

Right after his retirement, the bitter Canseco went on a sports talk show and mentioned that he was blackballed from baseball.

He felt as if commissioner Bud Selig wanted him out of the game and made it impossible for him to hit his five hundredth homerun because he didn’t want him in the Hall of Fame. (Twenty-four of the 25 players who have hit over 500 homeruns are either still active or in the Hall of Fame.)

Never mind that Canseco finished his last four seasons barely hitting a .250 batting average and struck out nearly once every three at bats.

Never mind that his body was so old and juiced up with chemicals that he couldn’t even put on deodorant in the morning.

Lets just look back at the last image of Canseco: a brash, muscular guy with a Los Angeles Dodgers batting helmet in a public park trying to make a passing female laugh.

I think he black-balled himself out of the game.

NEGATIVE OPINIONS

As you might have guessed, the book was not well-received in the baseball community.

Every single player the book mentions denied Canseco’s accusations.

Rodriguez went on record and stated: “I was his friend when he was in jail. I was the only one that visited him and brought him magazines. It hurts to hear him say those things.”

Calling out Mark McGwire was probably not a good idea either. Nobody is more respected in the clubhouse than Big Mac is, and nobody is given more credit for resurrecting baseball than he is.

“I’ve never met anybody that has wanted to win more than [McGwire],” said Tony LaRusso, Mark McGwire’s former manager in Oakland and with the St. Louis Cardinals.

Canseco is just hopelessly in this situation. It’s like Ron Artest publishing a book about violence in the NBA and saying LeBron James has a short temper.

There is just no way this black horse with a street named after him who doesn’t even show up to the for the naming ceremony, can get credibility on a hot-button issue like this one.

As for Major League Baseball, there is not much they can do.

They will continue to implement their new steroid regulations and simply move on.

The city of Miami is finished with Jose Canseco.

Just when we thought he couldn’t plunge himself deeper, he loses all self-respect and pride with this squawking book.

The tri-county area will focus on more beloved heroes that can display good character, like Alex Rodriguez and Dwyane Wade.

CLASSIFIEDS

HELP WANTED

Money For College. The Army is currently offering sizeable bonuses of up to $20,000. In addition to the cash bonuses, you may qualify for up to $70,000 for college through the Montgomery GI Bill and Army College Fund. Or you could pay back up to $65,000 of qualifying student loans through the Army’s Loan Repayment Program. To find out more, call Main Campus 305-223-1660 North Miami Campus 305-945-6345 Broward 954-472-4800

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Seeking Latin female singer for girl group. Must sing R&B, Pop, Reggeaton, Rap and write. Auditions held February 5th. Serious inquiries only! Contact groupotrez@aol.com with resume & pictures. Be Bilingual.

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The Beacon – February 14, 2005
As a special treat for Valentine’s Day, The Beacon decided to break down the hottest male and female athletes in the sports world. Here are the top five hunks and babes of today.

1. SHAQUILLE O'NEAL

By JENNIFER GALASSO
Staff Writer

He’s six feet, six inches tall, has six-pack abs and rides a Harley Davidson. End of story. I am in love. Between the gorgeous eyes behind his helmet and his stature, there is something riveting about this Miami Dolphins Pro Bowl player. Even though he is not as big as the other defensive linemen in the NFL, his lightning speed has made him an elite player. When he speaks, all attention (or at least all of mine) hangs on his every word.

2. DAVID BECKHAM

By HARRY COLEMAN
Sports Editor

This 2003 World Series MVP captured my heart with his fierce look and demeanor as he single-handedly defeated the New York Yankees in Game Six of the World Series. This Texas farm boy is the reason the Marlins won the championship. His confidence and overpowering fastball makes him the ultimate man.

3. TOM BRADY

No athlete is as attractive as this Team USA softball player. Not only is she a four-time gold medalist, but she is the hottest female athlete to ever play a professional sport. With her long beach-blonde hair and beautiful, mysterious blue eyes, Finch not only stands out on the softball diamond (where she holds the NCAA record for consecutive wins with 60), but also on any red carpet among the most stunning movie stars.

4. JASON TAYLOR

With a physique like no other player, Williams can out-power any player on the tennis court, but she can also tame any man (well at least me) that she pleases. She is another blonde on my list, but what can I say? Blondes are hot. The 18-year-old Wimbledon champion has an innocent look that begs to show her wildness. Because she is constantly traveling, she is trying to finish high school through Internet classes. A girl that stays in school is a girl that stays in my heart.

5. JOSH BECKETT

Williams has captured the hearts of men everywhere by not only winning the four major grand slams in a row, but also by displaying her voluptuous curves in sexy tennis outfits.

6. ANNA KOURNIKOVA

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7. HEATHER MITTS

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