

Camping season

Instructional camps offered for nearly every sport

Highlands Today sports staff

Now that the first full week of summer vacation is just around the corner, kids will have the opportunity to hone their athletic skills in a number of camps.

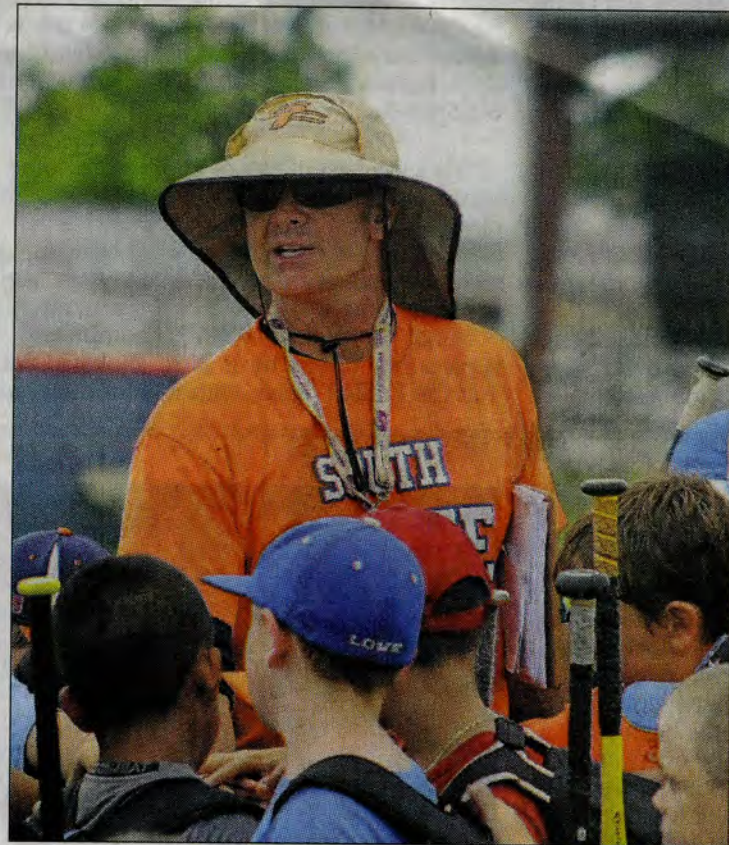
Beginning Monday, there will be camps for football, baseball, golf, volleyball, basketball, tennis and golf.

Tennis pro Horace Watkis has returned the Thakkar Tennis Center at the Country Club of Sebring and will be offering his popular week-long camps through the final week of July. Caps are \$100 per week and for ages 6 to 18.

"I love working with the kids," Watkis said. "It's my dream to teach these kids the proper way to play tennis because it's a great sport and one you can enjoy for a lifetime."

Call Watkis at 414-2164 or the Country Club of Sebring at 386-4282 for more information.

South Florida State College will be offering baseball and volleyball camps beginning Monday, with a softball camp starting in another week. South Florida baseball coach and athletic director Rick Hitt will run the baseball camp, while Panther volleyball coach Kim Crawford



HIGHLANDS TODAY FILE PHOTOS

will lead the volleyball camp.

Both Panther camps will run Monday through Thursday and registration forms and more information can be found on the South Florida State College website at <http://www.southflorida.edu/community/athletics> and select the sport you are interested in.

CAMPS, Page 2

Top: The junior tennis camps help youngsters learn the basics of the sport in a fun environment under the instruction of certified USPTA pro Horace Watkis. Above: South Florida State College athletic director and baseball coach Rick Hitt talks to campers at one of last year's baseball camps.

Camps

From Page 1

The Avon Park Touch-down Club Football Camp will take place Monday through Friday at Joe Franza Stadium in Avon Park. The camp is for ages 5 through incoming 8th graders and will run from 8:30 a.m. to noon each day.

The cost is 40 and registration forms are available at the high school. For more information contact Wade Jackson at 452-4311 or e-mail aptouchdownclub@gmail.com.

Sebring High School will be offering the first of four summer swimming lesson sessions. Each session lasts for two weeks and is \$50.

for more information contact Pat Caton at 381-7092 or e-mail catonp@highlands.k12.fl.us for more information.

Nick Brooks will be offering his fourth annual summer basketball camp at the R.O.C. First Baptist Church in Sebring. The camp is for boys and girls completing grades 2 through 9.

Session times are 8:30



JIM TAYLOR

Sebring High School football coach LaVaar Scott talks to campers during the Heartland Football Camp at the Highlands County Sports Complex.

a.m. to 11:30 a.m. for grades 2 through 5 and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for grades 6 through 9. The cost is \$70 and lunch will be provided each day.

For information contact Brooks at 850-322-8398 or coachbrooks@centurylink.net.

Registration Packets can be picked up at Hibbet Sports at the Lakeshore Mall.

Sun 'n Lake Golf Club is

holding seven week-long golf camps beginning Monday for ages 6 to 12. Camps will last from 8:30 a.m. to noon each day and includes breakfast and lunch.

The cost is \$125 per player and space is limited to 10 golfers each week. Contact 385-4830 ext. 1 for more information.

There are also daily clinics for youth golfers each day, with Sun 'n Lake holding clinics every Friday be-

tween 3:30 and 5 p.m. and Sebring Golf Club holding clinics each Wednesday between 9 to 10 a.m.

On the horizon are the Heartland Football Camp on Saturday, June 27, at the Highlands County Sports Complex. For information or to receive an application contact LaVaar Scott at 214-3880 or LaV39@yahoo.com, Princeton Harris at 381-8898 or Mike Avirett at 381-4098.

SFSC's Corporate Education offers summer classes

The Corporate Education Department of South Florida State College is offering a variety of classes during the summer months.

In Introduction to Google Docs, students will learn to create word processing documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and interactive forms without installed software. This can be done using Google Docs applications. Participants must have a gmail account — available at: www.gmail.com — in order to participate. The class is offered as a two-evening workshop on Wednesday, June 10 and Wednesday, June 17. Class times are 5:30–7:30 p.m. Cost is \$85, and the course number is 30628.

Introduction to Microsoft Excel 2013 teaches how to create, format, save, and print basic spreadsheets, formulas, and charts. The course is offered as a two-day workshop on Wednesday, June 24, and Wednesday, July 1. The cost is \$85, and the course number is 30316.

In Intermediate Microsoft Excel 2013, participants will learn to sort and filter data, and create cross-sheet formulas. The course is offered as a two-day workshop on Wednesday, July 8, and Wednesday, July 15 from 5:30–7:30 p.m. The cost is \$85, and the course number is 30317.

Introduction to PIXLR,

a free online photo and graphics application, offers the opportunity to learn the basics of photo correction and enhancement, merging images, creating PowerPoint presentation backgrounds, manipulating text, enhancing old documents and photographs. This workshop is offered Wednesday, July 22 from 5:30–7:30 p.m. Cost is \$55, and the course number is 30481.

In Introduction to Android Tablets, learn how to set up, personalize home screen pages with widgets, use onboard resources such as the camera and installed apps, find, download, and launch apps from Google Play Store; manage onboard, cloud, and micro disk storage; utilize external devices such as the S-Pen and Bluetooth keyboard, manage hardware such as battery and system reset. Owning a tablet is not required, most android phones offer the same features. The course is offered as a two-day workshop on Tuesday, July 28, and Wednesday July, 29 from 5:30–7:30 p.m. The cost is \$85, and the course number is 30771.

CPR Training classes with Basic Life Support through the American Heart Association provide training for designated first responders or individuals needing credentialed training for job or regulatory requirements.

Students learn CPR, as well as other lifesaving skills in a variety of in-hospital and out-of-hospital settings. The cost is \$40. For a detailed schedule, contact corporatetraining@southflorida.edu, or call 863-784-7033.

First Aid Training classes are for designated first responders or individuals needing credentialed training for job or regulatory requirements. The course covers first aid basics, medical, injury, and environmental emergencies. Students will also complete a written exam. The cost is \$40. For a detailed class schedule, contact corporatetraining@southflorida.edu, or call 863-784-7033.

Aquabics is a moderately-paced aerobic water exercise class for toning, weight loss, and building strength. It's easy on the joints, but still provides resistance. This class is offered Monday and Wednesdays, July 1–29 from 5:30–6:30 p.m. Cost is \$44 and the course number is 30784.

Lap Swim is an excellent way to exercise and cross train. Stay in shape without losing your cool. This class will be offered Tuesday and Thursdays, July 2–30 from 5:30–6:30 p.m. Cost is \$35 and the course number is 30786.

Register in Building B at the Highlands Campus or any SFSC campus or center.

For more information, contact Corporate

Education at 863-784-7033 or by emailing

corporatetraining@southflorida.edu.

Starting Your Business seminar offered

AVON PARK — Ever wanted to start your own business but not sure how to get started? The Florida Small Business Development Center at University of South Florida, located at South Florida State College, will host a Starting Your Business seminar 2-4:30 p.m. June 17 at South Florida State College, Corporate and Community Education Room T24.

From how to determine feasibility and legal structures to the types of license you'll need, this seminar covers all the essentials that will help you get started. It is customized for startups in DeSoto, Hardee and Highlands counties.

To reserve a seat, call 784-7405 and refer to CRN 30782. Cost is \$10, which includes materials.

For additional information, visit www.SBDCTampaBay.com.

SFSC News



COURTESY PHOTO

Twenty-three graduating high school seniors and their mentors were honored by Take Stock in Children on June 2.

Take Stock in Children graduates 23

AVON PARK — Take Stock in Children's 23 graduating high school seniors and their mentors were honored June 2 at the annual Mentor Appreciation and Senior Recognition Night at the Hotel Jacaranda.

The TSIC graduates in attendance were: Lacey Coleman and Rachel Gaidos, Avon Park High School; Nathaniel Acosta, Kayla Bowen, Matthew Brown, Krystal Dombroski and Sean Harrison, Sebring High School; Brittany Fragnals, Alexis Merlo, Devany Moore and Alex Velazquez, Lake Placid High School; Manolo Mejia, Amber Reid and Alondra Morales, DeSoto High School; and Pagou Vué, Abigail Vargas, Angelica Montanez and Julian Galvez, Hardee High School.

The graduates had an average weighted grade point average of 4.33, and 10 were in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class. Together they completed 300 dual enrollment college credits.

TSIC is a statewide program that provides college scholarships to at-risk middle students who agree to remain drug-free, stay out of trouble with the law and maintain satisfactory grades throughout high school. Students are matched with mentors who meet with them regularly and help them prepare for college.

The South Florida State College Foundation is the lead agency for TSIC in DeSoto, Hardee and Highlands counties. Since 2000, 363 students have graduated from the local program.

For more information, visit <http://support.southflorida.edu/> or call 453-3133.

SFSC recognizes students for academic excellence

AVON PARK — South Florida State College recognizes students who have pursued and achieved academic excellence during the course of study at the college. Students are named to the President's List for receiving a semester grade point average between 3.8 and 4.0.

Avon Park students named to the spring 2015 President's List are: Allen Abe Jr., Ashley Acosta, Stephanie A. Albright, Sarah D. Alfaro, Shelby B. Ball, Argelis M. Buck, Anai Cervera, Thomas G. Cook, Briana A. Cox, Jennifer L. Culpepper, Richard R. Dick, Hannah L. Farr, Becky A. Forbes, Jesus Garcia, Bobbie J. Gilliard, Roxanne N. Guerndt, Cheyanne A. Hazard, Glenda M. Hernandez, Tina M. Hill, Tara L. Huften, Manoj L. Kothari, Melissa A. Langdale, Chase B. Langston,

Phillip R. Lucas, Jozabad O. Maranan, Kathryn Millan, Kristie Millan, Heather A. Oyola, Katherine S. Oyola, Paul L. Primeau, Cherie A. Racke, Lourvina Grace R. Ramos, Mandy J. Ramos, Shane T. Robbins, Laura I. Rojas, Jennie L. Spencer, Tamara S. Stokes, Robin D. Stukes, Erica M. Tovar, Rodine V. Walker, Emily L. Whitman, Angie M. Wolfe and Devon S. Zengotita.

Lake Placid students are: Syed M. Abbas, Tyler B. Akins, Danielle R. Arnesen, Stephanie K. Bennett, Robert J. Brown, Amanda K. Carnahan, Lauren N. Falls, Ashley N. Ficco, Leigha M. Gersper, Jonathan M. Harrison, Katelynne L. Leman, Brandon P. Lykes, Itzel G. Martinez, Kristen N. Massung, Teresa M. McGovern, Brandy L. McMahon, Breanna K. Mendoza, Alexis M. Merlo, Jessica M. Parker, Darlene R. Pigman, Hector Ramirez, Brenda V. Ramirez Canchola, Russell R. Ramsey, Abigail L. Samperi, Liliana Sanchez, Brianna A. Shaw, Joanne E. Stayton and Jessica T. Young.

Lorida student was Shelly A. Sparks.

Sebring students are: Melissa R. Acosta, Steven M. Allen, Morgan B. Andrews, Marissa A. Andujar, Amanda S. Angeletti, Mariana S. Becker, Fachon D. Binns, Martile R. Blackman, Kent W. Boggs, Alexander J. Boyd, Charles M. Bullock, Morgan H. Bullock, Charlotte Busch, Alina T. Cancel, Ashley N. Chesser, Kathy A. Clements, Ceara D. Collins, Nicholas J. Croft, Patrick Cullen, Steven R. Cullipher, Eric N. Daff, Andrew S. Deierlein, Joy E. Derrick, Michael J. Divietro, Miranda A. Downing, Shawn D. Engelhard, Sebastian Eriksen, Mathew A. Estima, Denise M. Fernandez, Sandra R. Ferretti, Jennifer L. Garrison, Mialaysia A. Goodson, Heidi M. Graves, Megan A. Hughes, Sara E. Johnson, Sharmin D. Jones, Ashley A. Kinkade, Tarryn D. Knight, Karl B. Labra, Kevin H. LaDue, Justin G. Latter, McKenzie M. Liskey, Thomas C. Lovett III, Deborah S. Lulay, Thu T. Luong, Vondaill N. Massaline, Sara L. McGann, Grace K. McKelvey, Gladys V. Mejia, Cara R. Mingacci, Ethan M. Mitchell, Kelly C. Morgan, Caitlyn A. Moulds, Crystal R. Mullikin, Donnie W. Mullins, Kathleen Narayan, Donna a. Naugle, Carlos N. Negron, Cale J. Payne, Hannah L. Pepper, Tatiana Perilla, Alexis N. Pontius, Denise L. Porter, Glenn S. Powers, Jefferson D. Rooney Jr. Natalie E. Santiago, Deborah S. Sauls, Elaine M. Schmidt, Erica N. Simpson, Marissa A. Simpson, Leshia S. Spencer, Mary M. Stacy, Catherine J. Steiner, Jessica L. Sturgill, Tatiana Sullivan, Tiffani D. Teague, Cristian R. Tellez, Laura E. Tenneson, Monica M. Tookes,

Heriberto Torres Jr., Thi N. Tran, Hannah R. Tucker, Ashley B. Van Hynning, Tina N. Walker, Latoya D. Walton, Barron M. Ward, Riley B. Watson, Ashley M. White, Benjamin A. Williams, Jamie S. Wirries and Katherine J. Yeager.

Students are named to the Vice President's List for receiving a grade point average between 3.5 and 3.79.

Avon Park students named to the spring 2015 Vice President's List are: Cassidy B. Abbott, Mardon R. Abesamis, Brittany L. Bennett, Janesza M. Cardona, Fabiana Castro, Sycondra R. Collins, Paola Cruz, Emily J. Flores, Leticia Garcia, Jessica Garza, Christopher L. Gibbs, Iris M. Greth, Rajad B. Lawrence, Joseph F. Lucas, Brooke A. Moore, Javona Moses, Selina S. Olguin, Alyssa S. Perez, Sevens Pierre, Gus Ramirez Jr., Christian Reitnauer, Yamilet M. Sanchez, Laura R. Serrano, Patrick R. Swafford, Brandi A. Thomas, Nicholas B. Whidden, Dillon M. Whitman and Robert A. Wiggins.

Lake Placid students are: Nicole N. Atterberry, Melissa N. Barajas, Trenton J. Baxter, Jesula Bellegarde, Jenna E. Blount, Justin W. Bungard, Bianca T. Cannon, Pierce M. Cloninger, Laine A. Daum, Erica Escamilla, Carolina Flores, Travis T. Gibson, Theresa A. Hovis, Ashley T. Jones, Niel B. Matheis, Makeyla R. McGahee, Cody L. Ming, Elizabeth M. Pitts, Stacy M. Quashie, George H. Rasmussen, Kenneth W. Sides, Jr., Stephanie N. Skipper, Alexandra Torres and Garrett R. West.

Sebring students are: Jake T. Ahearn, Junaid K. Ahmed, Danielle L. Allen, Carl Andersen, Marissa D. Arjona, Shiloh K. Ashby, Joshua S. Austin, Christopher A. Baker, Hannah R. Belcher, Sylvia J. Betancourt, Leann T. Bland, Erin M. Broderick, Kevin E. Brown, Jillian R. Burnell, Sara M. Canali, Francis P. Carey III, Elizabeth E. Carroll, Ashley B. Castelli, Paula D. Church, Shannon M. Cleveland, Danielle N. Cole, Laura M. Collins, Andrew P. Cribbs, Sueliana Davila, Christopher J. Davis, Nicole L. Davis, Douglas Dos Santos, Laura E. Eshelman, Loren D. Eures, Richard W. Faircloth, Shayne L. Fassler, Nikki L. Feichtinger, Phillip P. Fillie, Timothy D. Finch, Joseph R. Forest, Kenneth W. Fritz Sr., Heydi Garcia, Lisa R. Garduno, Elton J. Gargano, Joelle D. Gengler, Manuela Y. Gomez, Maria D. Gonzalez, Carrie C. Hammonds, Harrison P. Havery, Tinna J. Hewitt-Milligan, Brittany E. Hobart, Evelyn P. Jackson-Elder, Crystal D. Jacobs, Samantha E. Johnson, Tyler J. Johnson, Sarah E. Keefe, Lorna J. Kellar, Joslean Kerly, Christina M. La, Kate E. LaDue, Veronica

SFSC

From Page 2

Librado-Galindo, Harry J. Lindsay, Walter B. Long, Bradley G. Long III, Ariel M. Madden, Chris L. Maher, Stella Maldonado Enchautegui, Bayani O. Marasigan Jr., Sloan A. Maybeck, Alahni N. Mc-

Gahee, Kimberly A. McLeod, David M. McManus, Heather M. Metts, Kathleen E. Mosquera, Melisa R. Mullins, Sarah D. Orrell, Joshua A. Ouellette, Jillian A. Palmer, Jhamil G. Pujols, Michael W. Reed, Darlin J. Romero, Holly M. Scherlacher, Jana K. Selle, Esgar S. Serapio, Richard

L. Sherrill, John S. Skrzyniarz, Woaldor St. Vil, Trinicia T. Sutton, Tiffany A. Tolentino, Terry J. Trainer, Tyler E. Whalen, Dylan E. Whiteman, Rachel M. Wolf, William L. Wolvin Jr. and Amanda E. Wood.

Venus student is Sophia Hernandez.

SFSC Offers High Schoolers A Boost

High school students who will be entering grades 11 and 12 in the fall can boost their skills in reading, writing and math through a free program being offered at the South Florida State College Hardee Campus.

The Summer Bridge Program is open to students who meet certain eligibility criteria but particularly demonstrate a need to improve their basic skills in language and math. SFSC instructors will work with participants to strengthen their abilities in these areas and to develop the attitudes that foster academic success.

As part of the program, students explore careers, gain a better understanding of topics related to science, technology, engineering and math, and learn

how they can use their last year or two of high school to prepare for entering college.

The Summer Bridge Program is being held at the Hardee Campus the week of June 22-26. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, with a field trip on Friday for students who attend all four days. This year's field trip is exploring Florida Gulf Coast University and Bowditch Point Regional Park & Preserve in Fort Myers.

Get more information about the program by visiting the website at southflorida.edu or by calling Magie Hulbert at 784-7209 or Dr. Kimberly Batty-Herbert at 784-7329. Applications are available on the website.

Cosmetology clinic now open on SFSC campus

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Cosmetology clinic is open for public appointments now at the Highlands Campus. The clinic offers hair design, haircuts, perms, coloring, facials, makeup, eyebrow arching, and manicures

performed by SFSC Cosmetology students at low cost.

Clinic hours are by appointment, Tuesday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

To schedule an appointment, call 863-453-4949.

“Clients time and time again say how much they like the salon environment,” said Timothy Johnson, cosmetology program manager and instructor, “and the fact that the students take their time to complete the services they render and that the instructor is always near if needed.”

The Cosmetology program at SFSC is a 10 ½ -month course that focuses on careers in hair design, nail services, and skin care. For more information on the program, call Johnson at 863-784-7143.

SFSC offering police officer crossover to corrections

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Criminal Justice Academy (CJA) is offering a law enforcement officer crossover to corrections officer course. This course is for current certified law enforcement officers who wish to become a certified corrections officer.

The course will be held Monday through Thursdays, beginning Monday, Sept. 28, with class times from 6–10 p.m.

For information, contact coordinator Richard Morey at 863-784-7285 or visit www.southflorida.edu/public-service. Register at any SFSC Campus or center, pre-registration is required. Applications must be picked up in-person by appointment only.

Take Stock in Children honors 2015 graduates

By SHARON JONES

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS SUN

AVON PARK — Take Stock in Children's 23 graduating high school seniors and their mentors were honored at the annual Mentor Appreciation and Senior Recognition Night on June 2 at the Hotel Jacaranda.

TSIC graduates in attendance were:

- Lacey Coleman and Rachel Gaidos from Avon Park High School;

- Nathaniel Acosta, Kayla Bowen, Matthew Brown, Krystal Dombroski, and Sean Harrison from Sebring High School;

- Brittany Fragnals, Alexis Merlo, Devany Moore, and Alex Velazquez from Lake Placid High School;

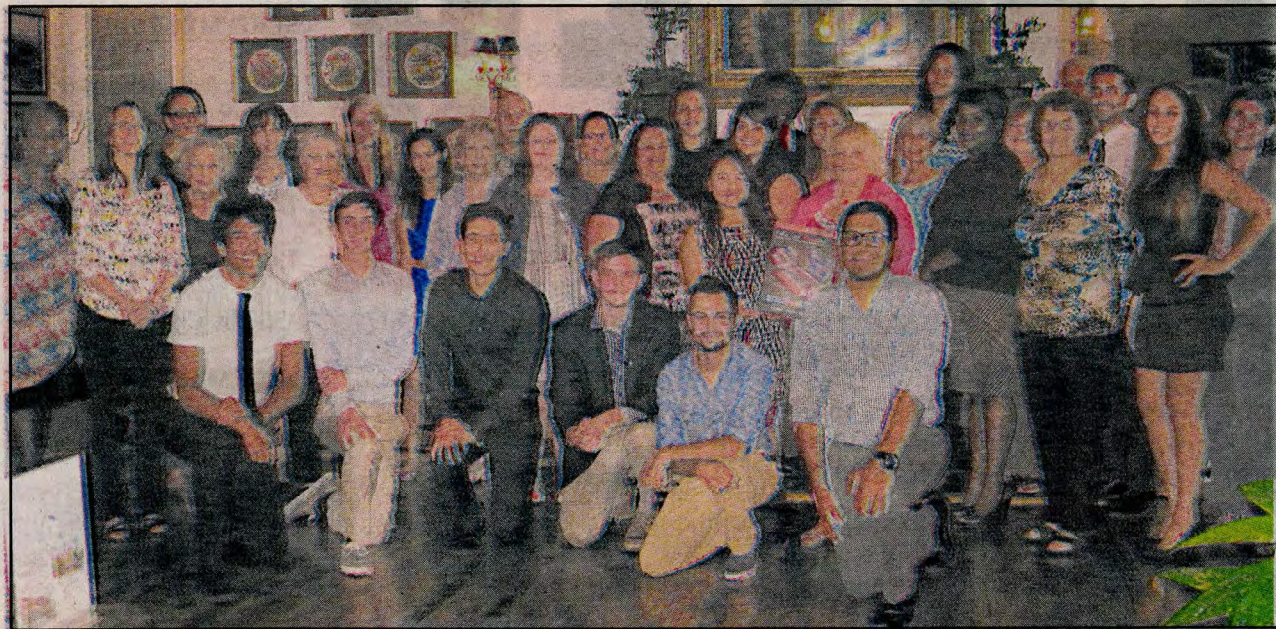
- Manolo Mejia,

Amber Reid, and Alondra Morales from DeSoto High School in Arcadia; and

- Pagou Vue, Abigail Vargas, Angelica Montanez, and Julian Galvez from Hardee High School in Wauchula.

The graduates had an average weighted grade-point average of 4.33, and 10 were in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class. Altogether, they completed 300 dual enrollment college credits.

TSIC is a statewide program that provides college scholarships to at-risk middle school students who agree to remain drug-free, stay out of trouble with the law, and maintain satisfactory grades throughout high school.



Courtesy photo

Twenty-three graduating high school seniors and their mentors were honored by Take Stock in Children on June 2.

Students are matched with mentors who meet with them regularly and help them prepare for college.

The South Florida State College Foundation is the lead agency for TSIC in DeSoto, Hardee, and

Highlands County. Since 2000, 363 students have graduated from the local TSIC program.

For more information

about TSIC, visit the SFSC Foundation's website at support.southflorida.edu/ or call 863-453-3133.

County Helping Bowling Green With Sewer, Water Expertise

By JIM KELLY

Of The Herald-Advocate

The Hardee County Commission on Thursday, June 4, received a good audit of county finances for the past fiscal year from the accounting firm of CliftonLarsenAllen. The year ended Sept. 30, 2014.

The audit was presented by CLA principal Mike Carter and manager Trisha Floyd.

The total budget was \$34.3 million in revenues and \$30 million in expenses. Ad valorem taxes were \$13.8 million, down over \$200,000 from a year ago, while sales taxes collected were up about \$75,000. General government expenses were up about \$800,000, and public safety spending was \$9.8 million, up about \$500,000.

The county's ending fund balances were \$15.5 million, enough to run the county for five months. Carter called the audit "very clean" and said he likes to see fund balances of at least two months, so five months is very healthy.

At the request of Kathleen Roehm, Hardee County Habitat for Humanity, the commission voted to waive the tipping fees for the roof that was removed from Mrs. Gaskins' home at 1006 Louisiana St. in Wauchula. She is a widow, and her home was in dire need of a new roof and some repairs inside, said Roehm. HFH is now into rehabbing some older homes instead of just building new homes for needy Hardee residents.

The commission received a check for \$15,000 from South Florida State College after the county recently donated a surplus fire truck valued at \$32,000 to SFSC which has a grant to develop a firefighting program.

The commission voted for the county to help the city of Bowling Green with personnel and expertise to help operate the city's sewer and water department. The previous contractor no longer helps the city as of Memorial Day weekend.

An interlocal agreement will be prepared to present to the BOCC and the Bowling Green City Commission. The help from county staff will keep Bowling Green from getting in trouble with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The help was offered by Park Winter, who runs the county water and sewer system. Workers must have proper licenses for sewer and water.

An interlocal agreement was approved for the Heartland Workforce Consortium between Highlands, Hardee, DeSoto, and Okeechobee counties.

Chairman Mike Thompson was authorized to sign a certificate of compliance for the Wilkerson Subdivision on Bostick Road east of Hobb Road for William D. Wilkerson Sr. and Patricia Helen Wilkerson.

Clay Cobb of the Hardee Builders Association reported a fireworks company and the Hardee County Fair Association have agreed to have fireworks at the upcoming 75th anniversary of the Hardee County Fair. The fireworks had been scheduled for July 4 at Pioneer Park.

Hardee County will have fireworks as planned July 3 at Pioneer Park in Zolfo Springs. The rainout date is July 5.

A long spirited discussion was held on the mud run that was held March 21 at Hardee Lake Park and sponsored by the county.

A report from World Risk

Management confirmed that the event was covered for property and general liability as per terms and conditions of the policy since it was sponsored by the county and held on county property.

The mud run failed to meet expenses when county staff and equipment time was factored in. County Manager Lex Albritton said accounting requires a full day for county equipment at the site even if it is used for an hour or less, based on the equipment cost and depreciation. He said new lumber and fasteners were used to construct the obstacle course, since used materials could be more risky. Some of the material has now been used for other county projects including a pole barn.

Pam Belflower said the project director Geno Stopowenko was paid too much and criticized the project for going over budget. The director was a temporary hire who was kept on by the county after six months.

The county funded the project with \$69,000 taken from a contingency fund.

Bob Cole complained that a lot of lumber and other materials were purchased in Polk County when they could have been bought from Hardee businesses including Ace Hardware. Cole said bids should have been received for materials.

Mosaic donated \$10,000 toward the project, said the county manager.

Don Chancey complained about the cost overruns and materials being bought in Polk County when the goal is to help Hardee businesses and provide local jobs.

Henry Kuhlman said the mud run was heavily promoted as a big event with hundreds of participants and posed a great lia-

bility to the county if there had been deaths or major injuries. Kuhlman said he used to work in the insurance business and the insurance company should have been advised in detail of the event so the underwriting department could review the risk and made sure the county was covered in case of a catastrophe that resulted in a \$100,000 million lawsuit. He said, "you got lucky. The county should never have sponsored a mud run and built the course."

"The county had insurance. The county had coverage," Albritton said.

Kuhlman said the mud run organizer was a personal friend of commissioner Colon Lambert who did not comment at Thursdays' meeting nor answer a question of Kuhlman at the

last meeting of whether mud runs at Dirty Foot in Polk County had special event insurance. Lambert and Stopowenko were involved in that enterprise.

Kuhlman has asked the state attorney's office and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to investigate the project to see if laws were broken.

Chairman Thompson said unless new information is presented the commission is finished talking about the mud run.

The next regular commission meeting is July 2 at 8:30 a.m.

The commission will hold a planning session Friday, June 12, at 8:30 a.m. to discuss the fire assessment.

The commission will hold county budget sessions

July 20-21.

Nancy Craft, a Hardee resident for 54 years, asked the commission to hold a workshop meeting to discuss Pioneer Park Days, an annual county event that has seen declining attendance in recent years. "Pioneer Park days is one of our best events, and it has declined," said Craft, who noted a Dutch Oven event was held recently at Hardee Lakes Park.

Chairman Thompson agreed that Pioneer Park Days needs a boost and said ideas should be brought for increasing attendance if a planning session is set up. The event is held the first weekend of March and is generally Wednesday through Sunday. It consists of a flea market, antique engines, food and entertainment.

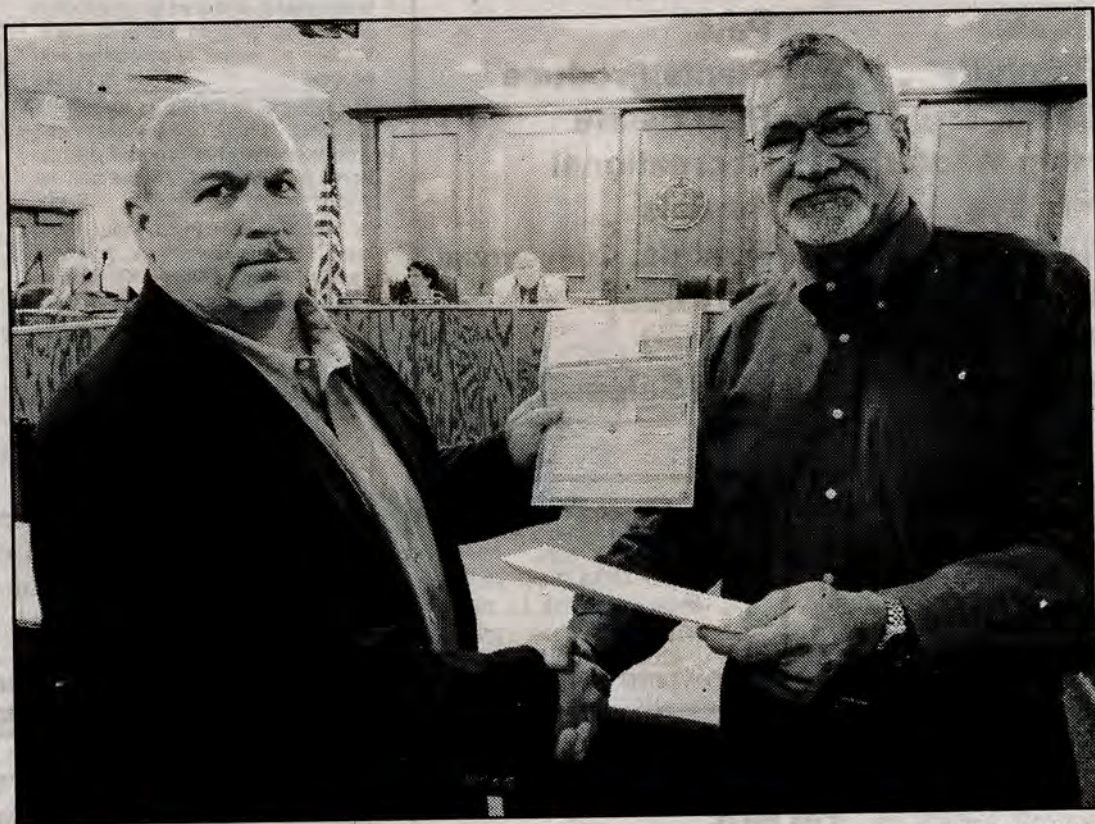


PHOTO BY JIM KELLY

County Commission Chairman Mike Thompson (left) accepts a \$15,000 check from South Florida State College, represented by Kevin Brown, dean of Division of Applied Sciences and Technology. The county recently donated a surplus fire truck valued at \$32,000 to AFSC, and the \$15,000 is a token of appreciation of the gift. SFSC has received a grant to establish a firefighter training program.

Leadership Highlands: What an experience



CHIEF'S CORNER

James Fansler

On Aug. 28, 2014, I stepped into a class room filled with over 20 different people from various professions from around the county. I knew about three of them, the rest were total strangers. On this first day of what is nearly a year-long program, everyone was spaced out across the room, a traditional college room filled with tables and chairs. On the last day of class, that was not the case. We came as individuals and left as a strong team.

I had been approached a few times by the Greater Lake Placid Chamber executive Eileen May about attending the course, so after becoming the police chief I decided to enroll. I wanted to see what I could learn and how I could use it to further my goals in Lake Placid. I was not prepared for the experience that lay ahead. What I have learned is, Leadership Highlands is a well-kept secret among alumni. Now, I don't mean that they are not telling others about it, just that they don't reveal much about their experience until you have graduated. I too, will not reveal too much detail so future participants will have their own surprises.

I can recommend this class to anyone wanting to learn more about what is going on in your own backyard. You will be amazed. Among many other great things, attending this class taught me Highlands is rich in history. Much of Sebring dates back over 100 years. If you have never been to the Sebring History Museum, you are in for a treat. You will learn a great deal of how Sebring Regional Airport (known then as Hendricks Army Airfield) played a role during WWII.

The agriculture in the county is nearly beyond measure. Organizations like Delray Plants in Venus are known worldwide. They are the main distributors for many lawn and garden specialty stores around our nation and beyond. It truly is a spectacular site to see how they operate.

Lake Placid is the "Caladium Capital of the World." You will learn why that is during a brief history and explanation. We had the distinct pleasure of getting a caladium education by none other than Darlene Phypers of Happiness Farms. There are a number of non-profit organizations that work exceptionally hard to help our county's neediest. By neediest, that doesn't necessarily mean the poorest. Organizations like Nu-Hope Elder Care services are available regardless of financial standing.

There are, however, a number of non-profits designed to help those who are down on their luck.

After visiting the New Testament Mission and Church, I was taken back to a time in my life when I too was down and out. The story of how the mission came to be is a testimony of God's great work here on earth. I urge you to reach out to one of the many non-profit organizations in this county and see how you can help. You will be surprised how easy it is to help. It is rewarding to give.

The business and industry in this county is one of its hidden gems as well. The Sebring Regional Airport is paving the way for many new businesses to come to our area. It is very exciting to see the future is being started right here in our own county.

I could go on and on about the experiences of Leadership Highlands, however I encourage you to find out for yourselves. You will meet two of the finest people, Kris Juve and Dr. Mike McLeod, who are the directors of the program. I hope you have the pleasure of having a great group with you like I did.

I could not have imagined bonding so tightly with a group of strangers. Almost immediately, we became family. I learned a great deal about people as well. You will definitely get out of a relationship all that you put into it. When you join, take the time to foster relationships, they will be friends for a lifetime. I will forever be grateful to those who shared the experience of Leadership Highlands Class of 2015 (The Best Class Yet).

To learn more about Leadership Highlands, go to any chamber of commerce in the county or visit South Florida State College's website and type in Leadership in the search; it will pop right up.

I look forward to meeting future participants of this program and hearing their stories.

SFSC graduates 12 new corrections officers

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK - South Florida State College graduated 12 new correctional officers on June 11, sending them off with advice for their first jobs and careers.

The class of six men and six women, joined by their families, gathered at the SFSC University Center Auditorium on the Highlands Campus to pick up their diplomas and hear words of wisdom from a seasoned corrections official and their class leader.

"The training you received at SFSC is just the beginning," said William Hamilton, chief of security at the Moore Haven Correctional Facility. "You need to challenge yourself to continue to learn and to grow, so that you can meet the challenges ahead."

He told the newly minted corrections

officers that recent federal legislation and heightened scrutiny from the Florida Legislature are both welcome and a challenge. He cited a renewed emphasis on protecting inmates from harm, including rape, and funding issues that affect corrections officer staffing levels in the facilities.

"You're not just an officer inside the fence or jail itself," Hamilton said. "You're a counselor, a mentor, and you're the face of reality from outside the fence for the inmates you protect."

From the auditorium stage, Michael Austin, coordinator at SFSC's Criminal Justice Academy, called up the 12 and handed each new officer a diploma. Receiving their diplomas were: Maily Ayala, Josh Martinez, Seth Abeln, Tabitha J. Cliburn, Ednisha L. Cottman,

Ruben Hernandez, Brandon D. McKinney, Kemory Newman, Adam Olivencia, John R. Peck, Chiquita Treadwell, and Aishea Warren.

He singled out McKinney and Peck for their achievements during the three-month course. Peck earned top honors for his academic excellence while McKinney scored the firearms award for his work on the shooting range.

Ayala, who Austin tapped as class leader, mounted the stage to share her parting advice with her classmates.

First, she got a chuckle from all when she recalled their reaction to their first dose of pepper spray.

"I said and heard a few words I never knew existed," Ayala said. "It was like a scene from the 'Exorcist'."

She reminded her

classmates of the bonds they forged while struggling to keep pace with the demands of the course. She urged them to remember that team spirit when they take their place alongside correctional officers in the field.

"One team, one fight," Ayala said, recalling the words the class had chosen as its motto.

When the speeches were over, the class snapped to attention and Ayala called out, "What do you say?"

"One team, one fight," the class belated out.



Courtesy photo

New graduate Aishea Warren receives her degree from Hardee County Deputy Joe Marble. She was one of 12 corrections officers from South Florida State College's Criminal Justice Academy.

■ YOUTH CAMP: **SFSC baseball**

Since 1998, the boys of summer have come to SFSC

By **JAMES TAYLOR**
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK — Running baseball camps has been a labor of love for South Florida State College Head Coach Rick Hitt.

He has been directing camps since 1998, and he has found that over the course of time and especially over the past few years, that several of his recruits for the Panther baseball team had at one time attended his camps.

"I would say that is maybe a dozen or more kids like that in the past three or four years," Hitt said.

Hitt also recounted that just last week another local player was in the office last week that came through the camps as a youth player.

"That full circle is kind of fun to see," Hitt said. "A 9-year-old coming to our camp is now a 17-year old being recruited by our office to play baseball."

Last week, the camp had 24 kids, which Hitt explained was a good turnout being that there are a lot of camp options for kids.

"I am thankful that you pick up a newspaper and see so many different activities for them in the summer," Hitt said. "Baseball camp is just one of them, we always enjoy doing it. Since 1998, we have been doing this once or twice a year."

"It is also a good ratio of coaches to kids, which allows the kids to get more repetitions," Hitt said.

Coaches include Hitt, SFSC assistant coach Andy Polk and several college players.

"It is a fun camp," Hitt said. "Our players are fun guys to be around. They enjoy doing it and they do a great job with the kids. My assistant coach and I enjoy having the kids out here on campus."

"We are just trying to give them a little bit of

something to take with them when they leave," Hitt said. "They get a lot of different type of instructions throughout the year now with year-round baseball, so we just try to reiterate some of the more important things out here."

Campers learn more than just hitting and catching. They learn and understand why they stand for the National Anthem when it is played.

Coaches also teach the kids things like the importance of hydration, how to dress as a baseball player and how to carry themselves.

"Just the little things like that instead of just taking groundballs and hitting," Hitt said. "All the little things that are character things that you hope they continue throughout life."

Even with that, there is still plenty of fielding of groundballs and fly balls, and hitting.

"We have about 12 stations we run through



Bryson Albritton gets a solid hit during batting practice at the South Florida State College baseball camp last week in Avon Park.

each day" Hitt said, "and either an offensive or defensive session. Like yesterday, our defensive session was all in the infield and they had to make throws to different bases from different positions."

Hitt said the throwing sessions are important because one of the things that happens is that younger players learn to field groundballs, but never learn to use their feet and keep their body together to throw.

"They learn to field,



James Taylor/News-Sun photos

South Florida State College assistant baseball coach Andy Polk tosses balls to Ashton White during batting practice of the SFSC baseball camp last week in Avon Park.

but not how to continue the play," Hitt said. "So we try to incorporate a lot of the fielding, plus the throwing."

Campers then play a game at the end to get the benefit of some live action.

"Success breeds success," Hitt said. "When a camper comes out and has success in a batting practice that they may not have had in a little while, or they catch a fly ball or field some grounders that they may have routinely missed, they get that success and then comes confidence."

"All of a sudden, they are excited about walking back in here tomorrow and they are not dragging their bat

from station to station anymore," Hitt said. "There is some enthusiasm in what they are doing."

The glimmer in Hitt's eyes is apparent and the smile on his face speaks volumes as he talked about lessons that he sowed into young players coming to fruition and wondered what this camp will yield in the future.

Hitt will have another opportunity to instruct young players the week of June 22 when SFSC hold its next camp. To register, call Hitt at 863-784-7036 or email him at hitt@southflorida.edu, or simply show up the first day. Camp officials do not turn anyone away.

Order SFSC Transcripts Online Now

South Florida State College now offers students and alumni the ability to order transcripts online seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Official transcripts can be delivered electronically in as little as 15 minutes from when the order is placed. This service is contingent upon the receiving institution's ability to accept online transcripts.

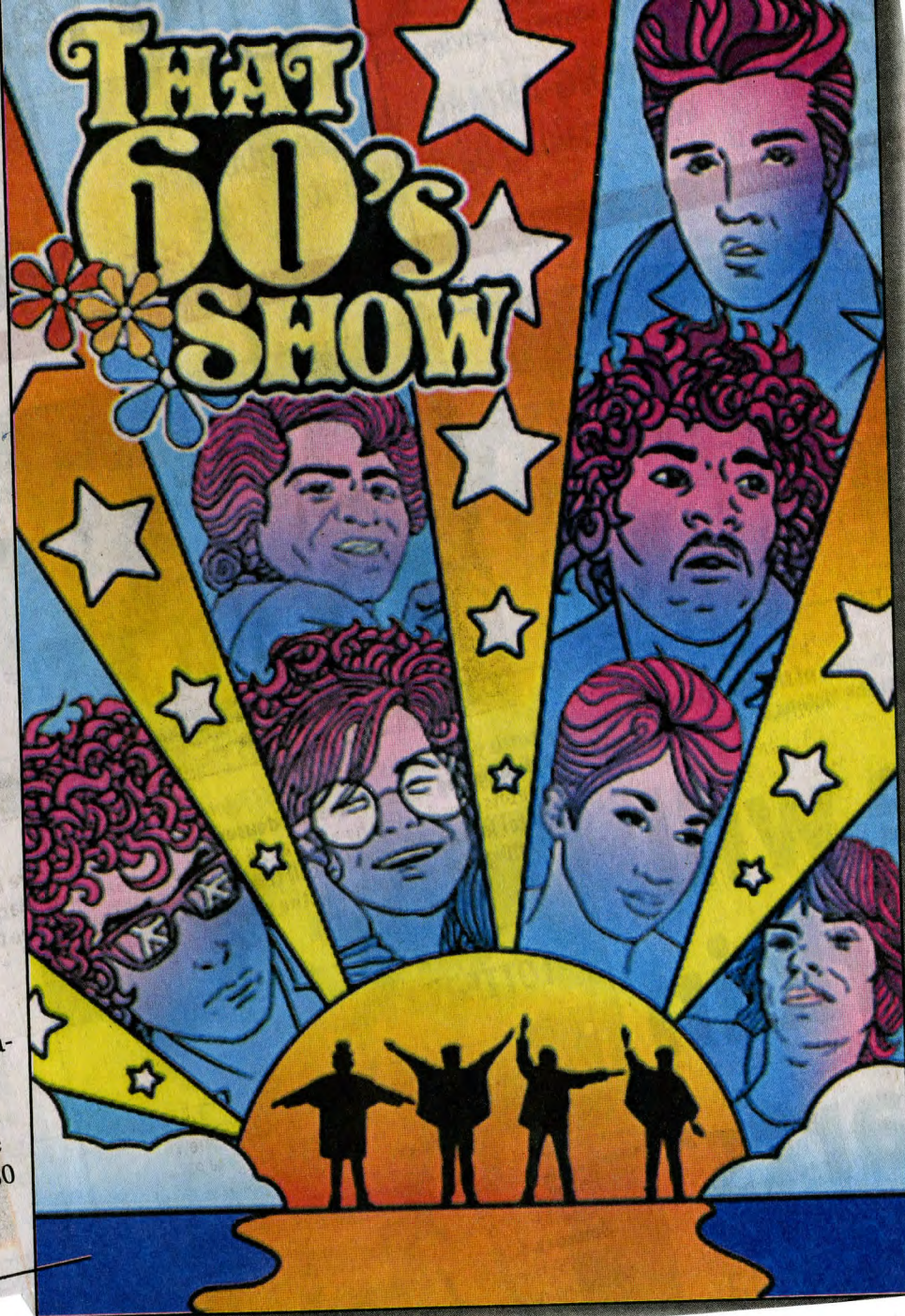
Users can order as many transcripts as they like in one online session using any major credit or debit card. SFSC students and alumni can access Transcript Ordering by logging into the secure student portal at *panthercentral.southflorida.edu* or by visiting the National Student Clearinghouse at *studentclearinghouse.org* and selecting Order-Track-Verify, then Order or Track a Transcript.

Students and alumni who submit transcript requests receive real-time order updates by e-mail and can request to receive instant mobile text alerts or track their orders online at the National Student Clearinghouse website.

NEWS-SUN | Wednesday, June 24, 2015

Flashback to the '60s at SFSC Friday night

AVON PARK — That 60's Show, an exciting new musical production that salutes the most influential decade of our time — the '60s — takes the stage at the South Florida State College Theatre for the Performing Arts on Friday, June 26. A feast for the eyes and the ears, the show is a nostalgic trip back to the days of peace, love, and rock and roll. Relive the music, culture, fashion, and good vibrations with hits from your favorite artists like Peter, Paul & Mary, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Creedance Clearwater Revival, Janis Joplin, The Beatles, and many more. The show starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$22. Visit performances.southflorida.edu or call 863-784-7178.





Tom Staik/News-Sun

South Florida State College's Don Appelquist received the chamber's highest honor: the Lifetime Achievement Award. More photos will be in Thursday's free Highlands Sun.

Chamber goes back to the '50s

Appelquist presented with 'Lifetime Achievement Award'

By **TOM STAIK**

CORRESPDENT

SEBRING — The Avon Park Chamber of Commerce went back in time at its annual banquet at the Island View Restaurant in Sebring on Thursday evening.

The event followed a '50s theme with decorations honoring the blossoming of rock 'n roll — complete with a nostalgic ice cream counter.

Dr. Don Appelquist received the chamber's top honor — the Lifetime Achievement Award — during the awards portion of the banquet.

"It is an honor to have you as a resident of Highlands County and someone who is supporting Avon Park in all that you do," said Angel Wiggins, outgoing chamber president.

Appelquist came to Avon Park in August of 1970 when he accepted a teaching post at the then South Florida Junior College. His decades-long tenure at the institution saw the center for higher education evolve into South Florida Community College and later into South Florida State College. He currently serves as dean of resource development and head of the SFSC Foundation and will retire June 30.

Homemade



Tom Staik/News-Sun

Tim Wise was the winner of the costume contest. Presenting his award was outgoing chamber president Angel Wiggins.

Creations received the chamber's Business of the Year honor. Receiving the award from Wiggins were owners Shane and Janet Wirries.

Chamber treasurer Nicky Dilday presented the Beautification of the Year honor to the Olympic Restaurant. Receiving the award were owners Jimmy and Maria Tsakalos.

Jeff Williams was honored as the Director of the Year and Mimi Loveless was honored as the chamber Volunteer of the Year.

Tim Wise was the winner of the costumer contest for '50s rocker theme. Jessica Swisegood took second place, and third place honors went to Michelle Trinder Goodrich.

Former County

Commissioner David Flowers served as master of ceremonies for the gala event that concluded with an evening of dancing with music by the Funk Monster Band.

Culinary-Arts Grads Cook Up Good Job Opportunities

Americans spend \$55 billion a month at restaurants, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, nearly \$3 billion more than they do at grocery stores.

Brennan Warner wants to get in on the action.

Warner is poised to start a trainee-management position at Ruby Tuesday next week. He credits his shot at the job to his finishing the culinary arts program at South Florida State College.

"If you want to get a head start in the restaurant business, SFSC's culinary arts program is the place to start, hands down," Warner said. "You're going to be looked at more seriously than someone without the training."

Warner, 28, said he was returning to his roots in the food-service business. Out of high school, he worked in local restaurants, first helping out with the salad bar, taking over food preparation and moving up to cook, mostly working at mom-and-pop eateries.

But in 2007, he opted for a new line of work. He graduated from SFSC's law enforcement program and started a six-year stint as a deputy sheriff, working for Glades and Highlands counties.

Now, Warren wants back in the kitchen.

"I love being in the kitchen," Warner said. "I enjoy the fast pace you find there, and I just love food."

To get reacquainted with his first love, Warner enrolled in SFSC's Food Management, Production & Services program last August. The 10-month occupational certificate course covers the gamut of food service, from kitchen organization



Brennan Warner leaves South Florida State College's culinary arts program for a manager-trainee position in a restaurant chain.

COURTESY PHOTO

to menu planning to cooking the perfect turducken. (What's turducken? It is chicken stuffed inside duck that is then stuffed inside turkey — all boneless.)

Graduates of the program find their way into every corner of the food service industry, said Timothy Hansen, professor of culinary arts. "We see graduates find jobs in Hilton and Marriott hotels, family-owned restaurants and corporate establishments like Ruby Tuesday," he said.

"We even send graduates to the resorts out in Yellowstone

National Park each summer, where they immerse themselves in the business and get to see the West," he said. "One student stayed on and is doing very well for himself."

Hansen, known to his students simply as "Chef," learned the food trade at New York's Culinary Institute of America, the nation's premier cooking school. After three decades in the kitchens of resorts and dinner clubs in the Midwest and New York, he chose to settle down in Sebring when SFSC offered him a teaching job.

"I've been teaching here for 16 years now," he said. "For me, it's fun, and I plan to keep on going."

The culinary program is housed Avon Park's Hotel Jacaranda, a historical structure that still serves visitors, both in its dining and guest rooms.

Students use the hotel's kitchen to master dicing onions, making doughnuts and roasting turducken to perfection. To hone their skills, students handle all the food preparation for several events, including the SFSC Foundation's annual gala.

The students say Hansen's experience and hands-on teaching approach is key to their success.

"With his background, Chef Hansen brings a lot to the learning we do in the kitchen that's invaluable," said Jeremy Ethridge, a student who graduates this week with Warner and who has lined up a cooking post in the Navy.

"This definitely isn't flipping burgers," Ethridge said. "Chef Hansen has us prepare everything from scratch and turn it into food that tastes amazing."

With Americans now spending more on eating out than at home, prospects for employment in the restaurant industry remains upbeat.

Warner is hitching his future to Ruby Tuesday's success. The chain of casual dining restaurants boasts 737 locations, mainly along the East Coast. Managers at Ruby Tuesday can earn north of \$45,000, according to Glassdoor.com, a website that tracks working conditions at American companies.

Warner has his sights set on moving up the management ladder. He said his goal is to move from manager to general manager within five years.

"If I had known about this course when I was coming out of high school, I would have done it then," Warner said.

Zombie fun at SFSC's Camp Adventure



Courtesy photo

The stage at South Florida State College's Theatre for the Performing Arts saw Camp Adventure kids rehearsing for a zombie-themed video they shot during Week 2 of their summer adventure on campus. Guiding them was Cindy Garren, director of cultural programs. SFSC's Camp Adventure is a summer program that introduces young people to career opportunities through games and structured, supervised recreation. Camp Adventure runs weekly through July 24 for explorers ages 6 - 12. For more information call 863-784-7388 or email: communityeducation@southflorida.edu.

Long serving SFSC employee retires with new title

After 40 years working at South Florida State College, Dean Jordan finally got promoted to dean, and she had to wait until her last day on the job for the honor.

Pamela "Dean" Jordan's retirement from the college's business office brings to a close the career of the college's third longest serving employee and an end to a long-running gag that tripped up many a new employee.

"We all called her by her middle name, Dean," said Anita Kovacs, SFSC controller and Jordan's supervisor. "But when new employees came by with an invoice, we'd tell them that needs Dean Jordan's approval, and they'd get flustered thinking they'd have to see a college dean for approval."

It was only fitting, then, that as co-workers mustered in the college's board room to bid farewell to Jordan, they would surprise her with a

certificate declaring her an honorary dean.

Despite the awe her name might instill in the new hires, co-workers saw her in a different light.

"Dean is one of the most personable employees I've worked with here," said Lynn MacNeill, SFSC's professor of communication, who has worked with Jordan since her hire in 1974. "From her first day on campus until this day, she has always been the easiest person to work with."

Before her retirement, Jordan, like MacNeill, was in line to take on the role of ROC, or "resident old coder," a title college employees give to the longest serving employee. That role was held by Don Appelquist, who started with SFSC in 1970.

"I started here when I was 20 years old, and it's the only place I've worked since," Jordan said, as coworkers milled about the board room sharing stories about their



Courtesy photo

Pamela "Dean" Jordan with a certificate declaring her an honorary dean at South Florida State College.

time working with her.

When Jordan started, the college was a collection of small buildings lining the shores of Lake Glenada. Now

nearly 3,000 students attend classes in two dozen buildings stretching across the college's 228-acre campus in Avon Park and satellite campuses in Lake Placid, Hardee and DeSoto counties.

She served as an assistant to the college's first president, William Stallard, and ended her career as the coordinator of accounting.

"I've worked here nearly my entire life — it's the best place to work in Highlands County," Jordan said.

Her comments echoed the findings of a recent report handing top marks to SFSC for its work environment. SFSC was designated a Most Promising Place to Work based on the results of a nationwide survey conducted by the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) and the higher education magazine *Diverse*.

Jordan was born in Alabama but has called many

places home. "I was an Air Force brat, so growing up we moved frequently." She moved to Highlands County when her father retired from military service and plans to stay put.

"I am going to devote my time to home renovations, a bit of travel, and lots of time with family and friends," she said.

Kovacs said she's waiting to see how the business office will soldier on without Jordan.

"Dean was definitely the go-to person in our office," Kovacs said. "I think this will be a case of not knowing how much you miss someone until they're gone a month."

Jordan got a laugh out of her elevation to honorary dean in the waning hours of her time on campus.

"I've always told folks I am the only real dean around here," she said with a chuckle. "I can say that because it's my name."

SFSC Panther Youth Partners saluted



Courtesy photos

Brittany Fraginal from Lake Placid High School accepts a recognition plaque from **Eddie Cuencas**, Panther Youth Partners program specialist. Fraginal was one of 12 students to be recognized for their dedication and hard work at a Thursday, June 18 recognition ceremony.



Avon Park High School student **Josnel Soto** accepts his recognition plaque from **Eddie Cuencas**, Panther Youth Partners program specialist.

Generous donors fund two new endowed teaching chairs at SFSC

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's faculty recognition efforts got a boost from four Highlands County residents.

Bill and Lisa Jarrett pledged funds to endow a teaching chair for an SFSC faculty member dedicated to teaching business courses. The Jarretts founded the Bill Jarrett Ford dealership in Avon Park.

Laurie and Dr. Norm Stephens designated their donation to fund an endowment to support a teaching chair for any academic discipline taught at the college by a full-time faculty member.

Dr. Stephens recently

retired as SFSC's third president after serving in the college's top post for 11 years.

"The Teaching Chair program gives us a way to show appreciation to excellence in teaching," said Donald L. Appelquist, SFSC Foundation executive director.

Appointments to SFSC endowed teaching chairs are highly competitive, Appelquist said. Recipients are chosen by a selection committee, with advice and counsel from the college faculty. Selections are confirmed by SFSC's president, Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel.

Faculty members appointed to a teaching

chair are awarded \$5,000 during two years, with half going toward professional development activities related to the professors' discipline of study and half as salary additive.

SFSC currently boasts three endowed teaching chairs. The Carol Emery Endowed Teaching Chair was established by a former SFSC mathematics instructor and benefits mathematics faculty. Endowed teaching chairs in nursing and dental education, both funded by the Highlands County Health Facilities Authority, are awarded to faculty members who teach students in the health sciences.

"These chairs not only

allow us to acknowledge current faculty, but also to attract the very best to our institution," Appelquist said.

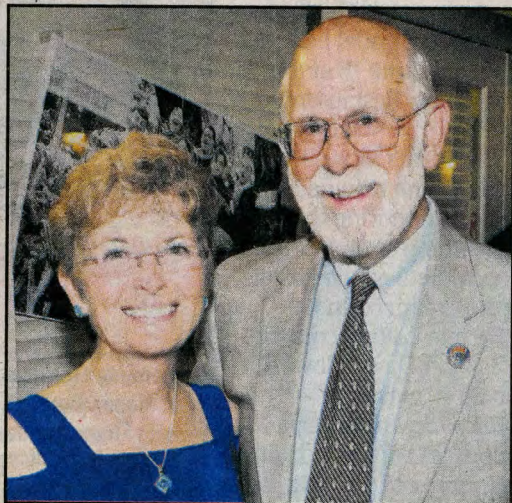
SFSC offers prospective donors two levels at which to endow teaching chairs: one requires an endowment level of \$50,000 and the other \$100,000. The Jarrett and Stephens families chose to endow their chairs at the \$100,000 level.

"We would love to have a teaching chair available in every discipline, and it is our goal to do that very thing," Appelquist said.

Courtesy photos



Lisa and Bill Jarrett



Right: Laurie and Dr. Norm Stephens

Register Now For SFSC Fall Term

It's not too early to register for the fall term at South Florida State College.

Students may register now, and classes will begin Aug. 21.

The SFSC Welcome Center on the Highlands Campus in Avon Park accepts walk-in registrations Mondays through Thurs-days, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Fridays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Students can also register at the Hardee Campus in Bowling Green.

Continuing students may register and pay fees online by going to the SFSC website at *southflorida.edu*, logging into Panther Central, and going to "Self-Service Banner" under the "Student" tab.

The SFSC schedules of classes are also available.

For more information, call 773-3081.

33 graduate SFSC's nursing program

AVON PARK — South Florida State College awarded associate degrees in nursing to 33 students at a graduation tradition-rich ceremony last week.

The students completed SFSC's two-year registered nurse program and will soon sit for the national board examinations, aiming to start their careers later this summer.

The freshly minted nurses, all clad in white uniforms, sat shoulder to shoulder on the stage of SFSC's Theatre for the Performing Arts, with scores of family, friends, and well-wishers looking on from the audience.

The graduates are Shiloh Ashby, Haley Britt, Angela Carlisle, Ceara Collins, Anais Cruz, Jennifer Culpepper, Kimberly Cummins, Sarah Donaldson, Nikki Feichtinger, Denise Fernandez, Bobbie Gilliard, Evelyn Jackson-Elder, Sheila Jean, Melissa Langdale, Guilmon Marasigan, Kimberly Martin, Kristen Massung, Crystal McCain, Christine McMillan, Breanna Mendoza, Lindsey Owens, Jillian Palmer, Paul Primeau, Claudia Regino, Eric Rodriguez, Laurie Rowe, Alysha Sargent, Sarah Smehyl, Ariel Vallejo, Courtney Williams, Rachel Williams and Valerie Worley

Tonya Chancey, director of nursing at Next Generation Village Advanced Recovery Systems, took to the lectern to address the graduates and share her experience of a life in nursing.

Chancey, a former professor of nursing at



The class tapped Diorelly Marquez-Lopez, a nursing instructor at SFSC, as the recipient of the Golden Duck award. The award's significance is based on the DUCK motto: Developing, Understanding, Compassion, and Knowledge. The award was presented by class president Alysha Sargent (left).

SFSC, told the students they were entering a profession where service and dedication were not just bywords but the very essence of their calling. She recalled the words of famed children's advocate Marian Wright Edelman: "Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time."

Alysha Sargent, class president, recalled the ups and downs of the students' two-year pursuit of their degree, noting that they all had to sacrifice and lean on loved ones to earn the opportunity to take their seat on the theater's stage that night.

But before the class could take its turn observing ceremonies stretching back to the 19th century, they had an award of their own to confer. The class tapped Diorelly Marquez-Lopez, a nursing instructor at SFSC, as the recipient of the Golden Duck award. Each graduating class of SFSC nursing



Graduate Shiloh Ashby was pinned by her son, Michael Ashby.



Graduate Guilmon Marasigan was pinned by his mother Joy Caro in a moving ceremony.

students gives the award to a person who contributes in a special way to their learning and development as a nurse. The award's significance is based on the DUCK motto: Developing, Understanding, Compassion, and Knowledge.

Continuing a custom initiated by Florence Nightingale, recognized as the founder of modern nursing, the graduating students received their nursing pins as a symbol of their hard work and achievement. In contemporary graduation ceremonies, students accept their nursing pins from a person of their choice, in most cases a relative, who they see as a pillar of support in their lives.



Courtesy photos

SFSC nursing grads assembled on stage in the Theatre for the Performing Arts. The ceremony marked the end of their two-year journey in education.

One by one, husbands, mothers, and children

mounted the stage, embraced their loved one, and pinned the new nurse.

The graduates, with the lapels of their uniforms now carrying their pins, then clasped a white lantern, which each graduate lighted in succession. This tradition, a rite of passage also initiated by Nightingale, signifies the courage, compassion, selflessness each new nurse is called to, Dr. Michelle Heston, SFSC's nursing program director, told the assembly.

"These unique values are yours now to pass along to your colleagues, but more important, to your patients," Heston said.

Then, in unison, the graduates recited the Nightingale pledge, a nurse's commitment of devotion to the welfare of the patient under his or her care.

Traditions observed, ceremonies complete, and a few wet eyes in need of a tissue, the new nurses filed off the stage into the audience to greet their loved ones.

SFSC offers associate degree in nursing options for students interested in becoming registered nurses: a two-year Generic-RN program and a one-year Transition-LPN to RN program. The college offers a one-year practical nursing occupational certificate program. Also,

Licensed Registered Nurses (RNs) can earn a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing (BSN) in just two years, while attending classes one day per week at the SFSC Highlands Campus.

For program entry requirements, consult the current SFSC college catalog.

SFSC: 4th year with no tuition increase

Board of Trustees approves 2015-16 budget

BY MARC VALERO
Highlands Today



Lambert



Wright

are happy about that," Little said.

The budget includes a one-time supplement for all eligible employees — \$500 full-time and \$250 part-time — to be awarded in November.

SFSC Board of Trustees member Joe Wright said the college didn't receive a lot of new money, but there were no cuts.

But he did note that the Adults with Disabilities Grant program was not funded this year because the money was redirected to children with disabilities.

The impact to the college is \$170,000 of recurring funding reductions, which will impact the operating budget by about \$100,000, according to a summary of the 2015-16 SFSC budget.

Little said it was disappointing because the college had received the grant for many years, which helped those with disabilities with programs, including their friends at nearby Ridge Area ARC.

SFSC Board of Trustees Chair-

man Ken Lambert said as usual the Legislature leaves the college in a "difficult" position.

"It is very difficult to grow an institution when you have no funds especially to take care of remodeling and repairs of the buildings, where you really have no room to provide staff incentives or raises beyond what is already built into their contracts," he said.

Also, expansion of curriculum becomes difficult, Lambert said, but the college manages by being very fiscally conservative.

"We are well within the guidelines of where we need to be financially," he said. "I am incredibly proud of the team of people that we have and the job that they do."

"And, like everybody else, in what remains a difficult economy in our region, we will make it work."

Wright said the board spent two hours reviewing the budget on Wednesday to make sure they understood it.

"Financially the college is in good shape so we did pass the budget basically as proposed," he said.

The college's fiscal year starts July 1.

mvalero@highlandstoday.com
(863) 386-5826

AVON PARK — While South Florida State College budgets for more students, it is holding steady for the fourth year in a row with no tuition increase.

SFSC Vice President of Administrative Services Glenn Little said Gov. Rick Scott recommended no tuition increases for Florida College System institutions.

The college's board of trustees could do something different than what the governor suggested, he noted.

"It is a fourth year coming up that we have had no tuition increase," Little said. "That's great for our students and we are glad it is not going up, but on the other hand we were hoping we would have a few more dollars coming in from the state to offset that revenue."

The college continues to grow with a projected enrollment increase of 2.69 percent in 2015-16.

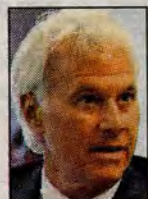
"While that is not a lot, it is more than what has been going on around the state, so we

Leitzel marks 2 years as SFSC president

Board of Trustees approve \$20,000 in deferred compensation for Leitzel

BY MARC VALERO
Highlands Today

AVON PARK — Nearly two years ago, on July 1, Thomas Leitzel assumed the presidency of South Florida State College, and since then his level of enthusiasm seems to continue to grow each day.



Leitzel

Leitzel said Thursday that coming here he knew that SFSC was a great college.

"That has just been affirmed many times over. It is a fabulous, amazing, great college and I am just honored to serve," he said.

The SFSC Board of Trustees showed its support for Leitzel on Wednesday by adding an annual \$20,000 in deferred compensation to his contract.

SFSC Board of Trustees Chairman Ken Lambert proposed the compensation enhancement for Leitzel. Lambert explained that Leitzel's salary is competitive with those of the other state college presidents, but is lacking in the benefits package.

Lambert said he received the final analysis of the college presidents' salaries and compensation this week.

"The reality is Tom has done an incredible job in the last two years and we need to be competitive and make certain he understands that we appreciate what he is doing and more importantly we want him to continue to do those things," he said.

Lambert said he proposed a "mod-

LEITZEL, Page 7

est adjustment" by providing a deferred compensation program, which Leitzel did not have.

"We started that at \$20,000 a year," he said.

The Board of Trustees on Wednesday unanimously approved the change in Leitzel's employment contract.

Board of Trustees member Joe Wright said, "From my view it is justified as I understand what it takes to be a college president."

When a president comes from out of state, as Leitzel did, and changes institutions, they sometimes don't receive the complete retirement benefits that someone would receive who remained in one place for 30 years.

"We want to keep him here," Wright said.

Leitzel was hired two years ago at an annual salary of \$230,000, which has not changed.

Leitzel is employed on a three-year contract, which is subject annually to a one-year extension by the board of trustees.

His current contract will run from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018. In January, following Leitzel's performance appraisal by the board, the trustees can choose to extend his contract.

Leitzel said, with the small increases in state funding each year, one of the major challenges for SFSC is ensuring that it has the resources to sustain the higher educational needs of the three-county region it serves.

"Technology is expensive, but we need to remain ahead with technological advances," he said.

With the retirements of Don Appelquist and Leana Revell, Leitzel said he is encouraged by the hiring decisions, which are the most important decisions for any organization.

"We are filling those with very capable people; they're young, they're enthusiastic and they are going to be the next dimension of leaders and we are so fortunate to have that," he said.

Sidney E. Valentine will start July 6, succeeding Revell as vice president for academic affairs and student services. With Appelquist's retirement, Jamie Bateman will start Wednesday as executive director for institutional advancement to include oversight of the South Florida State College Foundation.

SFSC graduates 11 law enforcement officers

Highlands chief deputy gave speech at Tuesday ceremony

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — South Florida State College graduated 11 law enforcement officers Tuesday, handing them their diploma, challenge coins and plenty of advice for their first assignment.

The class of one woman and 10 men filed into SFSC's University Center Auditorium on the Highlands Campus for the 7 p.m. ceremony and stood at attention while a color guard presented the Stars and Stripes. The auditorium's seats were filled with family and well-wishers, including Highlands County Sheriff Susan Benton.

Before picking up their diplomas, the cadets, dressed in brown uniforms, heard a send-off speech from a guest chosen by the graduating class.

"Why do you want to be cops?" asked Mark Schrader, chief deputy for the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. "Like most, you'll say you want to help people. That's the best reason to be cop," he said.

Schrader also sounded notes of caution throughout his 20-minute speech. He told of the physical dangers inherent in police work, the lack of respect cops receive from some quarters and exposure to the underside of society.

"Cops are the first on the

scene when a child has been maimed, when a spouse has been abused or when an innocent victim has been shot," Schrader said.

Out of it all, he told graduates, comes a sense of calling that is special to police work.

"You'll have a noble feeling that you've done something to help someone," he said.

Richard Morey, SFSC's coordinator of criminal justice training, then called up the 11 graduates of the Basic Law Enforcement Program Class 244 to the stage to hand them their challenge coins — specially minted medallions that signify their achievement and bond as future law enforcement officers. SFSC trustees Kris Rider and Timothy Backer presented the diplomas.

Those graduating were: Gilbert J. Absolu, Jonathan M. Avery, Jonathan Avalos, Nicole D. Brown, Dustin Gilman, Esaul Hernandez, Frans Jansen, Felix Moros, Markais Neal, Yosmany Pantoja and Emmanuel Vazquez.

Morey singled out Moros and Hernandez for their achievements during the nearly six-month course. Moros earned top honors for his academic excellence, while Hernandez scored the firearms award for his work on the shooting range.

Moros, tapped as class captain, took to the lectern to share his parting advice with his classmates.

"We used to be mechanics, retail salespersons and college



COURTESY PHOTO

Felix Moros, graduate of the SFSC Basic Law Enforcement Program, accepts his diploma from SFSC Trustees Timothy Backer, left, and Kris Rider.

students," he said. "Tonight we graduate 11 of the newest and finest law enforcement officers in Florida."

Missing kids' birthdays, late night shifts and the daily hazards of police work await them all, said Moros.

"Being in law enforcement, though, is not about us. It's about the community we serve," he said.

Long-serving SFSC dean set to retire

Appelquist's fundraising helped the college grow

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — In 1970, U.S. troops were on the ground fighting in Vietnam, the Beatles were at the top of the charts with "Let it Be," and the minimum wage was \$1.60.

In August of that year, South Florida State College hired a young graduate student to teach at its new campus in Avon Park.

That rookie instructor, now a dean, is leaving SFSC. Donald L. Appelquist retires on June 30, closing a chapter in the college's history and making way for new leadership at its foundation.

"I intended to teach for one year and then return to graduate school to complete my doctorate, but I fell in love with teaching," Appelquist said. "Now, after teaching for 17 years and overseeing the foundation for 28 years, it is time to retire," he said.

Before coming to Avon Park, Appelquist was nearing completion of his doctorate in biology. He decided to take a break and thought a year teaching community college undergraduates the basics of biology would fill the time before returning to his studies.

After his first year, he signed up for another, and he kept signing up. With each successive year, his ardor for teaching pushed the doctorate degree farther down the road. After nearly two decades of classroom teaching, the doctorate unfinished, he had established himself as one of SFSC's top instructors.

But in 1987, Catherine P. Cornelius, then SFSC's president, stunned Appelquist with a request. She asked him to step out from behind the lectern and take up the twin posts of executive director at the college's newly formed foundation and the college's dean of resource development.



COURTESY PHOTO

Donald L. Appelquist will retire from South Florida State College after a dynamic 45-year career.

Appelquist said he had no experience as a fundraiser, which is mainly what college foundations do, although he did have experience writing grants connected with his research. Still he thought it was time for a change, so he accepted the job.

"Don agreed to leave his faculty position to run the new foundation," Cornelius said. "A foundation that had only \$15,000 in assets then."

For the next 28 years, Appelquist set out to transform the organization into a fully staffed fundraising and grant writing outfit.

"I estimate that we've raised about \$30 million," he said. Much of that money has funded scholarships for students, help build out the campus and bulked up the endowment, which now tops nearly \$14 million.

Cornelius credits Appelquist with cultivating hundreds of supporters whose giving spurred the college to expand beyond Avon Park. Under his watch, the foundation acquired two former public schools: the Lake Placid Center in 1989 and the Teacherage, a historical

building in Sebring, in 1993 — bringing SFSC classrooms within reach of residents throughout Highlands County.

But Appelquist's responsibilities extended beyond fundraising. In 1990 the foundation assumed ownership of the Hotel Jacaranda, in Avon Park's main street historical district. He secured historical preservation grants with an eye toward restoring the hotel — which had fallen on hard times — to the grandeur it acquired in the roaring 1920s.

The hotel became the base for the foundation, housing its offices and serving as symbol of the college's roots in Avon Park. SFSC's first classes met just across the street.

For Appelquist himself, the money and the buildings take second billing to one of the foundation's most successful initiatives, Take Stock in Children. The program, launched in 1997, matches at-risk high school students with mentors who guide them toward earning their diplomas, with college scholarships awaiting those who graduate and enroll in college.

"The sense of amazement and satisfaction I derive from seeing the immediacy of the impact this program has on at-risk kids who finish high school, then move on to college, is without measure," Appelquist said. "And not only them, I can see the affect it also has on the parents and siblings—it's a life-changing experience for everyone."

Appelquist has served under each of the four presidents who have headed the college since its inception. Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel, SFSC's current president, who is poised to begin his third year, lauded the departing dean.

"We are enormously grateful for his dedicated service to SFSC and our community," Dr. Leitzel said. "He leaves us with a solid foundation — yes — an intentional play on words. From his efforts, the college will move forward to embrace and fulfill our vision."

But in his capacity as executive director of the foundation, Appelquist also answered to a board of directors who oversees its operations. Christy Crews, the foundation's current president, praised Appelquist for his efforts on behalf the students.

"Don has devoted his life to SFSC and its students, and untold numbers have benefited from his work," Crews said. "I wish him the best in retirement."

Appelquist's retirement makes way for his successor, Jamie Bateman, to assume leadership of the SFSC Foundation. Batemen, currently executive director for the Florida Hospital Heartland Medical Center Foundation, will take over the reins from Appelquist on July 1, bringing 15 years of foundation experience with her.

Retirement has its benefits Appelquist said. In July, he will set off for a month in France, including a cruise down the Seine. Add in mountain climbing and a marriage, and his face breaks out into a smile.

But with two weeks before saying goodbye, Appelquist had occasion to stop and marvel at SFSC's transformation from junior college with a clutch of buildings to a four-year institution with three campuses and a center.

"Through it all there remains one constant," Appelquist said. "SFSC was and is a great place to spend a career."

SFSC holds Baseball Showcase to snare next Panther

AVON PARK – The next South Florida State College Panthers may have been prowling around last weekend, and baseball coach Rick Hitt was hoping to catch them.

With a couple of spots still open on the baseball roster for the upcoming school year, SFSC held its High School Baseball Showcase last Sunday for players that were still looking for a college to play for in the fall.

For Hitt, it was an opportunity to gauge players' skill sets and look for athletes to fill the team's remaining roster spots.

"This is just an introduction in what we are looking for in players that are moving and transferring from high school to college," Hitt said. "Orientation on how we approach things at our school from a student-athlete standpoint."

In the showcase, players performed various drills depending on their preferred position. For example, outfielders fielded groundballs and threw to various bases.

Those showcase players that only pitched threw the equivalent of two innings in a game situation. Those that pitched and played another position threw one inning and drilled at the other position.

SFSC officials also gave parents information about financial aid and how it works.

"We talked to the guys about the opportunity they have today and going forward in showcasing themselves for college coaches," Hitt said.

Hitt also made it clear that there were no "basket weaving" classes at SFCS.

"Every now and then some athletes get the wrong idea that they will come to school and someone will give the classes just to keep them eligible," Hitt said. "At our place, we graduate players."

At SFSC, players meet with advisors and determine what is important to them. "It's a mutual conversation about what their major is going to be and they collaborate to get a good solid academic foundation to begin with and work toward graduation," Hitt



James Taylor/News-Sun photos

Players run a 60-yard dash on Sunday during the South Florida State College Baseball Showcase at the Highlands County campus in Avon Park. The showcase was held to try to find players to fill open spots on this year's roster.

said. "That is the ultimate goal for every player.

"We have a 2.0 to maintain eligibility and a 2.5 to transfer to a Division I school," Hitt said.

Hitt also said that SFSC had 21 student-athletes on the academic all-conference team this year that requires a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

"Obviously those are good goals to shoot for," Hitt said. "That is about 40 percent of our student-athletes."

As of Monday, no information was available on the outcome of the showcase.



South Florida State College baseball head coach Rick Hitt, in orange shirt, talks to potential players during the SFSC High School Baseball Showcase last Sunday in Avon Park.

South Florida State College Baseball Camp



RUTH ANNE LAWSON

South Florida State College baseball coach Rick Hitt gives instructions to youngsters who attended the weeklong camp on Wednesday at Panther Field.



Eight-year-old Owen Phypers displays perfect form for bunting during Wednesday's baseball camp at Panther Field.

Fun on the diamond

South Florida baseball camp focuses on fundamentals

BY RUTH ANNE LAWSON

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — South Florida State College hosted its 16th annual Panther Baseball Summer Youth Camp this week. The popular camp attracted 22 youngsters ranging from 5 to 14 years of age. The athletes were separated into groups and sent to various stations to practice their skills in bunting, sliding, ground balls, pop-ups and much more.

"This is our annual summer youth camp," said South Florida

State College baseball coach Rick Hitt. "We have two or three camps every year. We usually have one during the holidays and then a couple in the summer. We average between 20 to 30 youngsters each time. This is a great camp with kids between the ages of 5 all the way up to 14. It's a lot of fun and full of activity. We ask them to participate in a lot of things, have good attitudes, to work hard and try to do their best. We want them to improve their skills and become good teammates and good people along

BASEBALL, Page 2

Baseball

From Page 1

the way. This is always enjoyable for us and it is great to have the kids on our campus. We are really looking to their skills. We want to help them to be better baseball players. Our biggest goal is to lend our time to their advancement in baseball. Hopefully we will send each one home with a little something to take with them. Some of these kids have never played before. This is their first opportunity to be introduced to baseball and we want it to be a very positive one. Hopefully it will influence them, give them some confidence and they will stick with it. There are a lot of other things for them to do and hopefully they pick baseball to be one of them."

Hitt has been at South Florida for many years and has seen a number of campers grow up to be members of the Panthers baseball team.

"We do see future Panthers out here," he said. "We have had a few recruits that have been campers in the past. It's really neat to see that, and there are always future Panthers in just about every class that is out there. We enjoy having them back."

Assisting Hitt are some current members of the South Florida baseball team.

"I enjoy working with kids and this is something fun to



RUTH ANNE LAWSON

Seven-year-old Jazymn Negron practices taking ground balls during Wednesday's baseball camp.

do and it gets me out of the house," said Panthers player Tobias Culpepper. "I've worked at other camps when I lived in Fort Meade, but this is my first time at South Florida State College. I've learned that these kids have big imaginations, and I've learned to have patience. You have to

have patience. I'm just looking to have fun and make sure the kids have fun as well."

With Highlands County being a mecca for youth baseball, the youngsters are working hard to improve and learn more about the game they love.

"I came here today to get better at baseball and make new friends," said camper and Panthers bat boy Zackary Taylor. "I've learned how to catch pop-ups and ground balls by using two hands to get the ball out faster. I've been coming to this camp since I was 4 and it's a lot of fun. I play in the Majors for Sebring, and this camp helps me to improve. My favorite part of the camp is hitting because it helps me to get better and then at my games I can hit the ball a lot harder."

Sebring High standout Matt Portis, who signed to play baseball at South Florida in the fall and is helping out, knows how valuable these camps are.

"This is my first time out here as a coach," Portis said. "I came out here as one of the campers when I was little. This is a lot of fun. I had a good time as a kid being out here and I learned a lot from everyone here. It's a good way for the kids to exercise. I'm having a great time out here. I've learned how some kids respond to a certain way of coaching and some don't. You have to learn to adjust to that. It's fun hanging out with these kids and talking to them."

Hitt hopes these youngsters leave with a better knowledge of baseball and they have improved their skills. The next camp is set for June 22-25. For more information, contact Hitt at 784-7036.



Baseball camp set for June 22

South Florida State College assistant baseball coach Andy Polk tosses balls to Ashton White during batting practice of the SFSC baseball camp last week in Avon Park. Another opportunity to instruct young players will be the week of June 22 when SFSC hold its next camp. To register, call 863-784-7036, email hittr@southflorida.edu, or simply show up the first day, Camp officials do not turn anyone away.

COLLEGES: Panther Volleyball Camp



James Taylor/News-Sun

South Florida State College head volleyball coach Kimberly Crawford demonstrates an exercise this week in a Panther volleyball camp in Avon Park. This was the 13th annual camp for Crawford.

Serving up volleyball

SFSC teaches kids more than the basics

By **JAMES TAYLOR**
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK – It is not as easy as one, two, three and over the net.

Volleyball requires a person to be not only athletically inclined in several skill sets, but it also requires a degree of game intelligence in the rules, formations and plays, as

well as being able to communicate quickly and effectively with teammates.

Those were just some of the things that South Florida State College head volleyball coach Kimberly Crawford was looking for this week when she concluded her 13th

CAMP

FROM PAGE 1

annual summer camp, an event that actually was two camps in each of the four days that the camp was held.

The morning camp was held for beginners with no knowledge of the game, while the afternoon camp was for more experienced kids.

"With the beginners, we teach everything," Crawford said. "With the more experienced players, we build on the skills they already know: serving, passing, setting and hitting."

Though those four skills are important, Crawford also ran the campers through various warm-up exercises, each one designed to match movements on the court. Then, campers worked on the big blocks, performing various drills that help develop leg strength and land-in-play position.

Crawford noted that for the girls in the middle school or younger age groups, serving is probably on the top of the list of importance.

"At the middle school level, if the girls can't serve the ball over the net, the game is not too fun," she said.

The SFSC coach also noted that setter is typically the higher-skilled athlete in a camp.

"But at the beginner level, all of those skills are pretty difficult," Crawford said. "Then on top of that, you try to teach them how to actually play the game."

"We do our best to keep it simple," Crawford said. "We go through all the skills during the earlier part of the camp and the last hour we will play games."

The campers seemed to enjoy themselves.

"I love it," said Calynn Jackson, a student at Avon Park Middle School. "I wish it did not have to end."

Crawford also has a



James Taylor/News-Sun photo

Campers work on the big block to develop leg strength and how to land in the correct position during a session of the South Florida State College Panther volleyball camp this week in Avon Park.

summer travel team that practices at the college and plays in tournaments throughout the state. She also gives private lessons to help high school players that need to develop into players with college scholarship potential.

"When you have 20 people, you have to keep it kind of basic,"

Crawford said of camps. "But in private lessons, we can work on the position they play and what is needed to reach the next level."

"The ideal athlete would be an athlete that can do all the skills," Crawford said. "Even though they (may) play middle, they still need to be

able to serve-serve, set and hit and not just block. Those are always the athletes as a college coach you will look for."

Crawford certainly has the experience to know what she is looking for. She currently holds the SFSC record for most kills in a season and most blocks in a

match while being part of the Panther teams that won the Suncoast Conference Championships in 1991-92.

She also was inducted into the Florida Southern College Hall of Fame in 2009, played professionally for two years and trained at the Olympic level.