

# SFSC launches firefighting program

First class started in September and will graduate in April

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — Heartland residents can now turn to South Florida State College to earn the credentials needed to work as a career firefighter in Florida.

SFSC launched its fire science program last fall, enrolling 11 recruits.

In November, the State Fire Marshal gave SFSC's program its stamp of approval, placing it on Florida's

list of approved firefighter recruit training providers, the college said. SFSC now joins 42 training providers across the state, including 15 of Florida's state colleges, in offering the two-part course.

The Legislature, at the urging of state Sen. Denise Grimsley, R-Sebring, appropriated \$2.6 million in 2014 for SFSC to refit existing classroom space, build

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

South Florida State College instructor Eric Hanks works with a recruit on the proper technique for deploying a hose.

## Firefighting

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a water and fire tower, and acquire the equipment to open the program on the college's Highlands Campus, SFSC said.

"Our fire science program was a dream of our community that was a long time in the making," Kevin Brown, SFSC's dean of applied sciences and technologies, said. "We've received tremendous support from the community getting this program up and running, including essential equipment from the Hardee County Commission and the city of Frostproof."

SFSC wrapped up the construction and hired instructors in time to enroll the inaugural class in September 2015. The class will graduate in early April.

"Steve Ashworth, our fire science chair and the instructors, have done a great job in getting this program ready for our first class of recruits," Brown said.

Ashworth organized the site work, aided in drafting building plans, and ordered training equipment.

The state requires career firefighter recruits to complete a two-part training program. The initial 206-hour phase of the course covers the fundamental knowledge and skills to work as a member of a firefighting team, permitting graduates to work in a volunteer fire department. A second 192-hour course gives recruits the added



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Instructor Rodney Tumbleston watches a recruit practice using an axe to cut through a simulated floor.

skills set to work as career firefighter in a county and city fire department.

Prior to SFSC starting its program, area residents had to travel to Bradenton, Tampa or Winter Haven to enroll in the complete state-approved course.

Last week, Eric Hanks, an adjunct instructor, was at the new fire science training site with the 11 recruits, teaching them how to breach a shuttered door.

When not on campus, the Lake Placid resident commutes to Boca Raton to put in a 24-hour shift with that city's 216-member fire department.

"These folks are doing a great job," said Hanks, who is also a certified paramedic. "They're like sponges; they soak up everything we teach."

The 11 recruits, four of

whom are women, represent a range of backgrounds. Some are career paramedics looking to move into firefighting. One, only a few years out of high school, wants to fulfill his dream of fighting fires. Two recruits are married to each other.

Haines City residents George and Cheryl Bailey work as paramedics for Polk County's fire and rescue service. The couple wants to take the next step up the career ladder.

"We looked into SFSC's program and it worked out well for us," said 43-year-old George Bailey. "We thought it would be great way of backing each other up by taking the course together," he said, with Cheryl, his 37-year-old wife, nodding in agreement.

Wauchula resident Cole

Choate, a 20-year-old graduate of Hardee High School, is looking to start a career in firefighting.

"Right now I am just eager to graduate so that I can get in with a fire department," said Choate. "I hope it's a local department, but that's not necessary."

The class trains with the latest technology to mimic real-life situations. Recruits practice firefighting techniques in a 44-foot-tall fire tower that simulates structure fires, including a stove fire with flashover. They learn hose pulling and teamwork using two fire engines, each of which has seen service with area fire departments.

Entry into SFSC fire science program requires candidates to have a high school diploma or its equivalent, pass a background check, and demonstrate a level of physical fitness needed to carry hoses, saw through a roof, and pull an injured person to safety.

Members of volunteer departments who have already completed the initial 206-hours of training with another provider can enroll in SFSC to complete the second phase of the training, commonly known as Firefighter II.

To learn more about SFSC's fire science program, call Ashworth at (863) 784-7272 or email ashworths@southflorida.edu. Information on the program is available at the degrees and programs link at [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu).





**SFSC honors students, front row, from left: Nicole Darder, Alexis Drzewucki, Annsley Bohlman, Katherine Oyola, Melissa Garcia-Rodriguez, Heather Oyola and Dr. Charlotte Pressler. Back row, from left: Christian Reitnauer, Carlos Negron and Mathew Estima. Not pictured: James Pinkney, Kayleen Prestridge, William Sager and Tyler Whalen.**

## SFSC honors students receive scholarships

AVON PARK — South Florida State College awarded 13 students in its honors program the Edward K. Roberts Book Scholarship, an award that helps students cover the cost of textbooks.

Students awarded the merit-based scholarship receive \$250 in the form of a credit they can use toward the purchase of textbooks at the Campus Store,

the bookstore on SFSC's Highlands Campus.

SFSC's Honors Program offers students cultural enrichment, smaller classes, scholarship opportunities and special recognition at the graduation ceremony as well as an honors endorsement on their Associate in Arts degree and transcript. Honors students also take part in a service-learning project in the community.

Students receiving the scholarship must enroll in one honors course during the academic term in which they receive the scholarship. Returning students must achieve a 3.30 cumulative college grade-point average and continue to make satisfactory progress toward the Honors Program Associate in Arts degree.

Nicole Darder, tapped as one of the awardees, singled out the service-learning project as one of the more reward-

ing features of the honors program. "Through the service-learning project, we participate in new and enriching experiences outside of the classroom," she said. "That contributes greatly to our leaning."

Dr. Charlotte Pressler, who teaches English and philosophy, heads up the honors program. "SFSC is delighted to work with the Roberts Fund and the SFSC Foundation to recognize students for their outstanding scholarship," she said.

Two other awardees, Mathew Estima and Christian Reitnauer, have also drawn recognition for their academic performance through their participation in Phi Theta Kappa, an international academic honor society. They have been selected for the All-Florida Academic Team, which recognizes outstanding students in the Florida College System based on academic achievement,

leadership and service to the community.

# 7 graduate from SFSC law enforcement program



AVON PARK — South Florida State College graduated seven law enforcement officers on Feb. 23, handing them their diploma, challenge coins, and words of advice as they begin their careers.

The class of five men and two women 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. Family and well-wishers filled the auditorium seats.

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

"Your new public service family is counting on you to raise the bar and raise the standard," said Greg Bubbs, a detective with the State Fire Marshal's Office who investigates fires and arsons in south central Florida.

"Don't be scared, be vigilant," Bubbs told the cadets. "Don't be nervous, be ambitious. Don't be complacent, be tenacious," said Bubbs, who patrolled Highlands County as a deputy early in his career.

He sounded notes of caution mixed with encouragement throughout his

10-minute speech. He told the cadets law enforcement is challenging but, at times, treacherous.

"Your goal is not survive, but to win," he said.

Michael Huften, SFSC's coordinator of criminal justice training, then called up the seven cadets from Basic Law Enforcement Program Class 245 to the stage to hand them their challenge coins, specially minted medallions that signify their achievement and bond as future law enforcement officers. Kevin Brown, SFSC's dean of applied sciences and technologies, presented the cadets with their diplomas.

Graduating that night were: Timothy Duxbury, Crystal

M. Burns, James G. Ford, Eduardo Garcia, Maribel Gonzalez, Salvador Gonzalez, and James S. Sottile.

Huften singled out Duxbury and Sottile for their achievements during the 11-month course. Duxbury earned top honors for his academic excellence and Sottile scored the firearms award for his work on the shooting range.

Cadets typically complete the basic law enforcement course in six months. But this class of cadets enrolled in the part-time option, nearly doubling the completion time.

Ford, who was tapped as class captain, took to the lectern to sum up his fellow cadets' accomplishments.

"We've persevered,"



Cadet captain James G. Ford accepts his diploma from Michael Huften, SFSC's coordinator of criminal justice training.

said Ford. "We've kept full-time jobs, raised families, and made three-hour commutes to reach this point." Ford lives in Port Charlotte and other cadets commuted from Haines City, Glades County, and Winter Haven.

Ford thanked



Courtesy photo

The cadets of Basic Law Enforcement Class 245. From left: Timothy Duxbury, James G. Ford, Crystal M. Burns, James S. Sottile, Maribel Gonzalez, Salvador Gonzalez, and Eduardo Garcia.

SFSC's instructors for teaching the class life's lessons and helping them make it to graduation. Then, addressing his fellow cadets, Ford commanded them

never to forget the motto their class had adopted.

"Fight to the finish," Ford said, with the audience erupting immediately into applause.



# #Backchat to give teens, parents chance to address sexting issue

By **PHIL ATTINGER**  
STAFF WRITER

**LAKE PLACID** — When parent Larry G. Moore attended Monday's meeting on sexting at Lake Placid Middle School, several other parents wondered aloud if they could continue the frank conversation with their kids.

Fortunately, they can, he said.

He and other board members with Drug Free Highlands Coalition initiated #Backchat last spring to give youth and parents a common-ground forum to discuss serious issues.

So far, it has met twice — Aug. 14, 2015, and Jan. 22, 2016 — bringing in 50-70 people to South Florida State College's University Center. Another #Backchat is scheduled for August this year — right before school, Moore said.

"We cover all things teen," said Aisha Alayande, director of Drug Free Highlands. That includes social media, drugs, alcohol, bullying, suicide, sexual abuse and sexting.

The middle school meeting was prompted by a recent rash of nude selfies and sexually explicit videos created by LPMS students and distributed to other students. The images were brought to the attention of staff and a school resource deputy on Feb. 10.

Principal Chris Doty told parents that the images, because of the way digital devices store data, can never be taken off the Internet. Sheriff Susan Benton explained that under the sexting law, Florida Statute 847.0141, a minor has committed a crime if they knowingly use a computer or other device that can transmit the images to another minor that depicts nudity.

Alayande said at the August #Backchat that youngsters knew sexting can lead to criminal charges, and even talked about "revenge porn" sites where people use old sexting pictures to slander others.

Moore said #Backchat could help parents learn what their children are dealing with, and continue

the town hall conversation started with the Lake Placid Middle School meeting.

"I felt like (parent night) participants got what they needed," Moore said. "I wanted to make sure there are forums (where) they can talk to get information, so Highlands County is healthier as a whole."

#Backchat first divides up youth and parents to talk among themselves in separate areas, Alayande said. Then, both groups meet in one area to go over what they learned and what they want the other group to know.

Where parents found their kids to be narcissistic, she said, teens found their parents to be the same way.

"That communication was lacking," Alayande said.

The only downside with the current SFSC venue is that it's not convenient to Lake Placid teens and their families, so Moore is hoping to team with STR8 UP Youth Ministry to put on a program, possibly using the STR8 UP facility in Lake Placid.

"The idea is to bring it to each city," Alayande said.

The next #Backchat is scheduled for August at SFSC, but anyone who wants to schedule one before then can contact Drug Free Highlands at 863-382-2138 or [info@drugfree-highlands.org](mailto:info@drugfree-highlands.org).

*Kin Leatherman contributed to this story. Phil Attinger may be contacted at 863-386-5636, or [phil.atteringer@newssun.com](mailto:phil.atteringer@newssun.com) and followed on Twitter @PhilAttinger.*



Courtesy photo

**Two #Backchat sessions have already been held, with a third planned to include talk about sexting.**



# Archeological artifacts find home at MOFAC

Fla. couple dug up  
items from Indian  
burial mound

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — A collection of archeological artifacts held in private hands has found a home at South Florida State College's Museum of Florida Art and Culture.

The assortment of beads, jewelry, and ornamentals was unearthed 50 years ago by a Florida couple, Leon

and Nona Hurtado.

The couple dug the items from a burial mound constructed by Native Americans — mostly likely the Calusa tribe — on the north shore of Lake Josephine.

Nona Hurtado, now 88, arranged to have the items donated to MOFAC with the help of a family friend. Last September, she accompanied the box holding the artifacts to the museum, and arranged to transfer ownership to SFSC.



COURTESY PHOTO

Nona Hurtado and Mollie Doctrow in the gallery of SFSC's Museum of Florida Art and Culture.





COURTESY PHOTO

A selection of Goodnow Mound artifacts in their display case at SFSC's Museum of Florida Art and Culture.

## Artifacts

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On Jan. 29, Hurtado returned to MOFAC to attend a reception recognizing her for the donation. College officials, MOFAC's curator, Mollie Doctrow, and the Hurtado's family turned out for the event and to see the artifacts in their newly fashioned display case.

"It's time these items found a home after all these years," said Hurtado, who now lives in Punta Gorda. "They've been sitting in a box in my house since the '60s, so I thought now is the time they were put on display." Her husband, Leon, died in 1996.

The Calusa tribe inhabited settlements throughout southwest Florida, including Highlands and Hardee counties. Archeologists trace the tribe's ori-

gins to 5,000 B.C.

The donated items, some older than 600 years, were dug from a Native American burial site that came to be known as the Goodnow Mound, which was first excavated by archeologists John W. Griffin and Hale G. Smith in 1947. The project ended for lack of funds.

In 1964, the Hurtado family was visiting the initial dig site and noticed burrowing ants were ferrying tiny seed beads to the surface. Fascinated by what they found, and learning of the site's history, the couple got permission to dig the mound anew.

"My husband served 30 years in the Navy as an engineer," said Hurtado. "So he built a conveyor belt and we started digging the mound to see what might lie hidden."

The couple, along with their children, shifted through dirt finding hundreds of glass beads, two silver tablets and ornamental items that would have been used by a tribal chief as a ceremonial shield. The Hurtado family also acquired a lead tablet.

"This lead tablet is absolutely amazing," said Anne Reynolds, with the Kissimmee Valley Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, who was on hand last year as the artifacts were examined upon their arrival at MOFAC.

"Only two other tablets like this have ever been analyzed," said Reynolds, who helped arrange for a similar donation to MOFAC of items that had been excavated from a nearby archeological dig, the Blueberry site outside Lake Placid.

"We have arranged for

a special viewing case for this collection," said Doctrow, the museum's curator since 2005. "This is a particularly special donation and it will not only complement our existing exhibits but add to our understanding of the tribes that inhabited this region."

Doctrow said some of the most important items are now on display for public viewing in MOFAC's main gallery, which is housed on SFSC's Highlands Campus.

More items will go on display after the installation of additional display cases. She said the collection will be made available for researchers to study.

MOFAC, in addition to its permanent collection of contemporary Florida regional art, provides an exhibition venue for established and emerging

artists.

The museum also serves as a repository for the historical artifacts that showcase Florida's history.

The Hurtado family kept the collection at their home, making it available occasionally to an expert or interested amateur.

"At one point I was all set to sell it," Hurtado said. "I am getting old enough so that I don't want worry about what's going to happen the artifacts."

After signing the deed transferring ownership of the collection to MOFAC, Hurtado examined display cases containing arrowheads, jewelry, and tools from other archeological excavations in the museum's collection.

"I am happy to see my collection has found such a good home," Hurtado said.



# SFSC STEMQuest program promotes academic growth

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — For some three dozen first- through eighth-graders, a Saturday morning in late February was a day without cartoons or backyard activities.

Instead, they were huddled in classrooms on South Florida State College's Highlands campus learning computer programming, what makes sounds waves travel and how air pressure moves objects.

The students from elementary and middle schools throughout Highlands County had enrolled in SFSC's STEMQuest program, a series of half-day classes that introduce schoolchildren to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, popularly known as STEM.

Leslie Comeaux, a STEM coach at Sun 'n Lake Elementary School, led first-, second- and third-graders in a hands-on activity designed to spur children's interest in STEM fields. To teach students how air pressure can move objects, Comeaux guided students in racing inflated balloons tethered to twine across the width of the classroom.



COURTESY PHOTO

**SFSC STEMQuest students inflate a balloon in preparation for a race pitting them against their classmates. The teacher chose the race to show students how air pressure can propel objects.**

Using a Slinky, plastic pipes and wooden blades, Coral Rivera, a fifth-grade teacher at Sun 'n Lake Elementary School, helped her students explore the scientific principles behind sound and vibrations. One exercise had students fashioning an improvised harmonica made from tongue suppressors, tape and paper.

David Zoerb, a mathematics instructor at SFSC, led his group of seventh- and eighth-graders through the basics of computer programming. He took them through the paces of building a web page using everyday software to write HTML code.

"Immersing students in classroom activity centered on science, technology and engineering gives them an opportunity for academic growth," Dr. Kimberly Batty-Herbert, dean, SFSC Division of Arts and Sciences, said.

"Future high-demand and high-wage jobs will be found in STEM-related careers. Our STEMQuest program aims to orient students in this direction early in their academic journey," she said.

For information on SFSC's STEMQuest programs, call Batty-Herbert at (863) 784-7329 or email [battyhek@southflorida.edu](mailto:battyhek@southflorida.edu).

# **Basic Law Enforcement Class Soon**

The South Florida State College Criminal Justice Academy is accepting applications for its next Basic Law Enforcement course.

This is the course required to become a state of Florida certified law enforcement officer.

Basic Law Enforcement classes will be held Monday through Friday, plus some Saturdays and Sundays, from 6 to 10 p.m., beginning Monday, March 7.

By successfully completing 770 contact hours of training, students earn occupational certificates and are eligible to take the state certification examination for correctional officers.

The Criminal Justice Academy is located on the college's Highlands Campus in Avon Park.

For more information, contact program coordinator Richard Morey at (863) 784-7285.



# SFSC Names Hardee Students To Academic Honors Lists

South Florida State College recognizes students who have achieved academic excellence during their studies at the college.

These students are named to the President's List, for receiving a semester grade-point average between 3.8 and 4.0, or the Vice President's List, for an average between 3.5 and 3.7.

Named to the Fall 2016 President's List were:

Bowling Green - Ricardo Aleman, Amanda T. Bisette, Hollyann Brown, Makayla D. Chancey, Ivan Chavez, Jacqueline DeLa Cruz, Felise Y. Ehrenkauf, Stephanie A. Escobedo, Illeana Flores, A.L. Juarez, Claudia Lozano, Andrew R. Melendez, Kayla M. Schock, Shaina L. Todd, and Erica Vasquez.

Ona - McKenna N. Hellein.

Wauchula - Courtney M. Alexander, Luc S. Alfred, Erica Apolar, Kayla L. Austin, Leah L. Blankinship, Daniel L. Boehm, Grae N. Bollinger, Kenneth G. Bonds II, Abby L. Clark, Braddock B. Collum, Mariela Delacruz Camarillo, Byridiana De Santiago, Jordan N. Evers, Maria D. Flores, Mara L. Goodwyn, Janet Guido, Logan N. Gunnoe, Chad D. Hays, Crystal L. Hernandez, Odalis Hernandez, and Jesus Hernandez Jr.

Also, Katelyn P. Hines, Cory W. Jones, Hayden K. Lindsey, Rebeca Lopez, April M. Lozano, Christian Manresa, Brenda Martinez-

Bautista, Dennis Mejia, Adna Metayer, Danielle R. Milby, Brenda Miramontes, Jonathan A. Mondragon, Mireya Mondragon, Lindsay D. Moon, Crystal Morales, Kayla L. Nichols, Carrie J. Noel, Christian Pena, Jacqueline Perez, George Perez Gomez, and Cheyenne E. Pohl.

And, Kayleen M. Prestridge, Courtnee A. Richardson, Donna L. Roberts, Erica D. Roberts, Leonel Rodriguez, Sylvia V. Rodriguez, Kramer N. Royal, Vanette S. See, Holly D. Smith, McKenzie Staton, Danny Sustaita, Roberto Torres, Julie Valdivia, Noah D. Valletutti, Isaac E. Vasquez, Audra Weeks, Sarah L. Welch, Daniel W. Witt, and Summer Xiong.

Zolfo Springs - Silvia Alvarez-Vargas, Daniel A. Cisneros, Garrett J. Edenfield, Rebeca Espinoza, Sonya M. Fowler, Catalina Hernandez, Claudia G. Klein, Rosario Piedad-Camacho, Benjamin T. Tamayo, Cynthia Villa, Amber N. Westberry, and Terry R. Yanes.

Named to the Fall 2016 Vice President's List were:

Bowling Green - Jeremy Aguilar, Laina M. Durrance, Anna E. Erikson, Ruth E. Erikson, Karlee S. Henderson, Kyle Hewett, Keven A. Hodges, Alexis U. Lopez, Raquel Maldonado, Madison Marple, Priscella E. Ramirez, Emily D. Rhodes, Nikki L. Summers, and Balentin Tamayo.

Ona - Celeste Limon.

Wauchula - Evidianna Arce, Emily B. Bennett, Hanna G. Carlton, Mindy S. Castillo, Soraya Castillo, Sylvia DeLaRosa-Rodriguez, Esmeralda D. DeLoera, Adson Delhomme, Uriel Estrada, Morgan L. Evans, Darby M. Farr, Maria R. Fimbres, Maribel Garza, Breanna N. Godwin, Melissa Hernandez, Faith H. Hodges, Brandon K. Holton, Maricruz Jaimes-Ramos, Kiana S. Johnson, and Reyna M. Kirkland.

Also, Kathy Marcial-Palacios, James D. Miller, Selena Miranda, Jorge Molina, Jakayla M. Mosley, Angelica B. Navarro, Araceli M. Navarro, Kaitlin M. Oden, Jacob J. Pakovich, Elizabeth G. Paris, Elizabeth J. Pierce, Adam R. Ramirez, Magaly Ramirez, Michael J. Ramirez Jr., Rachel Roberts, Aron B. Ruiz, Okie C. Sambrano, David P. Sams Jr., Joselyn B. Thompson, Priscilla Villazana, Morgan T. Walters, Gannon Watson, Karley M. White, Jacob L. Willis, Madeleine Zamora, Wyatt L. Zeigler, and Maria I. Zuniga.

Zolfo Springs - Kayla B. Albritton, Evelia Cabrera, Alexa A. Chapa, Carmen L. Delgado Garduno, Haley R. Edenfield, Aniceto Estrada, Monica M. Graham, Julissa Ortiz-Ortiz, Angela M. Salinas, Deanna L. Sanchez, Miranda L. Smith, Gustavo Villalva, and Pajehouablai L. Vue.



# SFSC alumnus believes in giving back

Max Gooding is helping the school in a multitude of ways

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — Every college dreams of having alumni like Max Gooding.

Gooding, a graduate of South Florida State College's art department, excelled in the classroom and was involved in student government. After earning his associate in arts degree, he went on to a four-year university, graduated, and started his own company.

What's more, he never forgot where he got his start, giving his time, talent and money to the college that helped propel him to success.

"I wouldn't be who I am without the time I spent at SFSC," Gooding said, while on a recent visit to the Highlands campus, where he was attending an exhibition to showcase the art of fellow alumni. "Because of what SFSC has done for me, I believe in giving back."

At just 27, the artist and landscape architect finds himself at the helm of his own art and design studio. Still, Gooding finds time to stay engaged with SFSC.

From sponsoring an award that recognizes promising art students to encouraging young artists on campus to helping SFSC redesign its campus, Gooding keeps on giving.

A native of Naples, Gooding calls Highlands County home. He graduated from Lake Placid High School in 2007, intent on studying art with his own approach.

"I've always loved drawing," said Gooding. "But, I also had an affinity for creating spaces and experiences. Some artists yearn to express themselves in both the second and third dimensions. For me, landscape architecture is how I express myself in three dimensions."



Gooding enrolled in SFSC immediately after high school.

"I knew at the time that I wasn't in the best frame of mind when I left high school, so going away to a university would not have been a good option for me," he said.

He doesn't shy away from acknowledging that he had his share of problems that come with adolescence, bad friends and bad habits.

"At SFSC, I wasn't just a number as most students are at a large university," Gooding said. "A couple of SFSC faculty and staff members were instrumental in helping me rid those problems from my life."

With his life in order, Gooding poured himself into his studies. He credits art instructors Cathy Futral and Mollie Doctrow with his success. "Cathy and Mollie recognized my drive early on," he said. "They had a subtle, supportive way of pushing me to my limits."

Gooding delights in recounting that he had an aversion to painting in water colors. He said Futral coaxed him into sticking with the medium under her tutelage. It worked.

"She completely flipped my perspective with her style of teaching," Gooding said. "Now water color is my preferred medium."

"Max was an outstanding art student," said Futral. "Every now and then a student, as Max did,



COURTESY PHOTOS

**TOP:** A drawing of a residence by Max Gooding, a South Florida State College alumnus who has made a big mark. **ABOVE:** Gooding at work.

reminds me of the story of Leonardo's teacher who taught his student to paint and, in the end, the student outdid the teacher.

"Another aspect of Max that is equally important to anyone who knows him is his generosity and caring nature. Four years ago, Max established the Max Gooding Award as a way of giving back to the SFSC community, particularly the art department."

The award provides \$400 to students for purchase of their art. After earning his associate's degree from SFSC in 2009, Gooding graduated summa cum laude from the University of Florida with a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture. An investor saw Gooding's work and

was so impressed that he helped the new graduate start his own studio, The Max Gooding Company.

Gooding's life now revolves around growing his studio's business. He consults with businesses to create brands and logos, produces commercial art, and designs landscapes for high-end real estate developments.

"Right now, you could say I am married to my business," Gooding said. "What little scraps of sleep I get I am sprawled on the couch recharging myself for my next creative endeavor."

"Max was an exceptional student who touched so many lives

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# Gooding

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when he was at SFSC," said Mollie Doctrow, curator of the SFSC's Museum of Florida Art and Culture, who taught Gooding drawing. "He is remarkably talented, smart, hard-working, and involved.

"He contributed in so many ways to the art department, MOFAC, and SFSC."

Gooding collaborated with Doctrow in designing MOFAC's Wildflower Wayside Trail, a self-guided walking trail where visitors can explore pristine scrubland on SFSC's

Highlands campus.

Now, Gooding plans to put his landscape design talents to work on SFSC's Highlands campus. He is in the early stages of crafting a plan that would reconfigure the college's main entrance on U.S. 27.

"It takes about 13 seconds for a vehicle to pass the college's entrance on the highway," Gooding noted. "That's 13 seconds to tell a story of 50 years of SFSC, and that's not much time."

Gooding's ardor for SFSC has earned him recognition.

He recently received the prestigious LeRoy Collins Distinguished Alumni Rising Star Award, an honor

given by the Florida Association of Colleges to graduates of the state's 28 state and community colleges who show significant achievement as well as support of their alma mater.

Gooding has a message for his fellow alumni.

"The alumni who have shared a similar experience and really soaked up the SFSC experience know the value of the college," Gooding said. "If they can't give back with money, then they should consider giving back with their time.

"Just going to a class and telling your story of success can make a difference for students."

# SFSC's MOFAC features the photographic art of Clyde Butcher

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — "Visions of Florida: The Photographic Art of Clyde Butcher" will be exhibited today to April 28 at South Florida State College's Museum of Florida Art and Culture. MOFAC is located at the college's Highlands campus in Avon Park.

Discover an undisturbed paradise that is rapidly disappearing. Through the eyes of one of America's finest landscape photographers, journey into the realm of natural Florida — a world seldom seen by tourists or longtime residents.

Considered Florida's Ansel Adams, Butcher's black and white photographs chronicle some of Florida's most beautiful and compelling ecosystems. This exhibition, on loan from the Museum of Florida History, includes a video on Butcher and his environmental photography.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Clyde Butcher's silver gelatin print, Cayo Costa Island.**

At 1 p.m. Feb. 18, regional artist Joey Sacco will present an interpretive talk at MOFAC about the exhibition.

The state has honored Butcher with the highest award that can be given to a private citizen

— the Artist Hall of Fame Award.

For more information about this exhibition, call MOFAC curator Mollie Doctrow at (863) 784-7240 or email [mollie.doctrow@southflorida.edu](mailto:mollie.doctrow@southflorida.edu), or visit [www.mofac.org](http://www.mofac.org).



# SFSC to host open house on programs of study

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — South Florida State College invites prospective students and parents to discover all the college has to offer at the first of several open houses on the Highlands campus, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Feb. 25.

The open house will be in the lobby of Building B, 600 W. College Drive, Avon Park. Look for Entrance 1 and follow the signs to Building B. SFSC faculty and staff will be on hand to showcase college's many educational and student support programs.

"Attendees will have the chance to learn about the various programs of study SFSC has to offer, financial aid and scholarships, advising and counseling, student life, and learn more about support services for students," said Summer Miller, SFSC's college recruiter. "They can drop in any

time between 4:30 p.m. and 6 p.m., so there's no need to rush to the campus after work."

Miller said college representatives will be available during the open house to help new students apply for admission. Students can get their financial aid questions answered by talking to one of the college's financial aid counselors, she added.

While at the open house, attendees can join one of two guided tours of the campus. The first will set off at 4:45 p.m. and a second tour starts at 5:15 p.m.

"What's great about this event is that all the key college staff will be in one place, so folks won't have to go from office to office to get help," Miller said.

In addition to its two-year associate degree, SFSC offers three bachelor's degree programs: elementary education, nursing and business with a concentration in supervision

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## Open

From Page 10

and management. Students who earn an associate's degree at SFSC are guaranteed admission to one of Florida's 12 state universities or one of the college's own bachelor's degree programs.

Residents who haven't earned a high school diploma can learn about SFSC's adult education program leading to a high school equivalency diploma.

"Whether you're pursuing a bachelor's degree, an associate degree, college credit certificate, or occupational certificate, SFSC's open house can help you start your journey towards reaching your educational goals," Miller said.

Other open houses will be held April 28 and June 9.

For more information, call Miller at (863) 784-7447 or email [summer.miller@southflorida.edu](mailto:summer.miller@southflorida.edu).

## South Florida State College News

### Concealed weapons permit class on tap

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Criminal Justice Academy is offering a Concealed Weapons Permit course, required to carry a concealed weapon in Florida.

Topics to be covered include Florida Statutes, use of deadly force, carry restrictions and live fire exercises.

The course will be held on Feb. 20, 8 a.m. to noon. The cost of the course is \$55.

For information, equipment list and maps to the range, contact the Academy at (863) 784-7285 or visit [www.southflorida.edu/publicservice](http://www.southflorida.edu/publicservice). Register at any SFSC Campus or center, pre-registration is required.

### Basic law enforcement class starts April 4

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Criminal Justice Academy is accepting applications for its next Basic Law Enforcement course, required to become a certified law enforcement officer.

Classes will be held Monday through Friday, plus some Saturdays and Sundays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., beginning April 4.

By successfully completing 770 contact hours of training, students earn occupational certificates and are eligible to take the state certification examination for correctional officers.

The academy is located on SFSC's Highlands Campus, Avon Park.

For information, contact program coordinator Michael Huften at (863) 784-7285. Financial aid is available to those who qualify. Applications must be picked up in person by appointment only.



South Florida State College has a variety of events and classes coming up.

HIGHLANDS TODAY FILE PHOTO



## **Anthropologist to talk about Mayans**

AVON PARK — The ancient Maya civilization will be the topic of the next Kissimmee Valley Archaeological and Historical Conservancy lecture at South Florida State College.

Gabriella Vail, an anthropologist whose research delves into the culture and hieroglyphics of the Maya, will speak at 7 p.m. Thursday in Building G, Room 101, on SFSC's

Highlands Campus. The public is invited at no cost.

Vail will guide the audience through a review of research that provides evidence about the role of fire in rituals among the Maya, its transformative powers among the people and the mythic narratives that underlie their beliefs, the college said. The Maya inhabited land in present day southern Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras from 2000 B.C. until their conquest by the Spanish in the late 1600s.

The talk is one of a series at SFSC sponsored by the Kissimmee Valley Archaeological and Historical Conservancy.

For information, call Anne Reynolds at 840-3995.

## Panther 5K Run/Walk set March 5

AVON PARK — The seventh annual Panther 5K Run/Walk is scheduled for March 5 at the South Florida State College Highlands Campus as a fundraiser for SFSC athletics. Registration is \$25 for adults, \$20 for students and \$15 for children ages 6 to 12. Children under 6 may participate in the race at no cost, providing a registration form is completed on their behalf. Well-behaved pets are also welcome. Online registration is available at [www.southflorida.edu/giving/panther-5K](http://www.southflorida.edu/giving/panther-5K).

A free race shirt and goody bag will be reserved for each of the first 200 participants who registers and pays the admission fee before Thursday. Registration fees remain the same through race day; however, shirts are not guaranteed. Awards are presented to the first male and female who finish the race, to the top three male and female participants in each age category, and to the top male and female finalists in the masters and grand-masters divisions.



## **SFSC Pork Dinner slated for today**

**AVON PARK**— The annual South Florida State College Pork Dinner fundraiser will take place today at the Panthers Athletic Complex. Both the Panther baseball and softball teams will be in action. Cost is \$9 and includes a pulled-pork dinner and admission to the game. The event is sponsored by Nuttin Fancy Grillin and serving time is 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## **Registration underway for Heartland Games**

Those planning to compete in the Heartland Games For Active Adults need to submit registration forms to South Florida State College at least one week prior to the first event a participant is entering. Registration forms are available at [www.southflorida.edu/heartlandgames](http://www.southflorida.edu/heartlandgames).

Upcoming events are: tennis (Tuesday through Thursday), cycling (Feb. 20), bowling (Feb. 22 and 23), Indoor volleyball (March 4), golf (March 5), bridge (March 11), pickleball (March 12 and 13), euchre (March 18), shuffleboard (March 21 and 22) and swimming (March 22).

Feb. 14  
Highlands Today, Sunday

## **Starting Your Business seminar to be offered**

**AVON PARK** – Ever wanted to start your own business but not sure how to get started? The Florida SBDC at University of South Florida, located at South Florida State College, will host a **Starting Your Business seminar** at South Florida State College, Corporate and Community Education Room T24, from 2 to 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 24. 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. This seminar is customized for start-ups in DeSoto, Hardee and Highlands counties; including the cities of Lake Placid, Sebring, Avon Park, Arcadia and Wauchula. Call 863-784-7405 to reserve a seat. Refer to CRN 21150. Cost is just \$10 and includes seminar materials. To find out

more about Florida SBDC at USF no-cost business consulting and low-cost seminars, visit us online at <http://www.SBDCTampaBay.com>.



## Community News

### Rotary club learns about mentor program

**SEBRING** — Irene Castanon, program coordinator for the Take Stock in Children Program for the last 12 years, shared a moving video with the Sebring Sunrise Rotary Club.

The video highlighted some students who have been in the program. Take Stock in Children is a Florida-based mentoring program for children who come from impoverished families but show the drive to succeed.

These children are given mentors who give them the encouragement and support they need to break that cycle by not only graduating from high school, but by getting post-secondary education through scholarships.

The local program is partnered with the South Florida State College Foundation Inc. They get many applications each year. Applicants must meet income criteria and academic criteria to qualify.

This year, 84 students from Highlands County, 24 from DeSoto County and another 24 from Hardee County are enrolled in the program, the club said.

The SFSC-based program has had 377 graduates.

"They have had 96 percent graduate from high school, and 92 percent who have enrolled in college," the club said in a news release.

The key, says Castanon, is the commitment the mentors give these students.

The mentors give one hour of their time each week and are asked to make a minimum one-year commitment to the student. Many follow the students from seventh-grade right on through their college years, forming strong



COURTESY PHOTO

**Kim Heintz, left, is pictured with Irene Castanon, program coordinator for the Take Stock in Children Program for the last 12 years, who spoke to the Sebring Sunrise Rotary Club.**

bonds with these students.

The program helps the student become college-ready, from assistance with the applications, applying for financial aid through FAFSA, taking tours of the campuses and helping the students explore other scholarships available.

It was noted there were several mentors within the Sebring Sunrise Rotary Club. The club also made a donation to the program.

Castanon says they are in need of male mentors. For information, call (863)-784-7343.

# Heartland Games for Active Adults — bridge and euchre

Gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded after the tournaments

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK— For two decades, South Florida State College has challenged older residents of the Heartland and surrounding counties to stay healthy, by participating in a variety of sporting events in the Heartland Games For Active Adults. For 2016, the Heartland Games has been expanded to include both bridge and euchre tournaments.

Party bridge will be played at Tanglewood in Sebring on Friday, March 11 starting at 9 a.m. On March 18, Tanglewood will welcome euchre players for a full day tournament starting at 9:30 a.m.. Coffee and donuts will be provided by Hometown America before the start of play in each tournament and a light lunch will be served, compliments of the Games' sponsors, VITAS Healthcare, Newsom Eye, Edward Jones/Alan J. Holmes, Florida Hospital, Legacy Bicycles, Drs. Thakkar & Patel and Turner Furniture.

Pat Reich, coordinator of the bridge tournament, encourages avid bridge players to convince friends to register early. Seating for the first hand will be at each player's discretion. Subsequently, play-



**Left: Players at Sebring Recreation Club, from left, are Phil Ormsby, Mary Herrmann, Barb Myers, Lorraine Dugas. Right, Peg Maxel, left, Kathy Swain, Marilyn Redenbarger and Wanda Khouri enjoy a game at the recreation club.**



COURTESY PHOTOS

ers will circulate to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to meet new people and earn points with a variety of partners playing against different competition. At the end of the day, scores will be totaled and medals awarded to both men and women in each five year age group from 50-54 up to 90+. Reich emphasizes that it will be "party bridge" not duplicate.

On March 18, Carl Mys, coordinator of the euchre tournament, hopes to see a large turnout. Euchre is recognized as an excellent social game that is simple in concept but with a high degree of subtlety in the play. Euchre appears to have been introduced into the United States by ear-

ly German settlers in the Midwest. The game is still very popular in states such as Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin where so many of the Heartland Snowbirds summer. As with bridge, there will be gold, silver and bronze medals awarded on the basis of gender and age.

Registration forms are available at Tanglewood and many other adult communities, as well as at local Chambers of Commerce and online at [www.southflorida.edu/heartlandgames](http://www.southflorida.edu/heartlandgames). The entry fee is \$15

for either bridge or euchre and includes a Dri-Fit shirt and lunch. The cost to compete in both tournaments is \$25 per person. This same \$25 fee would also allow participants to compete in the other Heartlands Games events scheduled for March; golf, pickleball, shuffleboard and swimming.

For more information about the Heartland Games, call SFSC's Community Education office at 863-784-7388, or email [communityeducation@southflorida.edu](mailto:communityeducation@southflorida.edu).



## Historical society banquet to feature Cornelius

By **TOM STAIK**  
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK — Dr. Catherine P. Cornelius will be the keynote speaking at the annual banquet hosted by the Depot Museum and Historical Society of Avon Park.



**CORNELIUS**

The gala event — that is open to the public — is slated for Thursday, Feb.

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## BANQUET

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25 at the Jacaranda Hotel.

"I asked her to tell what she accomplished during her 18 years," said Elaine Levey, the director of both the museum and the society. "She did a lot and I so admired her with how she led people at the college. Lots of things were happening while she was there."

One of the many accomplishments, Levey said, was opening to college library to the public.

"I was living in Lorida at the time and having to pay to use the library at Sebring," Levey recalled. "It was really a great help to the community when

Dr. Cornelius opened the college library's doors to the public."

During her 18-year tenure as head of what was then South Florida Community College, Dr. Cornelius oversaw rapid expansion that included the construction of state-of-the-art buildings and the opening of satellite campuses in Lake Placid, Arcadia and Wauchula.

Cornelius came to SFCC from Daytona Beach Community College, where she had served as vice president of Academic Affairs and Institutional Planning.

She continues to reside in Avon Park. "She has done a lot of great work," Levey added.

Tickets to the banquet are \$20.

The dinner will

begin at 6 p.m. with an elegant buffet dinner, Levey said.

A short election of board members is scheduled prior to Dr. Cornelius taking the stage at 8 p.m.

In addition, a newly released book published by the South Florida State College Foundation titled "Fifty Years of Education Opportunities in Our Community" will be available for sale at the front desk of the hotel during the banquet.

Levey said the event will again feature gift baskets — including a wine table with glasses — and a door prize will be awarded.

Tickets are available at the Jacaranda and the Depot Museum (3 N. Museum Avenue).

Call the Museum at 863-453-3525 or Levey at 863-385-8618.

# Tennis, bowling next up in Heartland Games For Active Adults

The multi-event 2016 Heartland Games are now underway. Coming soon are three days of tennis and two days of bowling.

The Heartland Games will take over the courts at the Country Club of Sebring for mixed doubles today (Thursday) at 11 a.m. Players are asked to be at the venue by 10:30 a.m.

Last minute entries can be accommodated on the day of competition as long as players show up by 10:15 a.m. to register. The cost to play tennis in the Heartland Games is \$15 to compete on one, two, or all three days. The entry fee includes a dri-fit shirt and medals, as well as a light lunch.

Heartland Bowl in Sebring is the site for this year's Heartland Games bowling. Singles and doubles take to the alleys on Feb. 22 and bowling commences at 9 a.m. Mixed doubles will roll on Feb. 23 starting at 12:30 p.m. Bowlers are asked to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start time.

The entry fee is \$15 for two days of bowling. There is a surcharge of \$5 each day, payable at Heartland Bowl. Early

registration is a must. Bowlers are requested to register at least one week in advance. Registration forms are available at Heartland Bowl, and completed forms may be dropped off there.

Competition in both tennis and bowling is according to age. Medals will be awarded in the following age brackets: 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, 75-79, 80-84, 85-89 and 90+.

Registration forms are available online at [www.southflorida.edu/heartlandgames](http://www.southflorida.edu/heartlandgames) and at many local bin addition to the chambers of commerce in Avon Park, Sebring, Lake Placid, and Wauchula.

South Florida State College runs the the Heartland Games For Active Adults as a qualifier for the Florida Senior Games to be held Dec 5-11 in Clearwater.

The Heartland Games are sponsored by Edward Jones/Alan Holmes, Newsom Eye, Florida Hospital, Drs. Thakkar and Patel, Legacy Bicycles, Turner

Furniture, Wauchula State Bank, and the Alan Jay Automotive Network. For more information about the Heartland Games for Active Adults, contact games

coordinator and SFSC director Lorrie Key at 863-784-7033 or [lorrie.key@southflorida.edu](mailto:lorrie.key@southflorida.edu); or games ambassador Neil Simpson at 863-382-8349 or [nsimp76@gmail.com](mailto:nsimp76@gmail.com).



## South Florida State College Briefs

### SFSC Lake Placid Center offers exercise classes

LAKE PLACID — South Florida State College's Community Education Department is offering a variety of classes at the SFSC Lake Placid Center. Exercise classes are taught by certified instructor Kathy Rouse.

Body Burn class includes 20 minutes of weight training, cardio and abdominals. The class includes a stretch and cool down period.

Zumba Toning is an easy-to-follow class that helps to sculpt and

tone. The class includes a stretch and cool down period.

Power Pump is an interval training class including weights, cardio, and cool down period. The cost per month is \$35 for all three classes. Drop-in fees are \$5 per class.

The classes are ongoing and meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 8-9 a.m., and 9-10 a.m., and Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m., and 5:30-6:30 p.m. For a detailed schedule, see the schedule online at [www.southflorida.edu/community/community-education](http://www.southflorida.edu/community/community-education).

Low Impact Aerobics class is a low impact exercise done using a chair. The class is offered on Thursdays through April 28, 9-10 a.m. The cost is \$15, and drop-in fee is \$5.

In Clogging, an American folk dance, participants learn Irish dances and jigs wearing tap shoes. The class is offered on Mondays, Feb. 22 through March 28, 5:30-6:30 p.m., and is taught by instructor Diane Colleen Mooers. The cost is \$25, and drop-in fee is \$5.

To register or for a detailed schedule, call the Lake Placid Center at 863-465-3003.

# SFSC and financial adviser want grads to dress for success

Residents can donate clothing to students

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — South Florida State College is teaming up with Benton Wealth Management to ensure the college's spring term graduates dress for success.

Trudy Benton, president of the Sebring-based financial consultancy, will partner with SFSC to hold an open house from noon to 6 p.m. on March 4 so that residents clearing out their closets for spring can donate clothing to students looking for jobs. Benton will play host to the event in her office at 231 U.S. 27 N., Sebring.

The open house will benefit some of the 200 students SFSC who will graduate in May. Many of these graduates will launch their careers with their newly minted degrees and occupational certificates.

"Much to their credit, some of our graduates complete their studies even though they come from financially hard-pressed homes," said Col-

leen Rafatti, director of SFSC's Career Development Center. "One more hurdle often awaits these graduates: affording business-appropriate clothing for job interviews."

Rafatti noted that in today's competitive employment market, showing up for an interview with the wrong attire can cost a graduate a chance of landing a job.

"This year, we found an amazing partner, Trudy Benton, who founded Benton Wealth Management," Rafatti said. "Trudy came up with the idea of inviting the public to her office not only to drop off clothing but take time to enjoy refreshments."

Ladies can also enter their names for a chance to win a Brighton necklace.

In 2013, Benton, an SFSC alumna, started her own wealth management firm after 14 years as SunTrust Investment Services' lead financial adviser for Highlands County.

"It seems like yesterday when I was a student at SFSC working on building my career and struggling to put together my own professional wardrobe," Benton said. "I un-

derstand the difficulties of being a new professional with limited resources."

The idea of matching grads with the right clothing came to Rafatti in 2011. She had been tapped to take part in Leadership Highlands, a nine-month course that prepares a select number of county residents to assume leadership roles in the community.

Rafatti persuaded her classmates to donate time, clothing, and hardware to set up a "Dress for Success" room on SFSC's Highlands campus to fulfill the class's required service project. Rafatti and her classmates soon stocked the room with racks of clothing, furniture, and fashioned it with fitting space.

Rafatti heads up SFSC's Career Development Center, a one-stop shop that provides students with a range of employability services. From resume preparation to job leads to interviewing tips, Rafatti and her colleagues aim to ensure SFSC students get off to a good start.

Benton and Rafatti ask residents to bring gently used women's business attire, shoes, purs-



HIGHLANDS TODAY FILE PHOTO

**Bruce Kimball II found a three piece suit, several dress shirts, ties and shoes in South Florida State College's Dress for Success program back in 2014. Kimball said the program helped him find nice, professional clothes he wouldn't have been able to afford.**

es, and accessories to restock the "Dress for Success" shelves. Donation of men's clothing is also welcome. Clothing should be clean, pressed and on hangers.

For information on the open house, contact Benton or Shari Flowers at Benton Wealth Management's Sebring office at (863) 402-1700. For information on SFSC's Career Development Center, contact Rafatti at (863) 784-7410 or rafattic@southflorida.edu.



## Things to do this week



KAREN CLOGSTON/STAFF

**The Highlands County Concert Band will hold its next concert at 7 p.m. Thursday at South Florida State College's Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts.**

## Concert band to perform

**AVON PARK** — The Highlands County Concert Band will hold its next concert at 7 p.m. Thursday night at South Florida State College's Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts.

It will perform a selection of tunes, including music by Neil Diamond, Glenn Miller, Billy Joel and tunes of old.

Pre-concert entertainment will be provided by The Dixie Cups, playing the sounds of New Orleans.

Cost is \$7 donation. Tickets are available from band members or at the door.

The band's final concert of the season is set for 7 p.m. March 24 at South Florida State College's Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts.

—Highlands Today

## Phil Dirt and The Dozers

**AVON PARK** — This show will perform at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday at South Florida State College's Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts, 600 W. College Drive, Avon Park.

Phil Dirt and The Dozers take you on a charming ride of music from the '50s, '60s and '70s.

Tickets are \$21, \$25 and \$28.

For more information, call (863) 784-7178 or visit [www.sfscarts.org](http://www.sfscarts.org).

## 'Saturday Night Fever' slated Wednesday

**AVON PARK** — As part of its Artist Series, this show will perform at 7 p.m. Wednesday at South Florida State College's Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts, 600 W. College Drive, Avon Park.

"Saturday Night Fever" is the coming-of-age tale of young Tony Manero who learns the value of life in 1970s Brooklyn. Based on the 1977 movie starring John Travolta, "Saturday Night Fever" is packed with legendary hits from the Bee Gees, in addition to several new songs written especially for this production.

Due to the subject matter, this show may not be appropriate for children.

Tickets are \$38, \$43 and \$48. Pit seats are \$55.

For information, call 863-784-7178 or visit [www.sfscarts.org](http://www.sfscarts.org).

## Photography exhibit at MOFAC

**AVON PARK** — "Visions of Florida: The Photographic Art of Clyde Butcher" will be exhibited through April 28 at South Florida State College's Museum of Florida Art and Culture. MOFAC is located at the college's Highlands campus in Avon Park.

Considered Florida's Ansel Adams, Butcher's black-and-white photographs chronicle some of Florida's most beautiful and compelling ecosystems.

For more information, call MOFAC curator Mollie Doctrow at (863) 784-7240, email [mollie.doctrow@southflorida.edu](mailto:mollie.doctrow@southflorida.edu) or visit [www.mofac.org](http://www.mofac.org).



# Registration for Heartland Games closing soon

Remaining events include bridge, euchre and shuffleboard

Special to Highlands Today

**AVON PARK** — To date, the following events have been contested in the 2016 Heartland Games For Active Adults: track and field, tennis, cycling and bowling. This year's remaining events are: golf, bridge, pickleball, euchre, shuffleboard and swimming.

Those who have participated in the early events have found the competition to be excellent and the opportunity to meet new people with shared inter-

ests every bit as good. Being held in winter, the games provide a tremendous way for year-round residents to meet and compete against some of the snowbirds.

With registration deadlines quickly approaching for all remaining events, the organizers of the games in the Corporate and Community Education Department at South Florida State College hope that many more residents will download a registration form at [www.southflorida.edu/heartlandgames](http://www.southflorida.edu/heartlandgames) and participate.

The Heartland Games have been run by SFSC for two decades to promote a healthy lifestyle of fun and fellowship while

competing with others who share mutual recreational and leisure interests.

In previous years, all of the events have been of an athletic nature.

This year, the scope of the games has broadened with the inclusion of bridge and euchre tournaments. Both will take place at Tanglewood, which is located on U.S. 27 half a mile north of the Sebring Wal-Mart.

"Party Bridge" players will gather on March 11 while euchre enthusiasts will compete on March 18.

For more information, call SFSC's Community Education office at (863) 784-7388 or email [communityeducation@southflorida.edu](mailto:communityeducation@southflorida.edu)



# Area high school students participate in STEM scholars program

**AVON PARK —** Descending on the Highlands campus of South Florida State College on Feb. 13 were 104 high school juniors and seniors from DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, and Okeechobee counties who participated in a STEM Scholars program.

This program is a rural science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) initiative sponsored by the Heartland Educational Consortium.

"Students from small and rural districts face unique challenges, among which is access to enrichment opportunities in STEM," said Lisa Shin of the Heartland Educational Consortium and coordinator of the STEM Scholars program.

"Exposing students to the STEM career fields and research provides an opportunity for academic growth and enrichment," said Dr. Kimberly Batty-Herbert, dean, SFSC Division of Arts and



Courtesy photo

**SFSC instructor Dr. Mintoo Patel (center) explains the process of isolating DNA.**

Sciences. "Engineering and other STEM-related fields are predicted to be future high demand jobs. Our intention is to connect these young scholars to career pathways that ensure a rewarding and secure profession in the 21st century workforce."

The students had a full schedule of activities from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Officers with the Highlands County Sheriff's Office presented sessions covering a day in the life of a CSI crime scene technician,

through which students learned about fingerprinting, crime scene processing, collecting and casting shoe and tire impressions, and various equipment used in the lab and at the scene.

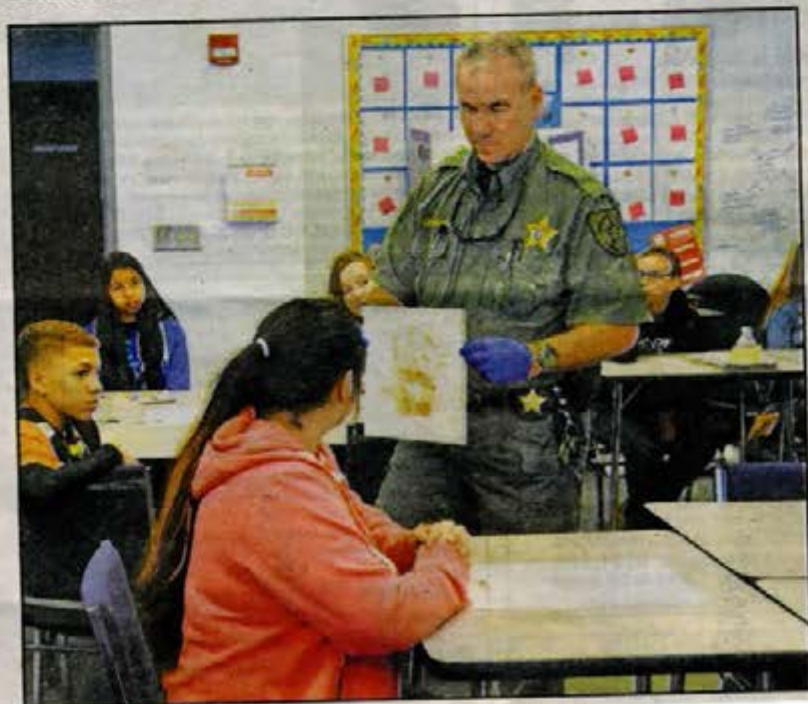
SFSC faculty led a series of explorations in science. Using a pecan half, a soda can, a twisted paper clip, matches, and lab equipment, students learned about calorimetry by calculating the number of calories in a pecan.

By staining *E. coli* (found in the gut) and

*Staph aureus* (commonly found on the skin), they were able to identify and view these two types of bacteria under a microscope.

And in another session, students isolated DNA from their own cheek cells and watched them separate through the process of electrophoresis.

"Over the last five years, South Florida State College has supported our program by providing STEM forums like this one to our students, helping to make them aware of a wide variety of postsecondary and career options in high skill and high wage fields," Shin said.



Courtesy photo

**Deputy Tom Ouversen of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office demonstrates iodine fingerprint development.**



# Professor's need to keep busy benefits SFSC students

AVON PARK — Dr. Christopher McConnell has to stay busy — even in retirement after three decades of practicing internal medicine.

He grew weary of the business end of medicine. Still, he couldn't imagine a life on the golf course or lounging by the pool. He had a need to work. To fulfill that need, he found a second career teaching science at South Florida State College.

McConnell is now entering his ninth year teaching human anatomy and physiology to aspiring nurses, radiologists, and biologists.

"I'm going to keep working until I drop," said McConnell from his office on SFSC's Highlands Campus. "As long as I'm useful, I'll keep teaching here."

His journey to SFSC's science classrooms came about from a knock on the door. "After leaving my practice, I took up piano lessons to keep myself engaged and busy," McConnell said. But after several years of lessons, he acknowledged, "I didn't

have it in me to play music."

Thinking he might have an aptitude for art and eager to find something to do, he knocked on the door of SFSC art professor Cathy Futral. "I never did art before," he said, "so I asked Cathy if I could audit her drawing class."

Futral said she advised him to start with a basic drawing class, which he did.

"As you might imagine, combining the scientific mind with his keen perceptual skills, the artistic talents of McConnell took off," Futral said. "Students — and his teacher — were inspired and impressed by his technically beautiful and well-crafted creations."

Indeed, visitors to McConnell's office will find several large renderings of detailed, expertly crafted drawings of anatomical subjects that appear to be reproductions from Gray's Anatomy, the iconic century and half old textbook on human anatomy.

"No, they are all my

drawings," McConnell observed. "I don't exhibit them at shows or sell them. I do the drawings for my own pleasure." He also draws portraits and paints with acrylics.

McConnell was so taken by drawing that he hoped he might land a position teaching at SFSC. A move — he hoped — that would keep him busy. But he said the department was already fully staffed. Then came word of an opening for a part-time anatomy instructor at the college.

"It was a perfect fit me," he said. "I had taught anatomy during the summers while wrapping up my medical studies."

McConnell was born in a U.S. Army hospital outside of Detroit, where his father was stationed during World War II. In short order, the family moved to St. Petersburg. He completed his undergraduate work at the University of South Florida in three years and earned acceptance to Emory University's medical school.

McConnell specialized

in hematology and oncology. He returned to St. Petersburg, where he practiced for the next 30 years.

"I worked at a large clinic and left when it was sold to a corporation," he said. "I moved to a 20-acre spread in Wauchula and commuted back to the coast for two years where I worked at the Veterans Administration hospital."

Then came retirement. Needing something to keep him busy, McConnell raised fainting goats. "Yes, they are goats that faint when startled," he said. He explained the goats have a genetic disorder that causes their muscles to stiffen when they feel panicked. "It's painless and they recover in a few seconds," he explained.

But caring for fainting goats and doing art wasn't enough to keep him occupied. After one year of teaching anatomy part-time, he was hired to teach full-time, much to his delight. "You can't go from being a busy doctor to doing nothing,"



Courtesy photo

**Dr. Christopher McConnell working one-on-one with a student at South Florida State College.**

McConnell said.

He carries a full load of classes, even commuting two days each week to SFSC's Lake Placid Center to teach.

McConnell is experimenting with a novel instructional approach that requires extra work on his part, which is fine with him. "This academic term, I am using the flipped classroom," he said. "Rather than lecture, I use class time to quiz the students and guide them through in-class exercises."

Students go online before the class to watch a recorded lecture

McConnell would otherwise have given during class. "This approach engages the student in a much better fashion," he noted.

Work is not the only thing that fascinates him. He reports a happy marriage to Lisa McConnell, a nursing instructor at SFSC.

"I still draw but not as much now that I have a full teaching load and do the flipped classroom," McConnell said.

Full load or not, McConnell says he could still do more. "I'd teach more classes if they let me," he said.



**RECREATION: 2016 HEARTLAND GAMES**

# Seniors roll to medal stand

## Highlands County bowlers dominate in Heartland Games

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-SUN

More than a few local seniors bowled over the competition last weekend in the 2016 Heartland Games for Active Adults, rolling all the way to the medal podium.

Competing at the Heartland Bowl in Sebring last Friday and Saturday, seven area bowlers took home the gold in singles play. It was a solid performance by Highlands County seniors in the latest event of the Heartland Games.

Taking first place in their respective age-group divisions

### UP NEXT

**\* What:** 2016 Heartland Games golf competition.

**\* When:** Saturday, March 5.

**\* Where:** Pinecrest Golf Club, Avon Park.

were Sebring's Kevin Butler, 55-59, and Carol Weise, 75-79; Sebring Oaks' Barbara Gaiownik, 65-69; Reflections of Avon Park's Ron Poulton, 65-69; Spring Lake's Wanda Harrelson and Whisper Lake of Sebring's Ron Crandall, 70-74; and Sebring Hills' Virgil Crandall, 75-79.



# SENIORS

FROM PAGE 1

Silver medals were won by Mary Ellen Schwehr of Camp Florida, Lake Placid, and Larry Weise of Sebring, 75-79.

David Wagner of Tanglewood in Sebring earned bronze in the 75-79 division.

In doubles play, Mary Lee Napier and Susie Kirkman of Tanglewood, 65-69, and brothers Ron and Virgil Crandall, 70-74, won gold in their age groups, while Gaiownik and Harrelson got silver.

Mixed doubles gold medal winners were the husband-and-wife team of Sebring's Tom & Jerri Koppein, and the team of Ken Chalsma of Spring Lake and Mary Ellen Schwehr.

In addition to winning a gold medal, the winners earned the right to represent the Heartland area in the Florida Senior Games in Clearwater on Dec. 5-11 - something that is nothing new to several area bowlers.

The Crandall brothers have gone on to play in the Florida Senior Games at least three times. Carol and Larry Weise have been perennial competitors in the State Games and have traveled the country competing in the biennial National Senior Games, competing in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn., in 2015; Cleveland, 2013; Houston, 2011; Palo Alto, Calif., 2009; Hampton Roads, Va., 2005; Baton Rouge, La., in 2001; and Orlando, 1999.

"The competitors all enjoyed their games and developed great camaraderie playing with many folks they'd never met before," Heartland Games Ambassador Neil Simpson said. "Bringing people together for fun and exercise is a primary goal of the Heartland Games, which is coordinated by South Florida State College's Corporate and Community Education Department."

Also having fun was wheelchair bowler Butler, who lit up the lanes with his beaming smile as his scores improved each game with a little coaching from Poulton. Butler captured the hearts of cyclists at the Games' cycling competition just as he did at the bowling alley.

"Butler's positive attitude, winning personality and determination have been an inspiration to all," Simpson said.

The Koppeins also played in the Heartland Games' tennis tournament and will play in the pickleball

tournament on March 12-13. As two of the youngest participants competing in the 50-54 age group, they are looking for other young Highlands County residents to sign up for some of the remaining events this year or to commit now to take part in the 2017 Games.

This year's Heartland Games bowling competition was directed by Sue Merritt and Cheryl Bateman.

Upcoming events in the 2016 Heartland Games are: golf, scheduled for March 4; Bridge, March 11; pickleball,

March 12-13; Euchre, March 18; shuffleboard, March 21-22; and swimming, March 22.

Interested seniors can download a registration form at [www.southflorida.edu/heartland-games](http://www.southflorida.edu/heartland-games), or pick one up at any of the local golf courses or at the Chamber of Commerce in Avon Park, Lake Placid or Sebring.

More information is available by calling SFSC's Community Education office at 784-7388 or by emailing [communityeducation@southflorida.edu](mailto:communityeducation@southflorida.edu) on the Internet.





Photos provided by Neil Simpson

**Mary Lee Napier and Susie Kirkman of Tanglewood in Sebring took home gold medals in the doubles competition of the 2016 Heartland Games bowling event last weekend at the Heartland Bowl in Sebring.**



**Medal winners, from left, Larry Weise of Sebring, silver; Virgil Crandall of Sebring Hills, gold; and David Wagner, Tanglewood, bronze, were all smiles after 74-79 singles play in the Heartland Games bowling competition last weekend at Heartland Bowl.**



Photo provided by Neil Simpson

**Kevin Butler took home the gold medal in the 55-59 age-group division of the 2016 Heartland Games bowling competition last weekend at the Heartland Bowl in Sebring.**



# SFSC's MOFAC hosts Pygmy Fringe Wildflower Festival



Above is the pygmy fringe tree flowering. At left is one of six shrine boxes along the Wayside Shrine Trail. Each box has information of the plant, a notebook for visitors to record their impressions and a plant image in relief so that visitors can make a rubbing on paper as a memento of their visit.

PHOTO BY JIMMY W. SMITH

## Guided walks go through Wayside Shrine Trail

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Museum of Florida Art and Culture will play host to the Pygmy Fringe Tree Wildflower Festival, a celebration of the region's native wildflowers, from 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, March 10 at SFSC's Highlands campus in Avon Park.

The festival kicks off with guided walks through SFSC's Wayside Shrine Trail, a footpath winding its way through pristine scrubland on the college's campus. The tract, blanketed by fine white sand and overspread with shrubs, is home to native wildflowers that bloom in early March.

The festival takes its name from the pygmy fringe tree (*Chionanthus pygmaeus*), a now rare flowering shrub that grows between three and six feet tall. The pygmy fringe tree once thrived throughout central Florida. But farming and development nearly swept it from the region, prompting the federal government to declare it an endangered species in 1987.

"Our Wayside Shrine Trail is one of the few venues where the public can readily encounter this rare and extraordinary shrub," Mollie Doctrow, MOFAC's curator, said. "Early March is the ideal time for the pygmy fringe tree to flower, giving the public a singular instance in which to view this beautiful plant."

Doctrow, noted for her award-winning woodcuts of natural habitats, conceived the trail based on her own exploration of nature and from indigenous shrine boxes she encountered while studying Indian culture. The trail opened in 2011.

Doctrow said the public can also glimpse other native plants flowering along the trail: the big flag pawpaw, sky-blue lupine, and another endangered species, the scrub St. Johns Wort.

This year's festival includes singing by Florida Seminole songwriter Rita Youngman and storytelling by Florida folklorist Carol Mahler.

Visitors to the trail can write their impressions in notebooks found in wooden shrine boxes sitting atop poles along the path. The boxes, designed by Doctrow, contain information that showcases the shrubs and wildflowers.

One side of each box has a plant image in relief, allowing visitors to make a rubbing on paper as a memento of their visit. Rubbing kits will be available for purchase, with proceeds going to SFSC art club. The art club will also sell picnic snacks to visitors.

A walk through the trail gives visitors a chance to see the land, known as the Lake Wales Ridge, as it existed for centuries. The ridge, an ancient beach and sand dune system formed 1-3 million years ago, has been home to flora that has struggled to survive against development.

The guided walks start at 11 a.m. at MOFAC's entrance, which is adjacent to the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts. SFSC's Highlands campus is located at 600 W. College Drive in Avon Park. The trail is open to the public during regular college hours. Visitors should look for Entrance 5 along College Drive.

For more information on the festival, call Doctrow at 863-784-7240 or visit [www.waysideshrine-trail.com](http://www.waysideshrine-trail.com).



# From a Beatle to the ballroom at SFSC

## The McCartney Years

**AVON PARK** — Hailed by the original Beatles promoter as 'the best on the scene,' "The McCartney Years" is a period-true, technically stunning and explosive live concert show that performs the music of Paul McCartney spanning two decades from The Beatles to Wings.

The show will be at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13. Tickets start at \$22. Visit [performances.southflorida.edu](http://performances.southflorida.edu)

## 'Ballroom: South Beach Style'

On the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts Stage Tuesday, Feb. 16 at 1:30 p.m. will be "Ballroom: South Beach Style," featuring intricate ballroom dancing, costumes and music from past decades in a state spectacle featuring rhumba, mambo, salsa, merengue, and jive dancers. If you enjoy Dancing With the Stars, you'll love "Ballroom: South Beach Style." Tickets start at \$18. Visit [performances.southflorida.edu](http://performances.southflorida.edu)

# A fan of the performing arts

Highlands Little Theatre continues to amaze me with every performance. I thought at first, maybe they had a really good cast the first time I attended a play. Now, I've attended several performances, and every time I walk away amazed with the level of talent and extensive group of volunteers we have performing and working at Highlands Little Theatre.

The most recent

performance was "Ring of Fire" and it was an exceptional performance that drew you into the story as it was told through the music of Johnny Cash. The actors and the live band had the packed house tapping their feet and singing along. The theatre was sold out and everyone had a great time.

Of course, I'm no expert when it comes to theater, musical performances and art.

I have absolutely no talent in those areas. I've been very fortunate to have attended many performances over the years. My career in newspapers was instrumental in expanding my cultural experiences with the arts. I'm not sure if I would've attended performing arts if it wasn't for my career. But, now I'm a huge fan and I look forward to any performance or show.

Therefore, I feel it's important for me to try and encourage others to try it. My idea of buying tickets to an event meant I was going to a baseball, football, basketball or hockey game. I still attend sporting events, but I enjoy the arts just as much now. I hope more people will try to expand their horizons and support the arts.

In Highlands County you have the perfect opportunity to

experience the arts. We have the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts, Circle Theater and Highlands Little Theatre. There's also a variety of museums and art galleries to try. All these venues are great for date nights, girls night out or just a night out.

Whatever your situation may be, I hope you give the arts in Highlands County a try. If you haven't been in a while, please go



## AROUND TOWN

### Glen Nickerson

back. It takes a lot of support from the community to continue to provide the arts.

Glen Nickerson can be reached at [glen.nickerson@newsun.com](mailto:glen.nickerson@newsun.com) or at 863-385-6155 ext. 1003.



# Bobby Vinton performance canceled at SFSC; Jack Jones to perform

AVON PARK — Health reweasons has caused Bobby Vinton to cancel a March 22 performance at the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts, on the campus of South Florida State College. In Cinton's place will be Jack Jones and his salute to Frank Sinatra.

"We wish Mr. Vinton a full and speedy recovery," said Cindy Garren, SFSC's director of cultural programs. "Jack Jones, who is currently on tour in the United Kingdom in support of his new CD 'Simply Sinatra', has agreed to entertain us that evening."

Ticket holders for the Vinton concert can use their tickets to attend the Jones performance. Patrons who want to purchase tickets to



Courtesy photo

**Famed singer Jack Jones will bring his rendition of Frank Sinatra — and plenty of his own hits — when he performs at SFSC in place of an ill Bobby Vinton.**

Jones' 7 p.m. performance on March 22 can do so starting March 1.

Ticket holders to the canceled show who do not wish to attend Jones' performance can

get refunds directly online or by downloading and mailing a refund form. Visit [www.sfscarts.org](http://www.sfscarts.org) to complete the transaction or download the form.

Jones' consistently sold-out world tours and 60 albums are a testimony to the breadth and quality of his remarkable talent, Garren said.

Jones won two Best Pop Male Vocalist Grammy awards for his Billboard-topping hits "Lollipops and Roses" and "Wives and Lovers." Frank Sinatra called Jones "one of the major singers of our time" and Tony Bennett hails Jones as "my favorite singer."

In addition to his Grammy Award songs,

he is best known for "The Impossible Dream," "The Race is On," and the "Love Boat Theme."

"Jack's swinging renditions of contemporary pop and classic standards have packed concert venues time and time again," Garren said. "We are delighted that he graciously accepted our invitation to come to central Florida."

Refunds for the Bobby Vinton concert are not available at the SFSC Box Office. Ticket holders are asked not to call the Box Office for a refund. Ticket holders who do not have Internet access can pick up a refund form at the SFSC Box Office, located in front of the Wildstein Center

for the Performing Arts, 600 West College

Drive, SFSC Highlands Campus, Avon Park.



# Panthers start season 3-1

## Sebring hurlers earns wins on Opening Day

BY ALLEN MOODY  
Highlands Today

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Panthers baseball team got the season off to a strong start on Friday, sweeping a doubleheader against Ave Maria University.

The Panthers captured the first game by a 6-4 margin, as Sebring graduate Matt Portis earned the win in his first college game.

Portis pitched three innings

and allowed just one run, while fanning two. Jarred Neal came in to pitch the seventh inning and earn the save.

Ave Maria jumped out to a 3-0 lead, but the Panthers tied the score in the bottom of the second. After the Gyrenes regained a 4-3 lead, the Panthers bounced back with the final three runs of the game.

Tobias Culpepper was 2 for 3 and scored twice; Quentin Davis knocked in a pair of runs and scored once; while Dalton Scarborough, Evan Shaffner and Avon Park graduate Alfred Brown also scored in the win.

It was another former Blue

Streaks who earned the win in the nightcap, as Jonathan Struck pitched four strong shutout innings, allowing just one hit and striking out four. Harrison McClure knocked in three runs with a pair of hits, with Davis scoring twice and knocking in a pair of runs. John Tatum was 2 for 4 and Shaffner was 1 for 2 with an RBI.

"I thought we were a little amped up to play on Friday and did not really get off to the type of start we wanted to, getting down 3-0 early," said Panthers coach Rick Hitt. "But as we talk about, we just kept playing,

PANTHERS, Page 2



ALLEN MOODY/STAFF

South Florida State College's Dalton Scarborough slides safely into third in the Panthers' sweep of Ave Maria University on Friday.

## Panthers

From Page 1

which is extremely important no matter the game situation, then we got our feet under us so to speak, and came back to win Game 1. From there, we played a much better Game 2."

On Saturday, the Panthers traveled to Clearwater to play a pair of games, facing off against Chipola in the first game, which they lost 10-2, but rebounded with a solid 10-2 win over Southwest Tennessee.

"On Saturday, we played really well for six innings then a 2-2 game in the sixth kind of got away from us on



ALLEN MOODY/STAFF

South Florida State College's Tobias Culpepper looks to break up a double play as Ave Maria's Hunter Rose throws to first.

the mound," Hitt said. "They are a tremendous measuring stick. Chipola is currently

well in Game 2 on Saturday and swung the bat extremely well."

Hitt said he was happy with what the players have done through the first four games, but that there is plenty of more work to do ahead of the team.

"Through the first four, we are encouraged by many things," he said. "Our players need to continue to remain consistent with their approach daily and understand that every day is a new opportunity to improve."

The Panthers are at Southeastern University tonight and return home Wednesday for a 5 p.m. game against Lake Sumter-State College.

ranked No. 2, and we found out more about ourselves early on. We bounced back



# Panthers split opening games

## SFSC softball team wins pair, drops pair to start season

Highlands Today sports staff

The South Florida State College softball team began the season with a sweep against Palm Beach State College on Friday and then dropped a doubleheader at Ave Maria University on Saturday.

The team has shown a penchant for close games in the early going, playing three one-run contests and coming away on the right side in two of them.

On opening day, the Panthers rallied for a 6-5 victory in the first game after trailing 3-1 in the third and 4-2 in the fifth.

"We just kept putting the ball in play," said Panthers coach Carlos Falla. "We had a lot of balls hit right at people."

Falla said the team kept at it and was able to move some runners over through butts and hits-and-runs and finally got a few key hits that gave them the win. The second game played out much like the first and the Panthers were able to pull out another victory, this time by a final score of 5-4.

The Panthers used three

pitchers — Hailey Pinterich, Evangeline Futch and Amanda Ross, and Falla said they did what he asked.

"They kept us in the game," he said. "All of them did a good job."

The Panthers made the journey to Immokalee on Saturday to face Ave Maria University for two games and the Gyrenes were able to pull out a 2-1, eight-inning victory in the first game. The Panthers started Stephanie Norris, who pitched four innings and Hannah Lollis pitched the balance of the game.

"We pitched two freshmen



ALLEN MOODY/STAFF

South Florida State College's Cristina Colli drops down a bunt in the Panthers' victory over Palm Beach State College.

## Softball

From Page 1

and only gave up two runs, so I'm extremely happy with them," Falla said. "They each gave up a few hits but were able to work their way out of trouble."

Ave Maria scored in the eighth after starting with a runner on second base — the Texas Tie-Breaker — and were able to move the runner with a bunt and scored on a flare just over the infield.

"We had some chances in that game," Falla said. "We just weren't able to get the hits when we needed."



ALLEN MOODY/STAFF

South Florida State College's Katlyn Vega fields a throw as Palm Beach State College's Shany Emerenciani slides safely into second base during Friday's doubleheader.

Shelby Press was 2 for 3 in the game and scored the Panthers' run, while Pinterich had a base hit and an RBI.

Ave Maria jumped out in front early in the second game and coasted to an 8-1 victory.

"I think we just ran out of gas in the second game," Falla said. "It was a long weekend."

Falla is encouraged with what the team did to start the season, but knows that they're going to have to do more.

"We're going to get back to work this week," he said. "We have Pasco-Hernando at home on Thursday and then travel to Santa Fe State College on Saturday."

Thursday's action is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m.



# Panthers fly past Hawks

Offense erupts as  
South Florida pounds  
Lake Sumter

BY RUTH ANNE LAWSON  
Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — It's still early in the season for the South Florida State College baseball team, but the Panthers continue to find ways to win.

South Florida kept rolling with a 12-5 pounding of Lake

Sumter on Wednesday at Panther Field.

The victory improved South Florida to an impressive 12-5 on the season.

"This was a good win for the guys," said Panther coach Rick Hitt. "Early in the game there were a couple of opportunities for us to have a really big first inning and we didn't take advantage of that. In the fifth, we got a couple guys on, played a little hit-and-run baseball and got some execution. We had a few

good swings and that five-run inning was the difference in the momentum of the game. Credit to our guys, they swung the bat well, but we are a work in progress. When we get into momentum spots in the game we have to be able to take advantage of them, otherwise the other club flips the board on you and you find yourself playing catch-up. If we can do that and do it early and continue to play with confidence, we will go far."

BASEBALL, Page 2



RUTH ANNE LAWSON

South Florida State College's Alfred Brown slides safely into second base during Wednesday's game against Lake Sumter State College. The Panthers defeated the Hawks by a score of 12-5.

## Baseball

From Page 1

South Florida jumped on top in the bottom of the first inning as Alfred Brown and John Tatum both drew walks. Dalton Scarborough hit a grounder up the middle into center field to plate Brown.

Tatum and Scarborough moved into scoring position on the throw to the plate. Quentin Davis bunted the ball for a single, loading the bases. Harrison McClure stepped to the plate and hit a rope into center field for a single, driving home Tatum. Hernando Sierra capped the inning with a ground out to score Scarborough to make it 3-0.

Lake Sumter narrowed its deficit when Cody Gannon hammered the ball over the left-field fence for a two-run homer to make it 3-2.

South Florida exploded in the bottom of the fifth in-



RUTH ANNE LAWSON

South Florida's Matt Portis had a solid outing against Lake Sumter State College on Wednesday at Panther Field.

ning as Brown, an Avon Park standout, singled, stole second base and moved to third base when a ball got past the catcher on a third strike.

Scarborough hit a sacrifice fly to left field to plate Brown, and Davis grounded an RBI single to left field.

McClure stepped to the plate and ripped a base hit

and Sierra walked to load the bases.

Evan Schaffner, hitting a ground ball to second base, threw late to home in an effort to get Davis.

Jason Plyn singled, and a ground out scored Sierra to give the Panthers a commanding 8-2 lead.

Lake Sumter battled back with a three-run eighth inning to pull the Hawks within 8-5.

South Florida answered in the bottom of the frame as Tobias Culpepper looped an RBI single to score Brown and a wild throw allowed Tatum to score.

Davis drove in Culpepper with a base hit and Sierra lined a run-scoring single to bring in Davis to make it 12-5.

Lake Sumter went down in the top of the ninth as South Florida closed out the win.

"Dalton Scarborough pitched a good solid five innings for us," said coach

Hitt. "He pitched a couple of goose eggs, gave us a chance to score, and our bats responded and we played really well. All we ask for the guys on the mound is to manage a game and keep us right there within striking distance. I think the pitching staff did great tonight. It is still early in the season and it's hard to tell who you are as a team. You go out and try to have success every single day, but by the same token you are trying to put some pieces into place for when the conference season gets here. I have no concerns about our work habits; we work extremely hard and they respond very well to that. They like each other, they enjoy being together, we spend a lot of time together, and they pick each other up and enjoy coming to the ballpark together."

South Florida is back on the diamond today for a game at Santa Fe. The Panthers are at Lake Sumter on Sunday.



# SFSC unveils website to search for scholarships



RYAN PELHAM/STAFF

South Florida State College is launching a website for students seeking scholarships from the SFSC Foundation. SFSC's Online Scholarship Manager will go live on Feb. 8.

**AVON PARK** — Navigating the path to a college scholarship can prove daunting for some students and their families.

That chore will get easier when South Florida State College launches a one-stop online shop for students seeking scholarships from the SFSC Foundation, the college said.

SFSC's Online Scholarship Manager will go live on Feb. 8, giving prospective students the ease of applying for scholarships through the website, by going to [www.southflorida.edu/scholarships](http://www.southflorida.edu/scholarships).

The online application process is open only to students who have already been admitted to SFSC. Students can apply for admission to SFSC online at [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu).

Applicants looking for scholarships will enter their personal information and a short biographical statement online. Once the student hits the finish button, cloud-based software will match students with the scholarships they are eligible to receive, the college said.

"This is a major step forward for our financial aid award process," said Jerry Donna, SFSC's director of financial aid. "With the Online Scholarship Manager we will be better able to match students with scholarships, ensuring that we offer as many awards to as many students as possible."

In the past, students had to download a form, write in their responses, and get it to SFSC. The college's financial aid staff would pore over documents for weeks, working to match students with the best scholarships, the college said.

Donna said the new online system will simplify the process for applicants. He said students can start the application, save their input and complete the process over several days. Once the application is complete, students will receive an email with a link to check the status of their application.

"The SFSC Foundation awards hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to students in SFSC's degree and occupational programs," the college said. "As the number of scholarships increased each year, SFSC saw the necessity in ensuring that every available dollar found a student."

The application deadline for the summer term

is March 15. Donna recommends that prospective students apply by the deadline.

He said the Online Scholarship Manager may tentatively match a student with a scholarship but require additional in-

formation to complete the match.

Donna said scholarship applicants will receive decisions by email in April for the summer term. He noted that no award is final until an applicant has completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

For more information about SFSC's financial aid program, call 863-784-7134 or follow the financial aid link on SFSC's website: [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu).



# Panthers baseball, softball continue strong starts

South Florida State College teams playing well in early stages of season

Highlands Today sports staff

Both South Florida State College Panther teams are off to solid starts on the diamond, as the

baseball team sits 8-2 so far this year and the Panthers softball team is off to a 4-3 start.

The men had the offense going in Friday's 12-5 victory over the College of Central Florida, collecting 17 hits in the game. Second baseman John Tatum was 4 for 6 at the plate, scoring three runs and knocking in two; third baseman Quentin Davis was 3 for 6 with four RBI and

scored twice; catcher Hernando Sierra was 2 for 4 and knocked in four runs; and Avon Park graduate Alfred Brown was 2 for 4 and scored twice. Evan Lambert earned the win in relief of Johnathan Struck.

On Saturday, the Panthers split a doubleheader, throwing in a stinker offensively in the first game, with six errors all-



ALLEN MOODY/STAFF

South Florida State College second baseman John Tatum throws to second during an inning during a game. Tatum had several big games.

## Panthers

From Page 1

lowed Sante Fe to score 10 unearned runs in a 14-3 setback. Eric Schulte had a pair of RBI to lead the South Florida offense.

The Panthers rallied late in the second game to earn a split, scoring in the sixth and seventh innings to pull out a 2-1 victory. Tatum was 3 for 3 and scored, while Brown was 2 for 2 with an RBI. Juan Ter-

ron, Scott Belina and Austin Haworth shared the pitching duties, with Haworth earning the win.

The Panthers closed out the weekend with a 4-3 victory over Lake-Sumter State College, with Sierra knocking in three runs with a pair of hits and Equon Smith going 2 for 3 and scoring twice. Cody Spencer picked up the win on the mound and Harrison McClure earned the save.

On the softball side, the Panthers swept a double-

header from Pasco-Hernando State College, picking up a 2-1, eight-inning victory behind the pitching of Haley Pinterich, who allowed just one unearned run. Allie Lawdan hit a solo home run and Rachell Reinbott was 1 for 3 with an RBI, while Samantha Vance scored for South Florida.

The Panthers took a 6-0, five-inning victory in the other game, as Amanda Ross pitched five shutout innings and aided her cause with a 2-for-3 effort at the plate.

The Panthers dropped a 2-0 pitching duel to Sante Fe College on Saturday. Evangeline Futch pitched all six innings, allowing one earned run. Cristina Colli had two hits for the Panthers, with Reinbott picking up the other.

The softball team takes to the road today for a doubleheader with Lake-Sumter State College in Clermont, while the baseball team returns to action with a home game against Indian River State College on Wednesday.



# South Florida State College stays busy in softball, baseball

Panthers split four in softball and win two of three in baseball

Highlands Today sports staff

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Panthers had a busy weekend, with the softball team playing four games and

the baseball team in action for three games.

The Panthers softball team split its four games, dropping a pair to No. 9 Seminole State College of Florida on Friday, losing 4-3 in the opening game and falling 3-0 in the nightcap.

The Panthers returned to their winning ways at home on Saturday, sweeping a doubleheader from Broward College on

Saturday, winning the first game 6-1 and coming right back for a 7-1 victory in the second game of the day.

The two wins pushed the Panthers back above the .500 mark for the season at 6-5.

The Panthers will be on the road Tuesday for a doubleheader against Daytona State College



HIGHLANDS TODAY FILE PHOTO

PANTHERS, Page 2 South Florida State College's Haley Pinterich takes a swing at a pitch.

## Panthers

From Page 1

and return home for a doubleheader against Lake-Sumter State College on Thursday.

In baseball action, the Panthers hosted the College of Central Florida on Friday and defeated the Patriots 10-7. Avon Park graduate Alfred Brown had a big day at the plate, going 2 for 3 with a home run and three RBIs. Equon Smith was 2 for 5 with two RBIs and Tobias Culpepper, John Tatum and Quentin Davis all picked up two hits. Harrison McClure scored twice.

Max Bling earned the win on the mound, allowing three earned runs in 7 1/3 innings. Sebring graduate Matt Portis got the final two outs of the eighth inning and Evan Lumbert got the final three outs.



HIGHLANDS TODAY FILE PHOTO

SFSC's Amanda Ross, left, throws to first baseman Nicole Caruso (7) as shortstop Katlyn Vega backs up the play.

On Saturday, the No. 8 Panthers hosted a doubleheader with No. 5 Sante Fe College and the Saints captured the first game by a score of 6-3, but the Panthers rebounded in a big way to take the second game by a 15-3 score.

Saturday was also the day of South Florida State College's annual barbecue fundraiser and Rick Hitt, Panthers baseball coach/SFSC athletic director, said the event ran exceptionally well and he was grateful for all of those who came out to support the

baseball and softball teams.

"We had great crowds for the annual Panther Pork Barbecue, sponsored by Nut'n Fancy Grillin," Hitt said. "We extend our tremendous gratitude to the Nut'n Fancy Grillin team for a great barbecue fundraiser, and we thank all of those fans who purchased tickets for Saturday's event. Thanks also to everyone who assisted with the event; it was a beautiful day at the ballparks, great crowds and three out of four for the Panther baseball and softball teams."

The South Florida State College baseball team will return to the fields today for a 3 p.m. game against Daytona State College and will remain in the friendly confines of Panther Field on Wednesday when Seminole State College visits for a night game.

The Panthers (10-4) will then take to the road for their next three games.



# SFSC falls to Daytona State

Panthers baseball team drops to 10-5 on the season

BY JIM TAYLOR

Highlands Today Correspondent

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Panthers dropped a 9-3 decision to Daytona State College in a bit of a letdown spot, after playing No. 5 Santa Fe in a doubleheader on Saturday.

"We did not pitch well, really the entire game, and our approach to play was not what we expect each day, but we will keep working and bounce back," said South Florida State College coach Rick Hitt.

The Panthers split with the Santa Fe Saints on Saturday. The Panthers dropped the first game to the Saints, 6-3, before pounding them in the second with five home runs by a score of 15-3.

"We did a little better job in the second game than we did in the first game," Hitt said. "The

guy we faced in the first game is really good. We had a few at bats I thought we could have been more competitive than we were."

In Saturday's SFSC victory, Santa Fe started the game scoring once in the top of the first on a single by Wyatt Meisterhans to put the Saints on top 1-0.

That lead would not hold though as a brisk breeze blew the American Flag in centerfield towards right.

With two outs error by the SFSC, Page 2



JIM TAYLOR

South Florida State College pitcher Jonathan Struck throws a pitch in the team's win over Santa Fe College.

# SFSC

From Page 1

Saints allowed Harrison McClure to reach. A single by Quentin Davis and a walk to Matt Portis loaded the bases.

The bases would soon be emptied as Dalton Scarborough belted a screamer over the left-field fence for a grand slam to give the Panthers a 4-1 lead.

The Saints scored once in the second and the score remained 4-2 heading into the bottom of the third.

The Panther strung together four straight innings of scoring at least two runs.

"We got going in the second game," Hitt said. "We put some quality bats together. We have been doing a good job at that, we catch fire, get some guys on and we start knocking it around."

A Saint error, a double by Scarborough and a walk gave the Panthers bases loaded with two outs in the bottom of the third.

Cody Spencer made the clutch-hit into right field to drive in two to extend the Panther lead to four, 6-2, after three innings.

South Florida State College added three more runs in the bottom of the fourth, highlighted by a leadoff home run by Equon Smith.

Leading 9-2, the Panthers continued their onslaught



JIM TAYLOR

**South Florida State College shortstop Evan Schaffner awaits the throw before putting the tag on Sante Fe's Wyatt Meisterhans.**

with a two run two-out homer by Davis in the bottom of the fifth to make the score 11-2.

The Panthers were not finished as they scored four more runs in the bottom of the sixth with two outs.

Spencer hit a solo home run over the left field fence and three batters later McClure dared to be different as he belted a three-run opposite field homer over the right-field fence as the Panther lead swelled to 15-2.

The Saints managed a run in the top of the seventh off Panther starting pitcher Jon-

athan Struck, who gave up just five hits and three runs in a complete game for the 15-3 win.

"Struck did a real good job," Hitt said. "He scattered five and a couple of runs, he did a good job in keeping them off balance."

In all, the Panthers scored 11 runs when they had two outs.

Hitt noted that they have gotten a lot of competitive at bats with two outs so far this season.

"We have done a good job at staying at bat, working counts and fouling off pitch-

es, they work real hard at it," he said. "When they execute plans, play competitive and tough, they deserve the success they are having."

When asked about the display of power with five home runs, Hitt grinned as got his thoughts together.

"We are not three-run homer material," Hitt said. "A couple of balls got up in the wind today and a couple balls we hit really well, but typically we are not a three run homer group."

The Panthers' (10-5) host Seminole State College tonight.





Courtesy photo/  
Cindy Marshall

**Special STARS  
athletes join  
SFSC volleyball  
team on the  
court for a  
team photo  
after their  
training on  
Feb. 6.**

# SFSC Lady Panthers teach volleyball to Special STARS



**By CINDY MARSHALL**  
SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS SUN

**AVON PARK** — South Florida State College Volleyball team players and their coach taught

some volleyball skills to Special STARS athletes on Saturday, Feb. 6, in the college gym.

Coach Kim Crawford and some of her team players stretched and

warmed up the special athletes before putting them through some basic training for volleyball at the Panther gymnasium.

"Training with the Special STARS is hands down the greatest experience for my team and me. They are always ready and eager to get started," Crawford said. "We started with dynamic movements, individual volleyball manipulation, volleyball skills and then competition. I want to thank Cindy Marshall for allowing us to take part with Special STARS."

The athletes learned how to serve, set, pass and hit the volleyball.

"I loved learning how to play volleyball from the Panthers," Special STARS athlete Gerald Bass said. "I can't wait to do it again."

"I couldn't believe how eager they were to learn something we take for granted every day. Volleyball seems like a naturally born skill to our team, but watching their faces light up when they score a point or make a serve over the net is heartwarming. Working with Special STARS is something I will never forget," SFSC Panther volleyball player Leah Sywanyk said.

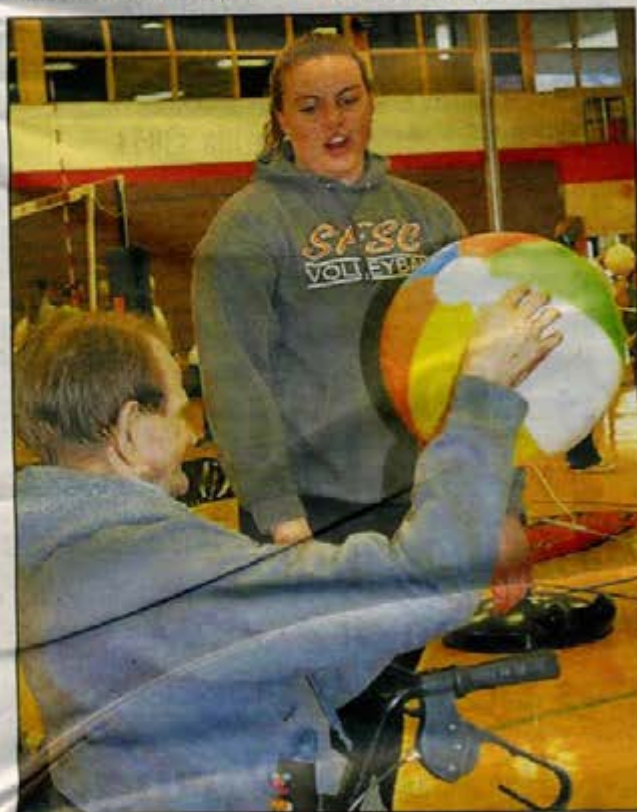
"We were simply teaching them volleyball while they were teaching us so much more. Their smiles and excitement to play volleyball with us immediately brightened our day," SFSC Panther volleyball player Kelsey Sanders said.

There were more

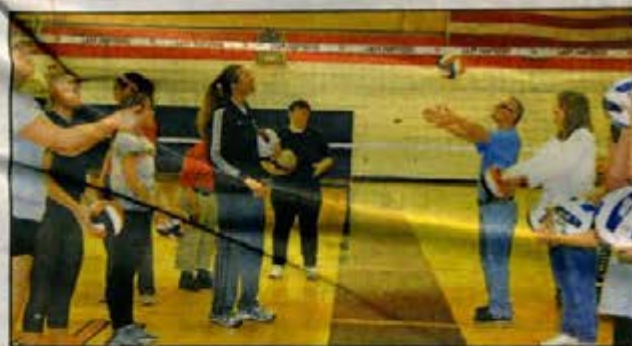
than 45 athletes from Highlands and Hardee counties on the court. After warming up, some athletes played on a regular court while others in wheelchairs and walkers played chair volleyball. Chair volleyball players used a beach ball instead of a regular volleyball.

The Special STARS athletes gave each of the SFSC players a Valentine's heart filled with candy to show their appreciation.

Special STARS will hopefully be working with SFSC volleyball players and their coach to add the sport to their list next year.



**SFSC volleyball coach Kim Crawford walks Special STARS athletes through the steps in hitting a volleyball properly.**



**Left: SFSC volleyball coach Kim Crawford works with some Special STARS athletes from Hardee County on some ball manipulation drills.**



**Left: SFSC volleyball player Leah Sywanyk demonstrates how to serve to Special STARS athlete Maricel Moreno of Sebring.**



## South Florida State College Baseball



MARK PINSON/STAFF

South Florida State College shortstop Evan Schaffner applies a late tag on a steal attempt during Wednesday's game against Seminole State College at Panther Field.



# Raiders ease past Panthers

## Seminole State knocks off South Florida

BY MARK PINSON  
Highlands Today

AVON PARK — Seminole State's Reyni Olivero had a two-run single and starting pitcher Rhett Aplin worked an effective six innings to lead the Raiders to a 5-3 win over South Florida State College on Wednesday at Panther Field.

The loss dropped South Florida to 10-6 on the season.

"We made some mistakes that you can't make in a close game," said Panthers coach Rick Hitt. "We pitched poorly early with walks, hit batters and wild pitches, and we weren't aggressive in a few spots where we had a chance to score some runs. We've got to get that cleaned up. We made some mistakes that didn't produce results for us and that was the difference in the game."

Seminole State took advantage of some early wildness by South

Florida right-hander Dalton Scarborough to score a run in the top of the first inning.

The Raiders tacked on two more runs in the second inning on a two-run single by Reyni Olivero to take a 3-0 lead.

South Florida was able to get some runners on against Aplin, but the left-hander kept the Panthers off the board by striking out seven batters with an assortment of pitches.

Seminole State tallied a run in the top of the fourth inning to go up by a score of 4-0.

South Florida finally got on the scoreboard in the bottom of the fifth inning as Tobias Culpepper singled, Alfred Brown reached on an infield error, and John Tatum and Harrison McClure laced back-to-back RBI singles to pull the Panthers within 4-2.

Matt Portis came on in relief for

PANTHERS, Page 2



MARK PINSON/STAFF

South Florida's Hernando Sierra (3) is congratulated by Tobias Culpepper (5) after hitting a home run against Seminole State on Wednesday.

## Panthers

From Page 1

South Florida, and the former Sebring Blue Streak standout tossed a pair of scoreless innings.

South Florida had a runner thrown out at third base to start the bottom of the eighth inning, but the Panthers still managed to score as Hernando Sierra launched a towering solo home run over the left-field fence off Raiders reliever Bernardo Moreno to make it 4-3.

Seminole State was able to score an insurance run in the top of the ninth inning to make it 5-3.

Moreno allowed a runner to reach base in the bottom of the ninth inning, but the hard-throwing, right-hander settled down to seal the victory for the Raiders.

"You have to give Seminole credit," said Hitt. "Their pitcher kept us off-balance and they executed in the right



MARK PINSON/STAFF

South Florida's John Tatum dives back safely as Seminole State College first baseman Luke Suchon waits for the throw during Wednesday's game.

situations and scored runs. We weren't patient enough at the plate and that's something we have to do better.

The guys are trying to get better every day and we're a work in progress."

South Florida is back on the

diamond today with a road game at Daytona State College.

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# **Panthers corraled again**

**By MARY KAY BERNARD**  
CORRESPONDENT

## **AVON PARK**

– Opportunity came knocking on Wednesday night, but South Florida State College Panthers' baseball team couldn't answer when it counted and dropped another one.

Ranked No. 7 in the NJCAA state poll, SFSC missed out on several scoring opportunities in a tight game and lost to visiting Seminole State College 5-3. It was the second straight loss to an unranked team after splitting a pair of games with ninth-ranked Santa Fe

# PANTHERS

## FROM PAGE 1

College of Gainesville last weekend.

On Wednesday, SFSC (10-6) dropped into an early hole when the Raiders scored an unearned run in the top of the first inning. Seminole State then added two more runs in the second inning and another in the third off Panther starting pitcher Dalton Scarborough to take a 4-0 lead.

Meanwhile, SFSC's offense failed to give Scarborough some relief. The Panthers got on base often with eight hits, two walks and a few Raider errors, but missed many opportunities to score.

SFSC stranded two runners in the bottom of the first and, with runners at first and third in the fourth, Equon Smith was

caught stealing to end the inning.

But, the Panthers didn't quit.

In the bottom of the fifth inning, they scored two runs to cut their deficit in half, 4-2. Tobias Culpepper, John Tatum and Harrison McClure had hits for SFSC.

Hernando Sierra then replaced the starting catcher for the Panthers and smashed a home run in the bottom of the eighth to bring SFSC within one run, 4-3.

But, the Raiders squashed the Panthers' momentum in the top of the ninth inning when they bunched together a pair of hits to score a run and take a 5-3 lead off McClure, SFSC's final pitcher of the night.

Statistically, Scarborough pitched six innings and gave up four runs, three earned, on four hits and four walks. He

## UP NEXT

**\*Who:** South Florida State College at Seminole State College.

**\*When:** Monday, 2 p.m.

**\*Where:** SSC, Sanford campus.

also recorded eight strikeouts.

SFSC middle reliever, Matt Portis, a former Sebring High star, pitched two scoreless innings for the Panthers.

McClure led the home team offensively by going 2-for-4 with a walk and one run batted in.

The Panthers also had several crowd-pleasing defensive plays, including a catch on a deep fly ball by centerfielder Culpepper and an over-the-shoulder catch by third baseman Quentin Davis. But, it wasn't enough to win on this night.

Seminole State



Mary Kay Bernard/News-Sun

South Florida State College's Alfred Brown (#8), a former Avon Park High star, tries to slide around the Seminole State College third baseman on Wednesday night in Avon Park. The Panthers lost 5-3.

starting pitcher Rhett Aplin pitched six innings, allowing two unearned runs, six hits and one walk, while striking out eight.

As for SFSC's ranking, coach Rick

Hitt said it is the first time in at least several years that the Panthers have been in the top 10.

"The rankings are nice recognition for our college and the

efforts of our players, but mean very little right now," Hitt said. "Where we are ranked on May 19th, the conclusion of the FCSAA state tournament, is what is important."



## South Florida State College Softball



JIM TAYLOR

South Florida State College's Haley Pinterich is able to get back to first base before Santa Fe's first baseman Cassandra Garcia is able to make the tag, while Garcia is unable to avoid getting a face full of Pinterich's foot on the play.



# Panthers claw above .500

South Florida State College softball team goes 3-1 in brief homestand

BY JAMES TAYLOR  
Highlands Today Correspondent

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Panther softball team swept a double header over the Lake-Sumpter Lakehawks on Thursday night and split with the Santa Fe Saints on Saturday to bounce over the .500 mark on the season to improve their record to 10-9.

On Thursday, with three of their five pitchers either not present or recovering from injuries, Amanda Ross stepped up to take the mound for the Panthers, despite suffering from a sore shoulder and toe to pitch a four-hit shutout to win the first game 8-0.

"We have played some tough competition," said South Florida State College coach Carlos Falla. "Our whole thing with this group is we are impatient at the plate; we don't make adjustments very quickly."

Ross and the Panthers found themselves in a jam in the top of the first as base hit singles

by Noelle McGuire and Madison Stantilou and a walk loaded the bases with Lakehawks with two outs.

Ross was able to get out of the inning untouched with an inning-ending fly ball to centerfield.

The Panthers scored a run in the bottom with two outs. Nicole Caruso walked and Haley Pinterich singled into center. Ross hit a routine ground ball to second base, but an error allowed Ross to reach and Caruso to score to give the Panthers a 1-0 lead.

Both teams loaded the bases in the second inning and both failed to plate a run.

South Florida State College doubled their lead in the fourth inning as a costly mistake by the Lakehawks to start the inning would haunt them later.

Rachael Reinbott led off the inning reaching first after striking out. The third strike pitch went low into the dirt and got past the Lakehawks catcher to



JIM TAYLOR

South Florida State College second baseman Samantha Vance makes the throw to first against Santa Fe.

SOFTBALL, Page 2

## Softball

From Page 1

allow Reinbott to reach first.

Cristini Colli sacrificed Reinbott to second before reaching third on a passed ball. Lawden singled into right field to drive in Reinbott. The Panthers later loaded the bases, but were again stopped from executing a big inning as the Lakehawks held the Panthers to just the one run and a 2-0 lead.

The big inning finally came in the fifth inning for the Panthers. Reinbott drove in the first run to make the score 3-0. An error loaded the bases and a walk to Lawden forced in the second run of the inning to give the Panthers a 4-0 lead.

A fielder's choice by Caruso drove in the Panther's fifth run of the game and a walk reloaded the bases.

Ross ended the game with a solid double to the fence in right centerfield to clear the bases and ending the game, on the eight-run rule with the Panthers winning 8-0.

"They finally figured it



JIM TAYLOR

South Florida State College's Kassidy Stawicki beats the throw to the plate against Santa Fe to tie the game in the fifth.

out in the fifth inning of this game," said Falla. "My challenge to them now is to make those adjustment while you are at bat. We are not disciplined; we are still working on that, but a win is a win and in this part of the season

is getting everybody to figure it out."

The Panthers also won the back end of the double header beating the Lakehawks 4-2.

Shelby Press, Reinbott and Caruso lead the team with two hits each in the second

game and Press drove in two runs. Haley Penterich pitched a complete game, giving up two runs on 8 hits and striking out three.

The Panthers extended their winning streak to three, winning Game 1 against the Santa Fe Saints on Saturday, 4-2. The Panthers scored twice in the first and second innings and the Saints score twice in the third inning.

The Panthers lost the second game, 3-1. Trailing 1-0 in the bottom of the fifth, the Panthers tied it after Kassidy Stawicki led off with a double and was later driven in on a bunt single by Shelby Press.

With two runners on and one out, the Panthers were unable to make any further noise.

The Saints scored twice in the top of the seventh after loading the bases with no outs. A Panther error allowed one run to score and a sacrifice fly to left field brought in the second run as the Panthers fell in the second game 3-1.

The Panthers travel to play Palm Beach State College today and will be home on Thursday to host Seminole State College.



**COLLEGES: SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE SOFTBALL**

Mary Kay Bernard/News-Sun photos

South Florida State College's Amanda Ross (#24) hits a sacrifice fly to drive in the first run in the opener of the Panthers' doubleheader against Santa Fe College on Saturday. SFSC won the opener 4-2, but lost the second game 3-1.

## Panthers split doubleheader

By **MARY KAY BERNARD**  
CORRESPONDENT

**AVON PARK** — Pitching is helping South Florida State College's softball team win games this season.

Now, if only the offense can follow suit.

The Panthers on Saturday afternoon received a pair of strong pitching

performances from Evangeline Futch and Haley Pinterich, but struggled to score in splitting a doubleheader with Santa Fe College of Gainesville.

SFSC (10-9) won the first game 4-2 and dropped the second, 3-1, at Panther field. It marked the fifth and sixth times in the last nine games that the Panthers scored four runs or less.

"They played hard and we stayed in the games," said SFSC coach Carlos Falla. "We're still a work in progress."

In the opener, two runs were scored in the first when South Florida State College's Shelby Press walked and Katlyn Vega ran out a bunt for a hit. A double steal allowed the two to advance to second and third and two deep sacrifice flies by Amanda Ross and Pinterich scored

**PANTHERS | 11**

### UP NEXT

**\*Who:** Seminole State College at South Florida State College.

**\*When:** Thursday, 5 p.m.

**\*Where:** SFSC Highlands Campus, Avon Park.



The Panthers' Shelby Press beats the throw home after a sacrifice fly by Amanda Ross, scoring the first run of the game against Santa Fe College on Saturday.



# PANTHERS

## FROM PAGE 1

both runners.

In the second inning, consecutive singles by the Panthers' Rachael Reinbott and Samantha Vance followed by a walk loaded up the bases. A passed ball by the Saints' catcher allowed both Reinbott and Vance to score and SFSC led 4-0.

Although the Santa Fe scored two runs in the top of the third, the Saints left the bases loaded as the Panthers' defense stiffened.

Futch pitched 5 1/3 innings and surrendered two runs on six hits, walked four

and struck out four. Pinterich pitched the final 1 2/3 innings to seal the win.

In the second game, Santa Fe College broke open a scoreless game with a run in the top of the third. The Panthers then tied it in the bottom of the fifth inning when Kassidy Stawicki doubled, Reinbott's single advanced Stawicki and Press bunted the ball for a hit and a run batted in.

A hit by Pinterich in the sixth then came back to hurt the team. A pinch runner was inserted and Pinterich wasn't officially re-entered into the lineup when she pitched in

the seventh.

Consequently, with the game tied at 1-1, the mix-up later caused a reversal of a Saints' out and the runner was declared safe. That call, coupled with a hit, walk and a Panther error, led to two runs and the win for Santa Fe.

Pinterich ended up pitching a complete game, giving up only one earned run on six hits, while walking only two.

"We're still not hitting the ball," Falla said. "We had opportunities and we didn't execute."

"But, this second one's on me, it's not on them," Falla said.



Mary Kay Bernard/News-Sun

South Florida State College second baseman Samantha Vance (#6) makes a throw to Nicole Caruso (#7) for an out in the second game against Santa Fe College on Saturday.



# South Florida sweeps Seminole State

Solid pitching, timely hitting lead Panthers past Raiders

BY MARK PINSON  
Highlands Today

AVON PARK — South Florida's Amanda Ross belted a pair of homers and drove in six runs and Evangeline Futch tossed a complete game to lead the Panthers to an 8-1 win over Seminole State College in the first game of a doubleheader on Thursday.

South Florida won the second game by a score of 6-5 to improve to 12-9 on the season.

"This is what we've been needing to do all year," said South Florida coach Carlos Falla. "Our pitching is solid and keeps us in every game, but our hitting has been inconsistent. We swung the bats today, hit the ball when we needed to and put some runs on the scoreboard. The girls are working hard and I'm proud of them."

South Florida jumped in front in the bottom of the third inning as Cristina Colli reached on a base hit off Seminole right-hander Morgan Williams, and Ross followed with a blast over the left-field fence to give the Panthers a 2-0 lead.

South Florida's Futch, a hard-throwing left-hander, cruised through the Raiders batting order with the help of some outstanding defense that turned a pair of double plays.

"We're in every game with our pitching and defense," Falla said. "We're a young team, but the girls are working hard to get better."

Futch, who had six strikeouts, allowed an unearned run in the top of the sixth inning with the help of a Panther error as the Raiders pulled within 2-1.

South Florida, which had left numerous runners in scoring position during the game, erupted in the bottom of the frame.

position during the game, erupted in the bottom of the frame.

Katlyn Vega lined a leadoff single to left field off Seminole State reliever Michele Peterson, Nicole Caruso walked and Rachel Reinbott worked a two-out walk to load the bases.

Shelby Press ripped a two-run double to left-center field and Colli was hit by a pitch to load the bases.

Ross stepped to the plate and drilled a shot high over the left-field fence for a grand slam to give the Panthers a commanding 8-1 lead.

"We swung the bats really well," said Falla. "If we can score some runs, we're going to be tough."

Futch came out for the final inning



MARK PINSON/STAFF

**South Florida's Katlyn Vega puts down a bunt during the first game of a doubleheader against Seminole State College on Thursday.**

and set the Raiders down to secure the first-game victory.

The Panthers claimed the second



MARK PINSON/STAFF

**South Florida's Amanda Ross (25) is greeted by teammates after blasting a two-run homer in Thursday's win 8-1 over Seminole State College at Panther Field.**

game with key hits from Reinbott and Cassidy Stawicki. Former Lake Placid standout Hannah Lollis earned the win on the mound with a complete-game effort for South Florida.

"We had a good offensive day," Falla said. "We had a miscommunication on defense, which allowed a run to score, but we worked through it and got the win."

Falla, who is in his 12th year at South Florida, sees a lot of potential in this year's squad.

"We are fairly young with a bunch of freshmen," the Panther coach said. "We make a few mistakes offensively here and there, but we keep competing. I enjoy coaching and watching the girls grow up, mature and become young ladies."

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## Softball

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