

## Nature trail is a disgrace

**J. Bryant Roberts**  
Staff Writer

Is your accident insurance paid up? How about your cell phone? Do you have the emergency services number programmed into speed dial?

If so, you are ready for a stroll down the Edward Ball Nature Trail at the University of West Florida. Springtime breezes are soon to bring the smell of honeysuckle drifting across the swamp as birds, small and large, call from behind snow-white dogwood blossoms.

Pack a lunch, grab your cell phone, and prepare to meet nature on its own turf.

On Nov. 16, 1969, the Edward Ball Nature Trail was dedicated by the UWF's President Harold Crosby and other local dignitaries. The Edward Ball Wildlife Foundation of Tallahassee provided a \$10,000 grant for construction of the catwalk, as well as other improvements, thereby making the swamp along Thompson Bayou accessible to everyone at UWF and its surrounding communities.

But since then, little has been done to assuage the

ravages of time and weather that have brought the catwalk to its present degree of decrepitude.

The University has not allocated, or procured from outside sources, funding for proper upkeep and repair. At least one attempt to obtain a follow-up grant from the Ball Foundation was rejected, according to University personnel familiar with the trail's history. The foundation considered its contribution a one-time grant and assumed UWF would bear responsibility for maintaining the trail.

Walking along the trail today, one takes care to avoid rotting planks, benches and railings. Sinking supports produce an uneven, warped floor that intimidates walkers. Unable to navigate this space in wheelchairs, the handicapped are denied access to this serene and beautiful Southern hardwood forest.

Pamphlets once describing various plants and features of the walk are no longer available, and the "Nature Trail" link has been taken off the UWF Web site. Busses of children from area schools go elsewhere to learn about nature.

Many still use the catwalk. Granted, it beats a trudge through the muck. The natural beauty is there,

although its appreciation is hampered by safety concerns. Allowed to languish further, the catwalk will soon become unusable. What was once a rare asset will soon become relegated to old pieces of paper stored in the basement of the John C. Pace Library. So much for your picnic.

King Solomon once said, "Money hath an answer to all things."

Sufficient, ongoing funding is key to the nature trail's survival. Foundations such as the Nature Conservatory have funds available. Local businesses look for tax shelters and positive press offered by environmental projects. The grass-roots approach of holding bake sales and other fund-raisers is also an option. Money can be found if people are interested enough to spend time finding it.

The Edward Ball Nature Trail was meant to be an ongoing legacy for UWF alumni, students and faculty, as well as an educational benefit for Pensacola-area residents. The reasons for its demise are not important.

Restoring and improving this resource is a mission worthy of the investments of time and energy needed to accomplish that goal.

## Love's in bloom, but I'm allergic

Valentine's Day. Let's pause while every male reader has a panic attack. (Remember to breathe, boys.)

That's right. Valentine's Day is near again. Consider this your public service message. Or, if you prefer, a test of the emergency broadcast system.

Obviously, this week we're discussing Valentine's Day. I'm going to make it easy.

Valentine's Day sucks.

That's right. It just sucks.

And you'd better get ready gentlemen, because your yearly exam is coming up. Do you have your No. 2 pencils? Do you have your \$20 box of chocolates and your \$60 bouquet of flowers? Well, you better, because the next guy does, and you can be sure that your lovely lady knows it.

I feel I'm qualified to expose Valentine's Day as a commercial sham because I have vast experience in the matters of love. For example, when I'm not writing this column, I am steadily retranslating the Karma Sutra for modern readers.

All right, I'm not. But wouldn't that be cool? "Chapter 28: The Milkshake That Brings All The Boys To The Yard."

Actually, my experience comes from being a wedding videographer. For a man, that's frightening work. I have seen more weddings than any man should ever have to see.

Let me put it this way: I have nightmares of being chased down the aisle by a ravenous beast made of white chiffon.

But through every ceremony, I did notice one thing that every minister, priest, or rabbi repeats: "Love is not a feeling, it's a commitment."

It's not a feeling, it's a commitment. Think about that for a moment.

Movies, as our modern source of education, have shown us that love is a magical, blissful experience, akin to hallucinogens. In movies, love stories always follow three rules:

- 1) Movie women always fall in love with the most unlikely men such as men in comas or men engaged to marry other women, or other men. And this always works out because no one in Hollywood knows how to spell "consequences."
- 2) Movie men are always strong, sensitive, caring, devoted and good with children.
- 3) Falling in love is as easy as finding an unidentifiable smell in your car. Basically, you don't know where it started, and it never goes away.

That's the kind of Valentine's Day every girl dreams of when she's growing up. But as the plumber once said to the bidet salesman, "I don't think it's supposed to work that way."

Ladies, I want you to think carefully about how you are training your men. The rule is: "Be a jerk for 364 days a year, we'll put up with it. Forget Valentine's Day, and prepare to live as a eunuch."

Let's face it. In relationships, men don't test well. It's not that they don't like you, ladies, it's that they are scared they won't measure up (this continues into other areas as well, but that's another article).

Please, be kind on Valentine's Day. It's not how your man treats you on the holiday that counts. You deserve to be treated well all year round, not as a special treat once a year. This doesn't mean an avalanche of presents, but how about a little note now and again, guys?

What about a Post-It? Start small.

Real love isn't the cards and flowers. It's a partnership. Although it's great to have someone who will give you big teddy bears and chocolate, isn't it nicer to have someone to take care of you when you are sick? Someone you can whine with?

If you haven't found someone to whine with, I really pity you.

These are the kinds of things that make a relationship last. Everything else is wrapping paper and ribbons. Sure, it looks pretty, but how long does it last?

So in closing, let me say that I hope this article finds all of you happy and in loving relationships. And if you aren't in a relationship yet, don't worry, it will happen when the time is right. And when it does, make sure it's an honest one that isn't clogged by commercialism and greed.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go shopping.

Questions/comments? Send them to NewtonsLaw@southernronin.com.



**Earl Newton**  
Commentary

## Fraternity not necessary for brotherhood

**Ron Besser**  
Photo Editor

Last Saturday, I had the privilege of being at the fourth annual University of West Florida Athletic Hall of Fame Induction luncheon to get some candid, and not so candid photos of the event.

Although the actual induction takes place during halftime at the men's basketball game, the luncheon is where the real story, and the fun, is. It gives the athletes a chance to renew old friendships, and catch up on what's been happening in each other's life. It also gives them a chance to relive stories about their adventures during their competition at UWF.

Like all the major league hall of fame inductions, each of the inductees is introduced by their former coach or someone who "knew them when." The inductees are then given a chance to respond to these comments or tell their story.

In almost all cases, there was a reoccurring theme: a sense of being part of something special.

The 1991 men's tennis team summed it up best when they all



Photo by Ron Besser

**Voyager Photo Editor Ron Besser is pictured in a self-portrait.**

Tennis player Bronna Allison was had inducted in 2000, but was unable to attend the ceremony. She returned this year to lend support to her former doubles partner, Laura Cadena Waldon, who had accepted Allison's award, and was now joining the hall.

A few of the inductees still successfully compete. Golfer Peter Dyson, who was a National Association of Intercollegiate Association All-American in 1986, enjoyed success as a professional golfer on the Hooter's Tour.

Beth Valenzuela Bruno, a cross-country runner, continues to compete in and win marathons. She still holds the women master's record for the Blue Angel Marathon. Former UWF baseball player Richard LaBounty has moved into coaching as head baseball coach for the successful Catholic High School program in Pensacola.

The other theme was the personal interest shown by the UWF coaches when dealing with their athletes. In several cases, the athletes came from another university, where they were not happy with the athletic program and felt burned out. In

some cases they had given up their sport before having their athletic career revived by the coaches at UWF.

Some said they came to party and stayed to get a degree. Each one had their own success story. Many are still a part of the local community, contributing to the growth and success of athletic programs in the panhandle area.

Despite the jokes about not always being serious about classes and their training, each and every one made a positive contribution as a representative of the UWF athletic program, and continue to show their pride in having been a part of West Florida.

Most people will not see the actual Hall of Fame until the new Field House addition is finished, when the new entrance will display the plaques of some of UWF's best athletes.

In a way, the enlarged Field House will be a true reflection of the contributions of all the athletes, whether recognized or not, who have represented UWF and enabled the successful growth of the athletic program.

## There is a bright side of Valentine's Day

**Megan Martinez**  
Commentary Editor

Large chocolate hearts, hot-pink silk boxers and Mary Kate and Ashley Olson cards everywhere can mean only one thing: (groan) Valentine's Day is right around the corner.

Every year it is the same drill - a last minute mad-scrabble to find someone to spend Valentine's Day with.

It is a game of musical chairs, where the person who can't get a date is the loser.

But with statistically more females on the planet than males, isn't this a un-winnable game, implemented by society to applaud couples over singles?

Trying to pinpoint the origins of my own psychological Valentine's Day scarring, manifested in a crippling fear of red and pink hearts, I looked back to my earliest pink and white candy-coated valentine memories.

I realized that since the first Valentine's Day at school, there has always been an emphasis on the day's importance.

Before I could recite my multiplication tables, I could cut out intricate red construction-paper hearts and spell out sentences with candy conversation hearts for the little boys in my kindergarten class.

After reaching an age where teachers don't require students to give the entire class cards, I began feeling rejected and envious.

The competition to have the most valentine cards escalated to epic proportions, resulting in the emotional damage of several students and even more kids having their parents send them Valentine's Day cards, signed "your secret admirer" in order to save face with their fellow students.

What does this teach us?

That you need to have an ad campaign in order to promote yourself and get paper cards from your classmates?

Even now, as a sensible, mature college student I get queasy when anyone asks me what my Valentine's Day plans are.

But this year I have a strategy to deal with Valentine's Day. Instead of wearing all black in protest of the holiday or sending myself flowers, I have discovered what some people call, "the power of positive thinking."

I have adopted the mind-set that Valentine's Day is full of positives, which allow me to rationally, and calmly make up several reasons why I think Valentine's Day is great, or at least semi-OK:

1. In one word, candy. Oh sure, you are sup-



**Megan Martinez**  
Commentary Editor

posed to get it for your "significant other," but what if your significant other is Zack, your kitten, who is allergic to chocolate? It only seems right that you don't let it go to waste. Besides, it's the thought behind the chocolate that really counts.

2. For the dateless, Valentine's Day provides the perfect opportunity to catch up on all those things that you have been meaning to do, but just haven't had the time, what with all the dates every other day of the year. These activities include sorting Tupperware, learning to crochet, vacuuming mini-blinds and catching up on "heaving" reading like Jean-Paul Sartre's, "Nausea."

3. When everyone is desperate for a date, it can help you to network with dateless, desperate strangers. This way, you can make connections with people who, when not under crushing peer pressure to find a date wouldn't give you the time of day.

4. If nothing else, Valentine's Day provides you with a reason to watch romantic movies such as "French Kiss" and "Fools Rush In," without guilt.

All in all, when you stop and think about it, Valentine's Day isn't that bad.

Sure, it was created by card companies as a way to boost revenue, and create emotional havoc among singles everywhere, but at least it gives you a reason to eat candy and maybe even have the courage to say hi to that special someone.

Just remember, it isn't your fault that you feel panic at the thought of Valentine's Day, the public school system did that to you.

## VOYAGER

The *Voyager* is produced weekly by students of the University of West Florida and is partially funded by Student Activities and Services fees with assistance from the Office of Student Affairs. This public document was promulgated by the president of the University at an annual cost of \$.275 per copy. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the views of UWF, the *Voyager* or its staff.

Advertiser and advertising agency will indemnify and hold harmless The *Voyager*, and its staff, for all contents supplied to publisher, including text, representation and illustrations of advertisements printed, and for any claims arising from contents including, but not limited to defamation, invasion of privacy, copyright infringement, plagiarism, and in the case of a pre-printed insert, deficient postage.

The *Voyager* is printed by the Press Gazette, in accordance with Florida Law. The above information is presented in compliance Section 283.27 of Florida Statutes. All contents © 2003 *Voyager*.

### SPRING 2004 STAFF

<b>EDITOR IN CHIEF</b> Marcus Ditty	<b>PHOTO EDITOR</b> Ron Besser	Bryan Meyers Justin Pizza Kathleen Ortiz Jeff Cassidy Jason C. Hartman
<b>NEWS EDITOR</b> Andy Pennebaker	<b>STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS</b> Jeff Meffert Greg Miller Mark Lane	Jessica Jones Angela Fail Vicki Kramer Ashley Carswell Brie Redfield Huy Nguyen Earl Newton
<b>ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR</b> Bethanne Sevech	<b>COMMENTARY EDITOR</b> Megan Martinez	<b>BUSINESS MANAGER</b> Beverly Kelly
<b>FEATURES EDITOR</b> Christina Tilton	<b>PRODUCTION</b> Tammy Leytham	<b>ADVERTISING MANAGER</b> Kristy Dyson
<b>ASSISTANT FEATURES EDITOR</b> Megan Kohr	<b>STAFF</b> Merit Claire Melissa Cook Travis Huisken Josephine Rios Mae Humiston Mara McDermott Rebecca Warren Chris Louie Geoff Watts Ted King Megan Youngblood Luis Ferreiro	<b>CIRCULATION MANAGER</b> Reynaldo Soares
<b>SPORTS EDITOR</b> Andrew Kilgo		<b>FACULTY ADVISOR</b> Gary Ghioto
<b>ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR</b> Amber Gay		<b>ONLINE EDITION</b> Marcus Ditty-Webmaster
<b>COPY EDITORS</b> Katherine Goldsberry Melissa Hatfield Jeff Cassidy		

## POLICY

Letters to the Editor must be signed and include the author's address and telephone number for verification purposes. Letters must be less than 250 words and are published as space allows. Letters to the editor do not necessarily represent the views of the *Voyager* staff. The Editor reserves the right to edit letters or to refuse to publish letters. Deadline for letters is noon Friday before the date of publication. Guest commentary is also welcome and follows the same guidelines.

**YOU CAN E-MAIL ALL LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AT**  
**voyager@uwf.edu**  
**ATTN: EDITORIAL**  
**or drop them by Bldg. 36, Room 120**