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Recommended Citation
https://stars.library.ucf.edu/centralfloridafuture/1662
By some strange twist of fate, America's first woman astronaut can say that she was at UCF for America's latest space disaster.

Sally Ride spoke Sunday at UCF as part of an effort to encourage young women to pursue careers in science-related fields. Her appearance at UCF came one day after the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated as it re-entered the Earth's atmosphere following a 16-day scientific mission. The Columbia was flying toward Cape Canaveral, Fla., when it broke into pieces in the skies above Texas.

At 11:15 a.m., Ride spoke to a group of eight fifth-grade students, all girls, from Thornembridge Elementary School in Oviedo. The girls, wearing blue T-shirts and accompanied by parents and teachers, sat on the floor in the auditorium of the Engineering I building and played the role of reporters, as fawning journalists from numerous local and national media organizations lined up to interview Ride.

Sally Ride gives an interview about the tragic loss of the space shuttle Columbia during her visit to UCF.

Kennedy Space Center security officers lower the American Flag and the flag for the space shuttle Columbia to half-staff.
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**Students in action**

**College politics support UCF alumni**

**KRISTA ZILIZI**

On a recent Friday evening Chris Crowley was doing something most college students could never be bothered with — actively participating in local politics.

Equipped with a post-hole digger and a truck full of wooden stakes, Crowley's campaign assignment today like most evenings, is posting yard signs around town. Fixing the campaigns signs to the stakes and drilling it into the ground isn't the hard part, the 23-year-old sophomore says, as he struggles to push the!

**From student politics to city politics**

**DAN THOMPSON**

Focused and confident, Tio Perez looked directly at the camera and announced to the city of Orlando, "I am ready to be your mayor."

Twenty years earlier, Perez addressed the student body at UCF the same way. Perez, reared as both a senator and student body president at UCF in the early 1990s, in 2003, there still exist testimonials of Perez's presence at UCF besides his old signatures on government minutes from the past.

**Voucher program may ride again**

**Senator claims program abused by students**

**ben baird**

As UCF students make their plans for Friday and Saturday night, many have stopped by the Student Government Association Ticket Center to pick up a Safe Ride voucher. However, those stopping by in the past week have left empty-handed.

SAF has purchased 600 Safe Ride vouchers for the academic year but has already distributed all 600 of the vouchers, so students can no longer get a cab ride from any location up to 15 miles from campus. SAF purchased the vouchers for $30,000.

The vouchers have a maximum value of $50. SAF has also had the funds to continue the Safe Ride program. If SAF finds that it has sufficient funds, it will disperse more vouchers at an undetermined date.

David Pavlions, director of student government administrative services, said an audit of the program would reveal whether any money from the original $30,000 allocation still remains.

"We're currently auditing the vouchers that have been redeemed or used and also auditing the ones that are still outstanding," Pavlions said.

SAF has also ensured the program will continue through at least the remainder of the year. The allocation by the Activity and Service Fee Committee for the current fiscal year has been an allocation by the Activity and Service Fee Committee of $20,000 for additional vouchers but that funding cannot go to fund this program until the new agreement or contract with Meers Transportation goes into effect.

Pavlions said.

This additional funding will come after talks and contract negotiations with Meers Transportation, the company that owns the taxi service utilized by Safe Ride. According to Pavlions, talks with Meers began last week.

In light of the current lack of vouchers, some senators raised questions as to the current operating status of Safe Ride. Marcus Gould, the program's founder, believes that it has been abused.

"I don't think 600 people have picked up the vouchers," Gould said. "It may be several people picked up many vouchers, he said.

Gould said that the Safe Ride program has lost its educational aspect, which is aimed at teaching students about responsible alcohol usage, and has instead become a "party bus." He said the program needs to be "bit more on top of the game because I know we have a free ride home," Gould said.

**SGA budget in the red $3,600**

**Ben Baird**

Just as college students sometimes find themselves in financial trouble, Student Government Association leaders announced Thursday it too was having fiscal troubles.

SGA Comptroller Ryan Romanik told senators that SGA has less than $1,000 in its accounts and was uncertain if it could continue to fund travel expenses for student organizations for the rest of the semester.

The announcement came on the second night of spring semester rush, when less than half of the senators attended the senate meeting because so many senators were absent, the Senate could not have a quorum — the minimum number of senators required to conduct official business.

With the announcement that a quorum of senators was not present, many senators chatted and left the room rather than waiting the necessary minutes for a quorum to be reached to address how the deficit would affect funding for student organizations.

While at least one senator pooled with senators to stay to address the deficit, the majority of those present quickly left.

The Clubs and Organizations committee, which disperses funds to various groups on campus to fund travel expenses, is responsible for the $1,000 deficit because they granted too many generous allocations to student organizations.

"Clubs and organizations are going to have to realize that they have to go out on expedition for some of their expenses," Van Voorhees said.

The committee's funds come from student activity and service fees.

"We're looking for any way possible to get the students back to their money," Monacelli said.

"We have already given out over 70 allocations, and we're only a little over half-way through the year," said Tyler Van Voorhees.

Ben Baird

Vanguard Daily News
On an unusually warm afternoon last Wednesday, an uncommon scene was taking shape at UCF. Students armed with signs began to gather outside the Student Union. Those without signs donned T-shirts that read “No Blood for Oil” and “Drop Bush not Bombs.” Another student passed out fliers that read 15 Reasons to Hate Bush.

Then, under the direction of Robert Coffman, president of the new campus student organization Campus Peace Action, 40 students began chanting, “What do we want? Peace. When do we want it? Now.”

Equipped with a megaphone and a notebook, Coffman silenced the chanting students and stepped away from the crowd. Forceful and well-versed, the 22-year-old junior declared, “Understand this war is not about flag-waving and supporting your country — this is about oil. It will only benefit those who already have their hands in the oil pot. This president does not have your interest at heart. Opposing war is your patriotic duty.”

Suddenly, a war protest was taking place at UCF, and Coffman and his 40 activists were there to convince students why war with Iraq was wrong.

While Jan. 29 marked a national day of protest in many places across the country following President Bush’s State of the Union address last Tuesday evening, it was the first protest UCF had ever seen.

But, at first no one seemed to care, except Winter Springs resident Matthew Macik, who called himself the lone voice of reason.

“It’s sad to see this whole thing is one-sided,” he said. “There are no students supporting the President.”

“These young people don’t see that this isn’t war propaganda — it’s the truth,” he continued. “We have choices in America, and I choose to support the President.”

But the protesters weren’t there to debate the reasons for war. They were resolved in their belief that war with Iraq was wrong and wanted others to feel the same.

They drowned out Macik’s dissenting opinion, chanting, “Hey Bush, we know you, your Daddy was a killer too.”

Slowly but surely, as television cameras from local news stations began to trickle in, spectators also took notice and began to follow.

While the campus protest didn’t attract half a million like last month’s march in Washington D.C., it did not go unnoticed either. One professor joined the group of peaceful activists, while another stood on the other camp and called the protest, “a waste of time.”

“These students are a bunch of losers,” said Niels Lobo, a computer science professor. “They probably don’t even read the newspaper. If you study this issue, you’ll see it for yourselves.”

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INROADS
Perez implemented summer graduations at university

FROM PAGE 3

He initiated the first evening escort service for all individuals on campus — the Student Escort and Patrol Services that is still used by students today.

The covered bike racks, that still stand near the commons today, are a result of Perez’s work as president and so are the grills by the dorm lawns.

Summer graduations exist at UCF thanks to Perez, who passed the resolution after UCF switched from grading quarters to semesters.

Perhaps Perez’s most valuable example of representing the student body’s needs in the 90’s was his decision to allocate $10,000 in emergency funds to financial aid to help financially strapped students waiting on late financial assistance checks to arrive.

And like any president, Perez made decisions that didn’t sit well with some during his term. He vetoed a bill to allocate $350 to send two girls in a boy’s championship football team to New Orleans for a national competition.

He also vetoed a $230 request to send two representatives to the Sports Medicine Education Institute in Atlanta for experience in their field and denied a $127 request for students to attend the Southeastern Theatre Conference.

But taking the leap from student government, to city, government isn’t affecting Perez’s personal outlook. He still holds the same values today as he did while attending UCF.

“At UCF, I focused on leadership and management skills to use the students’ money efficiently,” Perez said. “Now, I stand on the same platform, it’s just a bigger pond.”

While attending UCF, Perez represented close to 15,000 students. As Orlando mayor, he would represent almost 300,000 citizens.

Orlando’s escalating population serves as one of the key footholds in Perez’s campaign platforms.

Jeff Jonasen, Perez’s campaign manager, believes Perez will be just as effective as a city leader as he was as a student body leader.

“This knowledge of the city and the community’s needs is what makes him a great candidate,” Jonasen said. “We’re receiving a lot of positive feedback from all aspects of the community.”

And as Orlando mayor, Perez won’t forget his past. In fact, he plans to use as a gateway to develop stronger ties between the university and the city.

“I perceive UCF to be a big part of our city’s future,” Perez said. “Our future starts at UCF. In a way, so does his.”

With a team of more than 70 students supporting Perez’s campaign, including student body vice-president Brian Kintrow, Perez has relied on UCF volunteer efforts to create a better awareness of his ideas in this mayoral race.

Two-hour protest draws spectators, news crews

FROM PAGE 4

realize that Saddam has to go.

“Basic wisdom should tell them [protestors] to listen to those U.N. inspectors and realize that ultimately Bush is making the most sensible decision.”

While the protest remained peaceful, several spectators became embroiled in heated debates with protesters and other spectators. A group of students mocked the activists’ chants declaring: “What do we want? War. When do we want it? Now.”

One spectator accused the anti-war activists of behaving hostilely to which Coffman replied, “Who’s hostile here? We’re for peace in America, peace in Iraq and all over the world. It’s a little weird that people are sitting out here saying they want war and death.”

The line has been drawn,” Coffman told spectators, “If you do not join the movement, you aren’t part of it — you can not be in between.”

Kevin Christ Leen, 29, had made his choice. He supports a war with Iraq and wonders what it would take to convince the protesters to back one as well.

“A lot of what they are saying are half-truths,” he said. “They say it’s just about oil — that’s only half of it. Saddam has been shady, he’s been hiding weapons, that’s all well-known.”

It’s not as much that he is going to use them, but do we want Saddam having that kind of leverage over us? What I want to know is, what would it take for these people to say, ‘OK, it’s time for war.’”

Sophomore Richard Solling, 20, said he knew what could change the protesters’ views.

“Hit if [Iraq] threw a bomb through a window here with a biological weapon, [the protesters] would be quick to protest for war.”

Paul Anderson, 19, was on the other side of the line. The freshman, who comes from a military family, could not justify supporting a meaningless war, she said.

“When you think about people’s children and husbands losing their lives, that’s something really hard to put millions of families through — especially if there is no purpose.”

So the greatest drew to a close nearly two hours later. Coffman told spectators, “The world has never seen activism like this. Four million people will protest before a war even begins.”

And he was right, the world had never seen such forceful activism before, at least UCF hadn’t until now.
70 UCF students running campaign

FROM PAGE 3

digger through the solid dirt. The hard part is navigating through Orlando's downtown streets during rush hour trying to find the locations that have been approved for Tico Perez yard signs.

"I get to learn the roads of downtown Orlando," Crowley said. "If anything ever comes, I know where Harmon Avenue is. Just put up a sign there."

While Crowley is unfamiliar with Orlando's downtown streets, he is familiar with city politics. He has been involved in several city council campaigns in his hometown of Daytona as a political science major, but says this one is different for two reasons.

For Crowley, this campaign isn't just about peddling his resume or making connections, though he admits working on mayoral campaigns for a city with a 250,000 population has allowed him to meet several influential figures within the city. Instead, Crowley has a personal interest vested in former UCF campaign Tico Perez's mayoral campaign.

So Crowley has immersed himself in this campaign just like the 70 other UCF students who are backing Perez and making his campaign one of the most youth-oriented campaigns in the mayoral race.

"I think the reason most of us are for Tico is because he would be the first UCF-graduate mayor so that means a lot to all of us," he said.

Like Crowley, Nick Digirolamo, 19, is working on Perez's campaign. Digirolamo has taken a keen interest in both Perez and local politics for nearly eight years.

"I met Tico through Boy Scouts and I've always been interested in politics, so my involvement is a mix of both," he said.

He, too, is drilling yard signs with Crowley until he notices an interested elderly man, standing barefoot on a street corner, waving a Tico for Mayor sign. The man drops his sign, approaches Digirolamo and tells him the Navy SEALs have put a Tico Perez sign in the middle of Lake Ivanhoe. The sophomore politiely smiles and thanks the man for his information and support and both return to their work.

"It's unfortunated," Digirolamo said. "This guy has called the office four times this week telling us that."

"It seems like everyone's got their supporters who are really eccentric, I've seen Buddy Dyer supporters who are just as eccentric," he said.

But Digirolamo isn't put off and continues to help create assemble signs.

Digirolamo acknowledges that Perez has been able to garner more support from college students compared to other candidates. But he says that's not just a result of Perez's UCF affiliation, but because the candidate's agenda has addressed college student concerns instead of ignoring them.

"Being a graduate from UCF, Tico can improve the relations between UCF and the City of Orlando," he said. "The university has a lot of alumni in the city of Orlando which is a gateway Tico can provide."

Transportation is also a major issue in Tico's campaign that affects students," he said. "The biggest thing that affects students is roads because everyone drives on I-4 and 408."

That Perez's campaign has also appealed to the younger generation stretches beyond UCF.

Through Tico's been so involved in the community, he's touched a lot of people's lives and he's had the opportunity to work with so many young people on different fronts," said Alan Fowler, a former UCF graduate who worked on Perez's campaign beginning in 1999 and continues to volunteer today.

Perez's vision to turn Orlando into a vibrant community filled with culture, art and entertainment has also appealed to the college demographic plan to settle in Orlando after graduation.

"He is completely committed to revitalizing and putting all kinds of life into the city of Orlando," he said. "He wants to fix the city's woes and make this a place where people want to live."

"It's not just Perez's political ideologies that have won his student supporters. His strong characters have also renewed these students' faith in politicians."

"He's very open-minded to any idea tossed at him," Digirolamo said. "He listens to people and wants to know what others have to say. If it's doable, he'll do it. He doesn't push on an act. I know a lot of politicians who put on acts."

While Perez's character has renewed students' interest in politics, Jeff Jonasen, Perez's campaign manager, said it's refreshing to see college students back on the campaign trail.

"I was involved in campaigns in college, so it's nice to see students in city politics," Jonasen said. "I've worked for Buddy Dyer and never saw quite as many students involved. I appreciate that they chose to be involved here."

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Ride calls Columbia tragedy unavoidable

FROM PAGE 1

tions listened.

Later in the day she spoke to girls in middle school. The College of Engineering and Computer Science hosted Sunday’s event, called the Sally Ride Science Festival.

The fifth-graders’ questions focused on Saturday morning’s disaster. Ride, wearing a burgundy long-sleeve shirt and looking tired from the many interviews she had conducted following the tragedy, answered their questions as best she could.

Ride, who flew on two missions to space on the shuttle Challenger before it exploded on January 28, 1986, served on the presidential commission that investigated the Challenger tragedy. Seven astronauts, including schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe, died on that mission.

The Columbia accident happened 17 years and four days after the Challenger explosion. Ride remained optimistic that the Columbia accident “was not an isolated event.”

Based upon her experience investigating the Challenger, Ride did not want to speculate on what caused the Columbia accident. “I think people are focused on the issue of what may have been problems somewhere around or inside the left wing of the shuttle,” Ride said.

“Some of the issues from the Columbia accident and investigation are not ready to pre-guess what the problem may have been.”

Ride stressed that people not rush to judgment on what caused the Columbia accident. “I think NASA is very good at having backup plans after backup plans after backup plans. No everything you can think of, they plan for.”

This was something that was very unexpected and nothing could be done.

Ride stressed that it would be wrong until the shuttle went back up and you started seeing the streaks in the sky.

“Things happened much too quietly,” she added. “NASA is very good at having backup plan after backup plan after backup plan. No everything you can think of, they plan for.”

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Based upon her experience investigating the Challenger, Ride did not want to speculate on what caused the Columbia accident. “In the first few days of the Challenger investigation, there were lots of theories, and they all turned out to be wrong,” she said.

“So, I think it’s sad that we just don’t know yet.”

Although she does not know what caused the accident, Ride said, “We have another horrible day.”

Ride, a physics professor at the University of California in San Diego, said NASA could not prevent Saturday’s accident. “There was no time to react once they realized there was something wrong until basically it was over.”

Ride said “NASA had no indication that there was a serious problem until the shuttle just didn’t show up and you started seeing the streaks in the sky.”

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Space pioneer inspires women

MIKE BLAKLEY
STAFF WRITER

Sally Ride, the first American woman in space and Major General Maraville Harris, former director of the U.S. Space Alliance, spoke about women's roles in space exploration before a group of 300 elementary school and middle school girls at UCF on Saturday.

Ride's Space Festival aimed at encouraging girls to pursue math and science careers. But before the Sally Ride Space Festival could begin, Ride and Harris allowed the young women to ask questions about the shuttle Columbia tragedy that claimed the lives of seven astronauts the morning before.

"My experience has been, at times like this, people want to get together," Ride said.

"I think although yesterday was a horrible day for the space program, it will go on and get better because of it," she said.

The Challenger Centers across the nation, she said, serve as a memorial to lost crew members, as well as an inspiration for the children who want to become tomorrow's astronauts. She expects something similar will happen for Columbia's crew.

"Although she helped with the investigation following the Challenger accident, she said she is not currently assisting in shuttle Columbia's investigation. "I will help by offering any perspective I have from my experiences," she told students.

Ride also told the young women how she grabbed the opportunity to travel to space more than 20 years ago.

"I was working on my Ph.D. at Stanford, and I remember NASA ran ads in our school paper because they were looking for women to join the space program," she said. "I saw one of them and ripped it out immediately. I studied my application into the first mail-in I came across."

Her father, a political science professor, always encouraged her to pursue science, she said, even though he had no idea what astrophysics was about.

"My father could not explain to his friends what his daughter was doing," she said. "Then I became an astronaut, and his problem was solved."

Despite Saturday's tragedy Ride said she would return to space given the opportunity.

"I like what John Glenn did," she said. "I'm gonna call NASA in 25 or 30 years and tell them I want to go back too."

Harris said women have gone to great lengths, even posed as men, to serve their country and have made considerable contributions throughout history.

"It is not unusual for women to be a part of what's good for this country," she said. "We've always been a part of it."

Harris handled questions crucial to NASA's exploration programs.

"Space isn't the next frontier," Harris said. "We're already there and we're going to keep going there."

After their speech, the women fielded questions about what scares them, what inspires them and what space food tastes like.

"Things like orbital echoes, orbital rings and noticeable atmospheres were simplified and explained in less than three sentences," one student challenged Ride asking whether it was fair to let people buy their way into space.

"I'll tell you all for sending civilians into space," Ride said. "But I think we need a system of merit to choose them, not just based on who has the biggest paycheck."

She said a diverse amount of people should travel into space. "Missionaries and journalists can describe the experience in a much different perspective than an engineer or a scientist can," she said.

Despite the loss of shuttle Columbia's crew, Ride spoke optimistically about NASA's future.

"It's going to go on and it's going to get better," she said. "And the kids growing up today are going to be a big part of it."
DON'T GROUND MANNED MISSIONS

M ANY AMERICANS WEREN'T THINKING about the Columbia space shuttle's return to Earth Saturday morning. In fact, most have come to consider space travel so routine that in this day and age that lift-offs and landings hardly ever made the headlines anymore. But Saturday's tragedy made headlines and made Americans realize that blasting shuttles into space is still an extraordinarily feat — still risky and imperfect.

While President Bush vowed that space exploration would proceed, many Americans were left wondering if there were just too many costs to continue to risk human lives in space missions. In a time of soaring health care costs, a possible war with Iraq, and a plummeting economy, are space missions a vital priority for America? While it seems that there are few other reasons to turn space to enough to satisfy much need for knowledge, America's space program must instead focus on pressing for several reasons.

America's need to continue to send more humans into space because machines, regardless of how innovative they may be, cannot make the same contributions to space study and research that human experience can. Machines cannot inspire students to join the nation's space program the way veteran astronauts can. Without space missions, Americans may never have seen some of the many innovations that are a result of space exploration.

Manned space missions should continue because exploring the unknown is a fundamental of human spirit — the same spirit that inspired adventurers to travel across the oceans to unknown lands centuries ago now pushes scientists to conduct experiments and make discoveries that have benefited mankind in many practical ways.

Grounding the space program forever isn't the answer; the solution however calls for major overhauls for NASA and space exploration.

But the only way the space program can successfully continue to exist requires more attention and funding from the government and from the American public than it has received in recent years.

The best way to ensure that humans are never lost in space missions again is to replace 20-year-old shuttles with new space vehicles — even at a price tag of $48 billion or $50 billion.

Tell them that friction and fracture off space vehicles aren't acceptable either — beating shields need to be designed to withstand intense conditions that don't have to be second-guessed by scientists.

American must remember that compromising manned space missions may have saved seven lives in this event, and may save lives in the future, but it will also destroy the human spirit of exploration.

BLACK DEGREE PERCENTAGES IN LINE WITH BLACK POPULATION

Incidentally, the University of Michigan did not give extra points to Asians. Additionally, one should consider the demographics of Michigan's admissions system, which space 20 points, out of a possible 75, for being black, and only 25 for a perfect SAT on the math. In Michigan, applicants received more points for being part of the 10-20 percent of the state's black population that were 81 percent of the students who admitted that a perfect SAT were.

—BRUCE M. SAUND

BLACK DEGREE PERCENTAGES IN LINE WITH BLACK POPULATION

Student who have approved that $8.43 to UCF for the spring semester, $32,000 to the University of Michigan did not give extra points to Asians. Additionally, one should consider the demographics of Michigan's admissions system, which space 20 points, out of a possible 75, for being black, and only 25 for a perfect SAT on the math. In Michigan, applicants received more points for being part of the 10-20 percent of the state's black population that were 81 percent of the students who admitted that a perfect SAT were.

—BRUCE M. SAUND

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Kathy Garver "Family Affair"
Richard Biggs "Babylon 5"
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David Prowse "Star Wars"
Peter Mayhew "Star Wars"
Patricia Zentilli "Lexx"
Brian Downey "Lexx"
more to be announced...

Tony Bedard
J. Scott Campbell
Frank Cho
Scott Ciencin
Amanda Conner
Marie Croall
Chuck Dixon
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This sport takes the cake, or its athletes do

MENTAL DOODLES

CHRISTOPHER ARNOLD

STAFF WRITER

"It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen." - George Orwell

When the United States apparently has had the munitions for quite some time and without adequate physical activity to offset the added weight gain — or, the Fed’s don’t count — we are not only getting fat but we are cutting years off of our lives.

In addition to noting the rise in obesity studies have begun to estimate just how much time you are cheating yourself by not maintaining one’s healthy weight. According to them, and based on your height, weight, age, and other factors, you could be losing your life expectancy by three to seven years. In doing so, you become a more likely candidate for health problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and stroke. So, in a nutshell, based on the aforementioned information compiled from CNN and other reputable news agencies, obesity is bad.

Hold that thought in your head. Obesity is bad. In addition to that, because obesity is good.

At least according to Travel Channel’s “Vogue Battle of the Buffets.” And seconded by Discovery’s “Outbustiers.” And squashed the median was passed when Fox aired “The Flinton Bowl.” In 2002, other networks have aired similar specials, evidence of the growing popularity of one of the hottest sports to be dubbed “extreme.”

What these shows have done is package what traditionally is found at county fairs and super-sized them into commercial consumption competition. These events are held annually all over the country, and their numbers increase each year. They are sponsored by restaurant chains and food manufacturers. One event, held in New York and sponsored by Ben’s Kosher Deli, was held with the philosophy of raising money to help the homeless and hungry.

That’s right. This new breed of “athletes.” In all their 200-plus pounds of glory downed baseball-sized monster balls incessantly to help feed the hungry. A noble end, no doubt, but the path there seems a bit sketchy.

Even more interesting is the entire subculture of people who continue to flock to this so-called sport. The audiences are there, many of which probably just needed something to attend after the Central00000ceased production of Battleships. As long as people show up for these events, they will remain.

These audiences befall upon the contests their own brand of cruelty. Over-eating has in fact been placed upon a pedestal under the guise of sport, complete with its own governing body: the International Federation of Competitive Eating (IFOCE, whose meetings I unfortunately am held at the IHO). It even comes with its own training regimen that includes development of stomach capacity, jaw strength and hand speed.

You don’t get to be a world champion eater by just eating, after all.

And, did I mention that the International Olympic Committee has been petitioned to make competitive eating a medal event? Absurd, but true.

Modern-day obesity has been partly attributed to consumers’ ignorance of the nutritional elements of the food they are eating. Similarly, it is an ignorance that has led to this rise in eating competitions. We have turned the situation into the admirable and readily rewarded industry that enforces good eating habits on the masses.

While few might see this as a sport, and instead look upon its newfound cult-like status, the greater dangers it presents may not yet be fully appreciated. We are at true reverse the trend of increasing obesity, most agree it can only be accomplished through prevention and keeping children fit early on. How can we realistically hope to accomplish this if networks continue to hatch on this damaging new genre?

We can’t. Something, eventually, will have to give.

Obesity is good. Obesity is bad. Good is bad. Orwell is alive and well.

Edward Olowskii can be reached at edward@ucf.edu

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Valentine’s Day is quickly approaching and you’re probably looking for the perfect gift for your Valentine! Look No Further!

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UCF Baseball team
PING PONG
Boyd’s return lifts Knights

Matt Bethon
StafF Writer

Ray Abellard scored 15 points, and the Golden Knights used a suffocating zone defense to defeat Samford 58-52 Saturday night at the UCF arena.

The Knights (15-7, 7-2 A-Sun) are off to their best start ever in the Atlantic Sun under Head Coach Kirk Speraw. They also improved to 4-1 in the conference when playing at home.

In a matchup of the two best defenses in the A-Sun, the Knights jumped out to an early advantage. Leading 16-11, UCF held Samford scoreless for nearly seven minutes of the first half, as the Bulldogs committed five turnovers and missed all three of its field-goal attempts. J. Robert Merritt ended the drought by hitting back-to-back three-pointers, but the Knights still led 27-17 going into halftime.

The Knights were sparked by the return of Martain Boyd, who sat out the previous game after suffering a concussion. UCF’s premier defensive stopper stressed the importance of the team’s focus on defense.

“Defense wins games, we’re definitely gonna survive with our defense,” Boyd said. “If our offense isn’t there, you best believe that the other teams are gonna score more points than we are. Our defense is too tough.”

The Knights led by as many as 15 in the second half, but allowed the Bulldogs to creep back into the game. With 2:50 left,

Please see Belmont’s on 16

Sophomore Stephanie Best hit a school-record two triples in UCF’s 21-0 win over Morris Brown on Saturday.

Knights earn FIRST WINS of season

UCF beat B-CC, Morris Brown
Sadie Sham
StafF Writer

In their first day of play at the UCF Invitational, the Golden Knights picked up two W’s in a double-header and made school history. In the first game UCF beat Bethune-Cookman College 8-3. The Knights run-ruled Morris Brown in the second game 21-0.

Against Bethune-Cookman College, UCF scored first in the second inning when sophomore Stephanie Best scored on a fielder’s choice by sophomore Lindsay Bush. The Knights slapped on two more runs in the next inning. In the fourth inning pitcher

Please see Best on 17

Women’s Basketball Notebook

UCF sweeps through North

Chris Bernhardt
Staff Writer

The Golden Knights got off to a strong start on their stretch of six games against Atlantic Sun North Division opponents by sweeping a two-game road trip this week, improving to 10-8 overall and 6-1 in the A-Sun. They are tied with Florida Atlantic for first place in the South Division.

On Saturday afternoon the Golden Knights took on Samford (4-14, 0-7), taking advantage of the sub-par opponent for a runaway 71-49 triumph.

They shot poorly in the first half (30 percent) only to turn it around in the second (40 percent). But the lousy shooting allowed the Bulldogs to tie the game four times after UCF got a 12-6 lead early. The Golden Knights found themselves up by only two, 20-18, at halftime after Marvelous Washington hit a jumper with 30 second left in the period.

The Golden Knights came out of the half much better, opening up a 49-33 advantage on a three-pointer by guard Shayla Smith. Meanwhile, they held Samford to just five field goals in the entire second half and 25 percent for the game while hitting 16-21 free throws in the final period to seal a successful road trip.

The freshman Smith had a career-high 13 points for UCF to go along with Erin Paige’s seven points and nine rebounds, while guard ChrislCHEESE had 19 points for Samford.

On Thursday they traveled to Belmont to take on the Bruins (11-5, 2-4 in the A-Sun) and came away with a tight 71-68 victory.

The Bruins controlled things early, getting out to as much as an 18-12 lead at the 8:53 mark of the first half. But UCF stormed back, gaining advantage for the first time when forward Tulea Allen went coast-to-coast for a layup and a 26-26 edge. The Golden Knights finished the period on a 20-8 run for a 30-20 lead at intermission.

Neither team had much fielding in the opening half, with UCF hitting just 30 percent from the field compared to Belmont’s 39 percent. But that turned around in the second half.

Belmont opened up a 38-28 lead within the first five minutes of the period but would quickly see that vanish thanks to a 17-4 Golden Knights’ run. Belmont would remain close down the stretch, cutting the lead to 57-55 with just under five minutes left and 64-62 on a Hollie Davis three-pointer with just over two minutes remaining.

Please see Roberts on 16
Watch For Toll Plaza Lane Changes!

Major changes are scheduled to occur in the northbound direction of State Road 417 at the University Main Toll Plaza. For approximately two months, there will be a concrete barrier separating the two northbound E-PASS lanes of State Road 417.

- E-PASS customers exiting to University Boulevard use right lanes only.
- E-PASS customers continuing north on State Road 417 (towards Aloma Avenue) use far left lane.

A graphical description of the toll plaza layout for this phase has been provided for your benefit. Watch for message boards placed along State Road 417 with exact dates for lane changes.

Why All The Changes?
The Expressway Authority is widening State Road 417 between State Road 50 and University Boulevard, and expanding the University Main Toll Plaza to include highway speed Express E-PASS lanes. Improvements are also being made to the University Boulevard Interchange.

What’s Next?
- Toll plaza construction to be complete in April 2003.
- Total project completion anticipated by June 2003.

For More Information
Contact: Mary Brooks
Public Information Officer
(407) 709-9840 or E-mail: info@oocea.com

Log on to:
www.expresswayauthority.com/construction/roadwork
or call 407-82EPPASS
Samford also pace the conference in offensive rebounds per game with 15.4. They also managed to do a great job of rebounding margin, grabbing 3.4 more boards per game then their opponents.

Roberts continues coming off the bench

From Page 14

But UCF hit seven of eight free throws to close out the game and held off a last second three-point barrage by the Bruins. The Golden Knights shot 52 percent in the second half and the Bruins hit 50 percent of their shots, a total 180 from their bright first half.

Arkansas Billings came off the bench to score 17 points. Allen added 16 points and eight rebounds, while Paige and guard Jessica Scala had 11 and 10 points, respectively. Forward Brandi Miller had a game-high 23 points for Belmont, followed by center Christy Campbell with 16. Forward Brandi Miller had a double-double with 11 points and 12 rebounds.

Weber a hit from the line

Against Samford Saturday, freshman center Forward Brandi Miller had a game-high 23 points for Belmont, followed by center Christy Campbell with 16. Forward Brandi Miller had a double-double with 11 points and 12 rebounds.

Weber a hit from the line

Against Samford Saturday, freshman center Forward Brandi Miller had a game-high 23 points for Belmont, followed by center Christy Campbell with 16. Forward Brandi Miller had a double-double with 11 points and 12 rebounds.

Clearing the offensive glass

The Golden Knights have managed to do a great job of giving themselves second chances to score, leading the conference in offensive rebounds per game with 15.4. They also pace the A-Sun in rebounding margin, grabbing 3.4 more boards per game than their opponents.

Roberts still in reserve

Sophomore center All Roberts may have become the school’s all-time shot blocking queen, but she still hasn’t won her starting spot back. She has come off the pine in each of the last seven games, though it probably has more to do with her production than anything else. She has averaged 8.4 points, 5.1 rebounds and 1.85 blocks per game since the move, all above her season averages.

For the record, she now has 20 blocks on the season, which ranks eighth on the school’s single-season list. She already has the second spot with her 78 block effort last season and last week became the first woman in school histo ry to go over 100 blocks for her career. She now stands at 164.

Around the A-Sun

Cassie Collins of Gardner- Webb University was named Player of the Week on Jan. 29. She posted a season-high 19 points in back-to-back games against Belmont and Samford. She also shot 58 percent from the field and 84 percent from the free throw line over that stretch, leading her team to wins in both games.

She is the first player from Gardner-Webb to garner the honor this year.

Belmont’s buzzer beater nails UCF

From Page 14

Phillip Ramrell sealed in a three-point pointer to cut the lead to five. The load remained at five with under a minute left, but Doctor Lyons put the game away when he made an aerobic block on the defensive end, and then took the ball the length of the floor for a layup that put the Bulldogs up 59-51. After Eddie Harper hit a three for the Bulldogs, Abellard closed out the scoring with a pair of free throws.

Lyons admitted the team was a little concerned after letting Samford back into the game. "We kind of got a little hecked-up, but we just felt that we needed to calm down and pick everything up," he said.

Both teams shot the ball well. The Knights finished at 47.7 percent, and the Bulldogs shot 46.5 percent from the floor. Abellard finished with 13 points and three assists, and Lyons added nine points and five rebounds. Troy Lindbeck also added nine points for the Knights, connecting on three of four attempts from beyond the arc. Samford was led by Merritt and Harper, who scored 14 points apiece.

After the game, UCF Coach Kirk Speraw praised the team’s effort on the defensive end. "I think we’re taking a little pride in that end of the floor," he said. "The guys have been really consistent, and I thought it was nice character after losing a heartbreaker to Belmont on Thursday night. The Knights led by as many as 12 points in the second half, only to see the lead slip away. Trailing 58-59, Abellard hit a clutch three-pointer with 12 seconds left to tie the game, but James Senn hit a layup as time expired to give Belmont a 59-58 victory.

Roberto Marcoru hit his best game in a UCF uniform, scoring a career-high 30 points and eight rebounds. Paterson also added 14 points and eight boards. Horizon shooting in the second half, however, doomed the Knights. UCF shot just 20 percent in the second half, and finished the game at 38.2 percent. The loss was even more puzzling considering the Knights forced Belmont into 24 turnovers and out-rebounded them 52-26.

The mood was somber after Thursday’s performance. "We were a little down on ourselves, but we just had to bounce back," Lloyd said.

Lyons was determined not to let the loss influence the team heading into Saturday. "Every champion team goes down sometime, but it takes a real champion to get back up," UCF holds the second-best record in the conference, and will look to continue its success in the upcoming week. The Golden Knights go on the road Tuesday against Campbell before returning Saturday to play host to Gardner- Webb at the UCF Arena.
Best leads UCF’s offensive attack

BY ADAM ROSCHE

UCF Athletics This Week

Support Your Knights!

“Hoops and Scoops!”

Mon., Feb. 3rd at 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Meal plan students... Join the Women's Basketball team for ice cream and autographs in the Marketplace!

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“Hoops and Scoops!”

Mon., Feb. 3rd at 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Meal plan students... Join the Women's Basketball team for ice cream and autographs in the Marketplace!

Women's Basketball v. Georgia State
Thurs., Feb. 6th at 5 p.m. - UCF Arena

Baseball Home Opener v. FIU
Sat., Feb. 8th at 1 p.m. - Jay Bergman Field (Behind the UCF Arena)

Women's Basketball v. Jacksonville State
Sat., Feb. 8th at 3:00 p.m. - UCF Arena - CONFERENCE PLAY

Men's Basketball v. Gardner Webb
Sat., Feb. 8th at 7:30 p.m. - UCF Arena - CONFERENCE PLAY

Baseball v. FIU
Sun., Feb. 9th at 1 p.m. - Jay Bergman Field (Behind the UCF Arena)

Admission is FREE

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All other UCF fans, call 407-UCF-GOLD for tickets!

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SIGNING DAY

SPORTS

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ADAM RoscHE

UCF football coach Mike Kruak will find out Wednesday who will make up his 2003 recruiting class. Wednesday is the first day high school senior football players can sign and deliver their National Letter of Intent to the colleges of their choice. UCF will hold a press conference announcing its signees Wednesday afternoon. Look for positional breakdowns of UCF’s newest recruiting class in Monday’s edition of The Future.

Tri-DMC wins 2nd annual outdoor adventure race

Recreation and Wellness Center. Several teams were undefeated in the regular season and are looking to take home the ever-popular IM Championship Trophy. Lambda Chi Alpha and Alpha Delta Pi are on their way to winning the Greek Points trophies again this year, both teams finished the regular season 6-0. ROM Underdogs are looking to defend their 2002 spring Co-ed Volleyball Championship with their 6-1 finish in the Tuesday Co-ed division. Vertically Challenged finished 5-1 and is looking to avenge their loss in the Open Rec finals last year. Go to www.IMsports.ucf.edu to view the playoff brackets.

Sign up today for Floor Hockey and Pegasus Landing Basketball at www.IMsports.ucf.edu.

Volleyball playoff time

The 2003 Volleyball tournament will get underway tomorrow night in the Recreation and Wellness Center. Several teams were undefeated in the regular season and are looking to take home the ever-popular IM Championship Trophy. Lambda Chi Alpha and Alpha Delta Pi are on their way to winning the Greek Points trophies again this year, both teams finished the regular season 6-0. ROM Underdogs are looking to defend their 2002 spring Co-ed Volleyball Championship with their 6-1 finish in the Tuesday Co-ed division. Vertically Challenged finished 5-1 and is looking to avenge their loss in the Open Rec finals last year. Go to www.IMsports.ucf.edu to view the playoff brackets.

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Fear Factor

Contestant Julie Reish, on the stunts she performed:

Event #1: Contestants had to run to the top of a fire or electric wire, knowing when it would stop or change speed. The two females who stayed at it longest advanced.

"I was very happy when I finished the event...The hardest part was staying on because of the changing speeds."

Event #2: Fear factor Pizza, which consisted of a crust made of bile, a tomato sauce of coagulated blood, rotten cheese and a topping of worms or bloodworms. Fish was an option.

"I wasn't going to do it, but then a girl challenged me and that got me aggravated...On television it wasn't as bad looking as it actually was. I'm the disgusting girl now."

Event #3: Contestants were chained to a platform with a lock on either side; contestants were challenged to open the lock with the three keys they were given - after being locked into a tank of freezing water.

"I was scared to death," Reish said. "I just panicked. I had a plan, and I tried to focus, but I lost it after the plan was ruined."

UFC student competes on reality television

Consolidation aids students in debt

Mike Riegel
Staff Writer

For some, college represents the best time of their life — the best time to fall into debt, that is. Credit card debt, student loans and our payments are often taken for granted by students until they have to start paying the bills themselves. Yet, there are some like junior Jason Ramos, 22, who have found a way to keep as much of their money as possible and avoid debt.

"I refinanced my car loan and I figure that I'll have nowhere around $1,200," he said. "My monthly payments are the same, but my interest rate dropped and I'll be able to pay my car off a lot sooner."

When Ramos purchased his 98 Honda Accord in September of 2000, he was happy to just hear that his loan was approved and he would be driving off the lot in his new car.

"I didn't know much about annual percentage rates, but when my uncle told me about them, I decided to refinance as soon as I could."

What Ramos found, without a great deal of effort, was a list of lenders willing to loan him money at considerably reduced rates.

"I tried an Internet search, looked in the phone book and talked to my family members," he said. "Most [lenders] got back to me in less than two days. I guess they all wanted my money, even if they were getting less of it than the bank I had my loan through."

Another popular pitfall for students is the infamous plastic cash, otherwise known as the credit card. One simple swipe, followed by a PIN number or a signature, and the item is paid for with nothing to worry about — at least until the bill comes in the mail. This concept of instant gratification has lured more than a few people into a cycle of increasing debt and additional credit card accounts.

"I have about six credit cards," sophomore Patricia Conroy, 23, said. "It started with shopping and only paying the minimum amount every month. Then, I got another card when I lost my job and I put my rent on that one for a couple of months. After the first two, the offers [for new credit cards] poured in and it got really easy to sign up for them."

Senior Kyle Hammon, 23, shared a similar experience with credit cards.

"I figured things were out of hand when I financed a Big Gulp. I knew I was bad with money and it turned out that I was worse with plastic."

But there is help for those who have become ensnared in credit card debt. Consumer Credit Counseling is a non-profit organization that helps "consolidate credit cards, department store cards and personal loans into one monthly payment. This process will often lead to creditors waiving late fees, over-limit fees, re-aging (bring current your account if you are delinquent),"
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Credit counseling helps balance funds

FROM PAGE 19

counseling.org or by calling toll-free at (877) 428-6903. This service and many others like it will offer their services free of charge, or at least offer a free consultation.

However, credit card balances and loan repayments are not always the primary source of debt for a college student. The cost of attending a university, especially for someone lacking graduate level credentials, can also lead to costly student loans.

College Funding Services offers consolidation and refinancing of student loans of all kinds. Federal loan payments can be decreased by up to 56 percent, according to its Web site at www.worldsbestcollege.com. In order to be eligible, one must consolidate at least $10,000 in federal loans and all loans must be in a grace period or active repayment.

For those with private student loans, the amount owed must be $7,500 or greater and either the borrower or the lender must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. College Funding Services offers free online applications for any type of loan, which allows people to preview the benefits of refinancing at no cost. They can also be reached toll-free at (888) 423-5702.

No matter what an individual’s situation may be, there is never a bad time to manage their finances.

“It’s almost never too early or late, to reconsolidate your balances,” Larson said.

Where to go for more information:

Consumer Credit Counseling
www.non-profit-credit-counseling.org
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Raising limits on student loans

College lobbyists across the nation are trying to convince congress that there is a need to raise the limit on how much money college students are allowed to borrow through federal loan programs.

The lobbyists are arguing that the limits, which were set 10 years ago, need to be updated to compensate for the ever-increasing costs of education. Many student groups believe that if the federal loan limit is increased, students who are already in debt from borrowing too much money would be buried in debt three-fold.

The 10,000 UCF students borrowing about $47 million in federal student loans this academic year believe that they do not need any more money. In addition, their loans, in combination with grants, scholarships and jobs, provide them with enough money to pay for their college expenses.

Counselor, Minnick, said that her office limits students over most of her expenses and she doesn’t feel the need to borrow any more money.

Junior Louis Sebastian, 23, and sophomore Ashley Deckel, 19, both agreed with Corder.

Deckel, a Stafford loan coverer her rent and very small expenses, making her grant and scholarship money extra spending cash.

In concluding, students believe an increase in the amount of money students can borrow from federal loans may be a bad idea.

"I would highly recommend that students first apply for loans through Student Financial Assistance before considering these optional loans," Lisa Minnick, an intern associate director of the Student Financial Assistance office, said.

“Optional/Educational loans are marketed to students and parents who are, sometimes not aware that these loans have higher interest rates and origina-
Students engaged by so-called reality

CityWalk, but instead was discovered by casting agents while she was working at a downtown bar.

"I was waiting off with a co-worker when some casting agents came up to me and asked me to audition for Fear Factor. At first I said no, especially because of the eating part, but then they told me maybe I would get lucky and not have to eat anything.

After my interview, she was asked to make a 10-minute taping for the Los Angeles producers to watch.

"Most people just make a tape of themselves talking, Reish said. "But my tape was outrageous. I performed my own stunts and it was a lot like Jackass," it was very silly.

Within a month, Reish was flown out to Los Angeles for the taping of the show. Before the taping, the contestants were probed interesting with each other, Reish said.

"Nothing was scripted. It was very much a "jam session," he heard that some other reality shows aren't, but all of our conversations were fresh and real.

Reish participated in two Fear Factor tests before making it to the final round. The first event had the contestants run to the top of a five-story Ferris wheel, not knowing when it would stop or change speeds. Reish was not only the first person to go, but also scored the best time out of the women.

"I was very happy when I finished the event," she said, "but I am not scared of heights so it wasn't a problem. The hardest part was staying on because of the changing speeds."

Although Reish became a contestant of "Fear Factor" in hopes that she would not have to eat anything, her next event was the "Fear Factor" pizza.

The pizza, which consisted of a crust made of bile, a tomato sauce of coagulated blood, rotten cheese and a topping of boiled out fish eyes revealed a major challenge for Reish.

"I wasn't going to do it, but then my teammates challenged me and that got me aggravated," she said. "On television it wasn't as bad looking as it actually was. I'm the disgusting girl now."

After an energizing dinner, Reish made it to the final round to face her greatest fear.

However, the final event would be Reish's downfall. It chained contestants to a platform with a lock on each side and the contestants were challenged to open the locks with the three keys they were given. One contestant then lowered into a tank of cold water.

Reish had planned out in her head how she was going to do the stunt.

"I was scared to death," Reish said. "I just panicked. I had a plan, and I tried to focus, but I lost it and the plan was ruined."

Despite her success in the first two events, Reish did not win anything, not even a T-shirt or hat. But Reish still encourages others to participate in reality television shows for a good laugh and their 15 minutes of fame.

Like Reish, many UCF students are attracted to reality television shows. Sophomore Keila Ayub, 19, said that she watches several reality television shows, such as "The Real World," "Fear Factor" and "The Challenge."

"I watch them because they are just really funny." Ayub added "The Realities," for instance. "I like to watch and see what Kelly is wearing."

Reality television is an entertaining form of television, but should not be taken liberally. Associate Professor NIKI Jo Radcliffe, 19, said.

"Sometimes, I like to see what they will make people do, but I don't take it seriously," Radcliffe said. "I know that even though they call it reality it is still television."

Professor Lee Moore, who teaches social and cultural psychology, said people enjoy watching reality television shows because they can relate to the television shows to their own life.

"When people watch dating shows for example, they often watch to see if they are doing the right things when they are on dates. It is also a great way for people to live vicariously through others."

Most people participate in reality television for the money, Moore said. It takes an aggressive and risk-taking type of personality to participate, she added.

"But it's not really reality. The events are actually happening, but it is not what people would normally do if they weren't on camera."

Although Reish did not successfully complete all the events in "Fear Factor," she said she had experienced it all for a worthwhile use.

"If challenged me in certain ways, she said. "The main point was to put mind over matter, which I did in the first two stunts."

Ask a DOC

Patricia Stuart
All Student Health Services

I am planning a visit to Student Health Services. How can I make the best use of my appointment?

There are more opportunities than ever to learn about your health and how to take better care of yourself. Physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists and you make up your health care team. To reduce the risks of side effects related to using medications and to receive the maximum benefit, your participation is needed to be an active member of the health care team.

First of all: speak up

The more information your health care team members know about you, the better they can create a plan of care especially customized for you. Things to tell your health team include: your complete medical history, if you are seeing more than one health care provider, any allergies and sensitivities you have, the medications you take daily and occasionally, including prescription and over-the-counter medications, any dietary supplements you use including vitamins and herbs and anything else that may affect your ability to use a medication that has been prescribed for you.

Second: ask questions

Your health care team is here to help you make the best-informed decisions and choices regarding your health care. At your first visit with a provider, base your questions and questions written down. You may even want to take some notes during your visit.

Third: learn the facts about any medications you are taking

Before you purchase the medication, whether it is prescription or over-the-counter, as much as you can about the medication, including generic versus brand names, active ingredients, its proper use, including any contraindications, exactly how the medication is to be taken, warnings and precautions, interactions — especially with foods, other medications and dietary supplements, side effects and adverse reactions. Also, always check the expiration date of a medication. Many pharmacies now will provide you with an information sheet on the medication. Make sure you read it thoroughly before taking the medication and if you don't understand something about it, ask questions. They are there to assist you.

Balance the benefits and risks of the prescribed medication

After you have received and exchanged all the information, consider your options. At this point, you must decide if the benefits you hope to achieve from taking this medication outweigh the known risks. The final decision is yours.

If you decide to take the medication, FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS. Follow the instructions exactly on the label to maximize the benefits and to reduce the risks of any adverse reaction. Follow these guidelines for safety: read the label every time you fill the prescription before leaving the pharmacy. This will ensure that you have received the medication and will give you the opportunity to ask questions if you do not understand how to use it. Next read the label every time you are about to take the medication to be sure it is the right medication, for the right patient, the right dose and in the right way. Take the recommended dose exactly as prescribed, even if you are tempted to take more to feel better faster. This is never a good idea. Make sure you finish all the medication as directed even if you start to feel better before you have completed taking all the medication. Make sure you report back to your health care provider. Pay attention to how you feel and notify your provider if you develop any problems while taking the medication. If you think the medication isn't working, do not stop taking it without checking with your pharmacist or provider. Some medications take a longer time to work and some need to be stopped gradually to decrease any undesirable effects. Finally if you experience any side effects, let your health care provider know immediately. A change in medication or an adjustment in the dose may be needed.

Got a question you'd like to ask a Doc?
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March 1, 2003.
6 - 10 pm, Marriott World Center, Cocktail/Semi-Formal
The Etiquette Dinner is a dinner event, sponsored by EKCEL, that provides students with a four-course meal and an etiquette instructor in order to teach them how to dine professionally. Spaces for 100 people will be raffled. Sign up at the front desk in the Office of Student Activities Jan 27 - Feb 3, or online at http://www.osa.ucf.edu/Etiquette Dinner

Tue Feb 4
1:30 - 2:30 pm - Knights of the Round Table meeting for clubs, SU 224
9 pm - CAB Cinema presents "Punch Drunk Love," Cape Florida Ballroom, SU 316

Wed Feb 5
1 - 5 pm SAK Improv Comedy Class. Class limited to 20 participants, SU 224
6 pm Dance Marathon Dance Competition. Clubs can have fun and compete for prizes! Registration fees go to Children Miracle Network, Pegasus Ballroom.

Fri Feb 7
9 pm - 2 am Late Knights Polar Bear Pool Party. Recreation and Wellness Center.

Sat Feb 8
9 am - VUCF Beach Cleanup at Alan Shepard Park. Carpool from Millican Hall.
12pm - 4 pm SAK Improv Comedy Classes. Class limited to 20 participants, Student resource center Auditorium, and Wired Cafe.

Sun Feb 9
2 pm - Knight of Sushi, Fusion Restaurant. Learn to make sushi then eat your own creation. Advance registration required. Sign up in the Office of Student Activities, Rm. 208 in the Student Union.

Tue Feb 11
10 am - 6 pm VUCF Blood Drive, outside the SU
11 am - 2 pm VUCF Green Ribbon Day, SU South Patio
7:30 pm EKCEL "Time Management" workshop, SU 316
9 pm CAB Cinema presents "Moulin Rouge", SRC Aud.

Wed Feb 12
10 am - 6 pm VUCF Blood Drive, outside the SU
7:30 pm EKCEL "Time Management" workshop, SU 224
8 pm Battle of the Bands, UCF Arena

Fri Feb 14
7 pm Block Party sponsored by CAB and Affiliated Housing, Pegasus Landing

Visit us on the web at osa.ucf.edu
For more info on any of these events contact the Office of Student Activities, Rm. 208 in the SU, or call 407. 823.6471

Funded by the Activity and Service Fee as allocated by SGA
UCF students find ‘common ground’

SHELLEY MALMOR
STAFF WRITER

At the west end of the CIASB plaza, nestled in between Los Chinitos Chinese restaurant and the Downtown I Vera clothing store, sits Common Grounds Coffeehouse, one of the best-kept secrets for UCF students.

Common Grounds is a free coffeehouse donated to UCF students by the shopping center’s owner, Mary Demetree of Demetree Properties, and run completely by volunteers.

The key word, free, does not stop at just the admission price. Common Grounds also has free live music; free improve comedy shows, free meeting space for UCF clubs and organizations; and best of all, free coffee— all you have to do is serve yourself and then wash your cup in the sink after you finish.

“[It’s a free gathering place where] UCF students have the advantage of backgrounds could meet and connect on ‘common ground’,” senior Craig Stewart, 22, one of the volunteers who keeps Common Grounds up and running, said. “The whole purpose of the place is to create a community for just UCF students and not the general public in East Orlando.”

Stewart said he has been involved with Common Grounds since its origins almost two years ago, when it was just Demetree’s brainchild. Now he believes he is part of something big, so big in fact, that occasionally most of the crowd has to stand because there are no more seats on Friday nights, when a local band plays.

After plans solidified and Demetree donated the space, Stewart and other volunteers had to get the furnishings and decorations necessary for good ambiance for any coffeehouse. According to Stewart, he and others went to area stores and told them about Demetree’s donation to UCF students, and they returned the favor and donated everything from the couches to the coffee and even the paint for the walls and floor.

After lots of sweat and tears, Common Grounds finally opened in August 2002. It is now an eclectic blend of all the things a UCF coffeehouse fan could want, from the comfy couches and tables available to study on, to the relaxed artistic atmosphere with art to look at and books to read and, of course, the free coffee.

Common Grounds recently opened its walls up to aspiring UCF artists. They are currently displaying sculptures of clay platters, in addition to the hand-painted tables and floors, which Stewart said, “are pieces of art themselves.”

The coffeehouse also has gained a reputation for its regular weekly features, open-mic night on Mondays and the Friday night entertainment spectacular, featuring a live local band and an improv comedy troupe.

Last Friday’s turnout was one of the biggest, according to Stewart, with approximately 80 people who came to see some comedy and hear the sounds of the Orlando-based band, “A Hollywood Landing.”

“I had never been to this place before,” senior Melissa Mitchell, 22, who was part of the audience Friday night, said. “But I think it’s a great idea, and I’m sure I’ll come back.”

However, the message Stewart really wants to get out in that all UCF clubs and organizations may book Common Grounds, for free of course, as their meeting space. Although some clubs, like Greenpeace, do take advantage of this, many still do not, he said. To try and get the word out, Common Grounds has planned an expo day this Tuesday to try and draw clubs in.

“To prove the freebee thing we do all the time,” Stewart said. “On Tuesday Feb. 4 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Common Grounds is hosting EXPO 2003 for the officers of student clubs on campus to come get to know the place.”

“Local managers of businesses will give away free food all day, tell officers about the discounts their places offer UCF clubs exclusively and register everyone who comes for huge prizes for their clubs from these vendors,” he continued.

Stewart believes clubs would want to see Common Grounds as a meeting place because they have very few rules and regulations for the clubs when they hold their meetings there.

“They literally own the place for the time they schedule it,” he said. “They are free to bring their own food or get food delivered from anywhere without any rules about who they can or can’t use.”

Though it may not be as popular as some UCF areas hot spots, Common Grounds is surely making a name for itself. Stewart loves the volunteer work he does at Common Grounds, describing it as, “a perfect, hands-on experiences in meeting people and getting the community involved.”

Common Grounds is located at 12802 College Village Way in the CIASB plaza and can be contacted via phone at 407-828-1000, or by e-mailing malmor72@pa. The building is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays, and from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays.

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