

Former gunner's mate navigates way to fourth-grade teaching job

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — When Hardee County native Daniel Witt graduated from high school in 1986, he wasn't sure what he would do. But he knew for whom he would work.

"Growing up, my dad was in the U.S. Navy and the family traveled the world with him," Witt said. "I knew I too would serve and did that by enlisting just two weeks after finishing high school."

After 20 years riding frigates and destroyers — sailor speak for serving on a ship — and showing others how to keep the Navy's ships secure, Witt earned his retirement. But the relatively tranquil life after military retirement didn't sit well with Witt.

Now he is set to embark on a new career journey. Witt, who graduated in May with the inaugural bachelor of science in elementary education class at South Florida State College, will teach fourth-graders in Hardee County this fall.

As it happens, this won't be Witt's first time teaching.

Fresh out of high school, the Navy sent Witt to the Great Lakes Naval Station in Illinois. He trained as a gunner's mate.

"What does a gunner's mate on a ship do?" Witt asked, with a quizzical expression. "Well, we handle ship-borne weapons systems that blow up other things, like enemy ships, submarines or land targets."

♦ ♦ ♦

Witt became an expert at maintaining the Harpoon missile that can skim the ocean surface in search of hostile ships.

He worked to keep the ASROC anti-submarine missile system at the ready, giving his ship the ability to fire a missile at a



COURTESY PHOTO

Daniel Witt, right, with Maday Leon, while on a visit to the SFSC Highlands Campus after his graduation.

submerged submarine as far as 12 miles out from his vessel.

Prepping the Tomahawk cruise missile for firing also came under Witt's watch.

The missile that hugs the Earth's surface while in flight can destroy a target 1,200 nautical miles from the ship with pinpoint precision. For the non-sailor, that's 1,380 land miles.

In late 1990s, while serv-

ing in the Persian Gulf aboard the USS Curtis Wilbur, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer, Witt and his shipmates nearly had chance to try their hand at getting Osama bin Laden.

"We were in the gulf and got orders to go black," Witt said, referring to shutting down all the ship's electronic systems — including the radar — in order to avoid detection.

"In the middle of the

GUNNER, Page 11

Gunner

From Page 3

night, we went to general quarters and starting spinning the Tomahawks to ready them for launch because there was a fix on bin Laden's location," Witt said. "But the orders were countermanded at the last minute by President Clinton."

In 2006, Witt left the Navy with a monthly retirement check and benefits from the Montgomery G.I. Bill that would pay for four years of college coursework. But he had no plans to start taking classes.



After several years of travels and working as an airport screener for the TSA in Tennessee, Witt moved back to Hardee County to join his family.

"I started thinking about those G.I. Bill benefits and knew it was time to start college, so I went to the SFSC Hardee Campus and enrolled with a plan to earn an associate in science in information technology," Witt said.

Witt said he took a course load heavy with math. "I was a techie in the Navy, so I thought engineering was in my future," Witt said. "But when I got to the electrical side of physics, I thought maybe engineering wasn't for me."

Still, Witt graduated with his associate degree in May 2013 and took the summer off to think about his next two years.

"I went back to the Hardee Campus folks to talk about my options," Witt said. "I can't say enough about those guys. They got me thinking

about the bachelor's degree program in elementary education."

Not entirely sure if he was a fit for the elementary classroom, a lifelong bachelor, Witt took preparatory education coursework that required logging in classroom observation hours. "I had a blast in the classroom," Witt said. "I said let's give this a go!"

SFSC launched the two-year bachelor of science in elementary education program with start of the 2014 fall term. Students who have an associate in arts degree, passed a state-mandated test, and completed prerequisite education courses, are eligible to enroll in the program.

In the fall of 2014, Witt joined the alpha cohort, the 18 students who comprised SFSC's first class of BSEE students.

"The first term was a bit rough for all of us, and we lost a few students, but by the second term we all got the rhythm of the pace of studies," Witt recalled.

Witt got assigned to Bowling Green Elementary School in northern Hardee County to finish out his last internship.

Maday Leon, the lead instructor of the SFSC BSEE program dropped in at Bowling Green for a routine site visit.

"What I saw that day made me so proud of our students," Leon said. "One of the teachers was having a difficult time with a young boy and called Witt for help."

Leon said Witt's intervention calmed the student. "I said to myself this fellow is going to make a wonderful teacher," Leon said.

SFSC Briefs

Alcohol drug accident prevention offered

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Community Education Department is offering a series of Alcohol Drug Accident Prevention Training (ADAPT) courses for first-time driver's license applicants.

The four-hour courses will be held Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., SFSC DeSoto Campus, 2252 N.E. Turner Ave., Arcadia, and June 25 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., SFSC Hardee Campus, Bowling Green.

Preregistration is required. The cost is \$50 and may be paid by cash, check, or credit card. Register in Building B on the Highlands Campus or at any SFSC campus or center. For more information, contact the Community Education Department at (863) 784-7388, or email CommunityEducation@southflorida.edu.

SFSC to host open house on programs of study

South Florida State College invites prospective students and their parents to discover all it has to offer at an open house on June 9 from 4:30 to 6 p.m., in the lobby of Building B on the Highlands Campus, 600 West College Drive, Avon Park.

Faculty and staff will be available to answer questions and help new students apply for admission. Guided tours of the Highlands Campus will embark at 4:45 p.m. and 5:15 p.m.

Community Education offers safe driving accident prevention courses

South Florida State College's Community Education Department is offering a series of Safe Driving Accident Prevention Program (SDAPP) courses for drivers who have received a traffic citation, were court ordered to attend, or were involved in a traffic accident and issued a ticket.

The four-hour courses will be held Wednesday from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m., SFSC DeSoto Campus, 2252 N.E. Turner Ave., Arcadia; June 18 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., SFSC Highlands Campus, 600 W. College Drive, Avon Park; and June 25 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., SFSC Hardee Campus, 2968 U.S. 17 N., Bowling Green.

Preregistration is required. The cost is \$50 and may be paid by cash, check, or credit card. Register in Building B on the Highlands Campus or at any SFSC campus or center. For more information, contact the Community Education Department at (863) 784-7388, or email CommunityEducation@southflorida.edu.

SFSC Dean Kevin Brown retires

BY MARC VALERO

Highlands Today

AVON PARK — He never applied for a job, but Kevin Brown's efforts and dedication impacted thousands of students at the high school and college levels.

Brown, who has overseen South Florida State College's applied sciences and technology programs for 18 years, brought his academic career to end with his retirement on Tuesday.

When he graduated from Florida Southern College, Brown's former principal, Pat Patterson at Hardee Senior High School, asked him if he would like to teach agriculture at the high school until a new ag teacher could be hired. "I stayed there 14 years," Brown said recently.

A lot of his students did well in FFA and won state and national awards, Brown noted. The program expanded and had around 100 acres of land for the FFA livestock, citrus grove and plant nursery education projects.

He became the department chair of the high school's technical programs and then the Hardee School District's vocational director.

Brown said he was also in charge of school accountability and information technology. While at the district office, he helped build the first wireless network and installed the first email system for teachers.

While working at the district office, Brown said he got to know Catherine Cornelius who was the president of then South Florida Community College.

Cornelius asked him to come to the college and work as a director for two years before the retirement of Michele Roberts who was the college's dean of applied sciences.

In 1998 he started working for the college and became a dean in 2000.

The college has grown and expanded its program offerings during Brown's tenure, with new programs such as radiography, electrical linemen, computer networking, logistics and the college's first bachelor's degree (in supervision and management) in Brown's division. He helped develop the bachelor's degree in nursing program.

Grant writing was also an important part of Brown's duties at the college. Before the college had a director of grants, just out of his office he secured more than \$20 million in grants, Brown noted.

"To me the most important thing has always been the students," he said. "I have gotten the most satisfaction out of participating in individual program graduations, like corrections and law enforcement and pinnings for dental hygiene, nursing and radiography."

"Without a doubt, Dean Brown has left his mark on SFSC's applied sciences and technologies programs," said Sidney Valentine, the college's vice president for academic affairs and student services. "SFSC students are finding rewarding careers because Dean Brown helped launch programs for in-demand jobs."

Superintendent Wally Cox said Brown was one of the key people who helped the district develop the Highlands Career Institute (formerly Career Academy) at South Florida State College. "He did a great job. It was great to partner with him over a long period of time," Cox said. "He not only did what was best for the students at the college, he always helped the needs of our K-12 students."

Grants and Programs Specialist Di-



MARC VALERO/STAFF

South Florida State College Dean, Division of Applied Sciences and Technologies Kevin Brown retired Tuesday after 18 years with the college.

vision of Applied Sciences & Technologies Gaylin Thomas said, "Although he has many skills, I feel his most outstanding contribution as a dean is his genius for thinking outside the box and a charisma that makes you want to help him succeed."

Brown has mapped out a busy routine for himself as he makes way for his successor, SFSC professor Erik Christensen. "I've got 450-acre ranch in Hardee with 80 head of cattle that need looking after," Brown said. "My plan is to grow that to 150 head."

Brown never forgot his roots as a young man teaching agriculture to Hardee High School students. He has been active in Florida Future Farmers of America (FFA), helping sponsor a chapter at SFSC. The state organization gave Brown its Honorary State FFA degree, an award that recognizes members for their lifelong commitment to agricultural education.

After 37 years helping the region's students get the education they need to succeed, Brown's retirement from SFSC won't mean an end to his teaching.

"I'm hoping to start a program that will promote agriculture to young folks," Brown said.

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SFSC DEAN RETIRES



COURTESY PHOTO

Kevin Brown, who has overseen South Florida State College's applied sciences and technology programs for 18 years, retired Tuesday. He started with SFSC in 1998 after nearly two decades with the Hardee County School District, where he taught agriculture at Hardee Senior High School for 14 years and then was director of vocational programs for five years. It was Brown's experience in vocational education that brought him to the attention of SFSC. At first, Brown assumed the title of director. Within two years, he was named dean, placing him over educational programs that ranged from practical nursing to electronics to network service technology. "I've got 450-acre ranch in Hardee with 80 head of cattle that need looking after," Brown said at his retirement reception. "My plan is to grow that to 150 head." Shown congratulating him is Lena Phelps of the Florida Association of Colleges.

SFSC dental hygiene grads shine on National Board Exams

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's 2016 class of dental hygiene graduates came out on top on their national board examinations, with a 100 percent pass rate.

The soon-to-be dental hygienists completed their coursework in April and received their Associate in Science in Dental Hygiene degrees at SFSC's May 5 Commencement ceremony.

With their diplomas in hand, the students started taking the national board examination. Then the waiting began, with students checking their mailboxes daily for the examination results.

"We knew going in this was a good, strong class," said Deborah P. Milliken, chair of the Dental Education Department. "We just knew they were going to perform well on the boards."

The examination scores started arriving. Graduate after graduate reported the good news to Milliken and the dental education faculty.

"At 5 p.m. last Tuesday, I got a call from one of our grads, Blanca Cendejas," Milliken said. "She was the last student to report in to us. She was so excited, and so were we."

Cendejas, a Desoto County resident, joined Nikki Atterberry, Allison Brooke Bivens, Sofia G. Chong, Nancy Jaramillo, Shelby Lynn Lambert, Maria Guadalupe Ruiz, and Janet Velasco in passing their national board examinations.

Milliken said admission to the program is competitive, with students

required to take college algebra, microbiology and anatomy and physiology before they are considered for entry into the program.

Dental hygienists complete a two-year associate degree program. Once they pass the National Dental Hygiene Board, graduates must also pass a practical examination administered by the Florida Board of Dentistry.

Cendejas, who graduated from DeSoto County High School, was on campus the day after getting her test results. "I was ecstatic when the letter arrived," Cendejas said. "Next, is the state examination and then on to starting my career."

Milliken said this year's crop of graduates scored above the national average on all but two subject areas of the board examination. "And in those two areas of the examination, our students scored at the national average," Milliken said.

Graduates find jobs in dental offices performing direct patient care, taking



COURTESY PHOTO

Blanca Cendejas ensuring proper hand hygiene before attending to a patient at SFSC's dental education clinic.

X-rays and educating patients about oral hygiene.

Milliken noted last year's class also had a 100 percent pass rate.

SFSC also offers a 16-month occupational certificate program in dental assisting.

For more information, contact the SFSC Advising and Counseling Center at 863-784-7131 or visit www.southflorida.edu.

APHS teacher to speak at national AVID conference

By **TOM STAIK**
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK — For the second year in a row, Highlands County will take center stage at the national conference for the AVID program.

Dawn Henderson, a teacher at Avon Park High School, will be one of the featured speakers at the annual summer institute of the nationally recognized college-readiness program slated for June 14 in Tampa.

More than 3,000 educators are expected to attend the conference.

"The school district is extremely proud of Ms. Henderson," John Varady, coordinator of the county's AVID program, wrote in an announcement about the honor. "Dawn works tirelessly for her students as well as coordinating AVID implementation campus wide at Avon Park High."

Diana Eugenio-Hernandez, one of Henderson's students, presented her inspirational story at last year's conference.

"It was a huge honor to have one of Dawn's students chosen as a student speaker at last year's Summer Institute, and it comes as no surprise that

AVID would choose Ms. Henderson to speak this year as she is sure to inspire the thousands of educators in attendance in Tampa," Varady said.

A graduate of Avon Park High School with the class of 2000, Henderson began teaching mathematics at the school in 2004 and currently serves as the school's AVID coordinator. She has taught the AVID elective classes for the past three years, serves on the curriculum leadership team and is a mentor for the College Bound Male initiative at APHS.

Advancement Via Individual Determination — or AVID — is a nationwide program that "works to close the achievement gap" by giving educators strategies to help ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed in college, career and life.

Avon Park area

schools have led the county in success with the program that since its launch in Highlands County has expanded through the high school level and into all middle schools. This year marked the first year of limited implementation at the elementary level.

Fifth-grade students at Avon Elementary School were introduced to the program for the first time this year. It is hoped, Varady said recently at a meeting of The School Board of Highlands County, that the program will be widened to include fourth-grade students at the school for the upcoming school year.

A version of the program has also been adopted at South Florida State College as well, making Avon Park one of the few regions in the nation where the program is available from elementary to college.

SFSC Recognizes Students For Academic Excellence

South Florida State College recently recognized its honors students for the spring semester.

Students named to the President's List for earning a grade-point average between 3.8 and 4.0 were:

From Bowling Green — Cori A. Abbott, Magali R. Barcenas, Yolanda Benitez, Hollyann Brown, Makayla D. Chancey, Ivan Chavez, Jacqueline DeLa Cruz, Ofelia Diaz Brito, Stephanie A. Escobedo, Illeana Flores, Cassandra D. Gilman, Kyle Hewett, A.L. Juarez, Claudia Lazano, Alexis U. Lopez, Santos Lopez and Prescella E. Ramirez.

From Ona — Mckenna N. Hellein and Carrie J. Noel.

From Wauchula — Adriana Aguilar, Luc S. Alfred, Eric Apolinar, Kayla L. Austin, Leah L. Blankinship, Leeanna M. Castanon, Abby L. Clark, Braddock B. Colum, Sylvia DeLa Rosa-Rodriguez, Esmeralda D. De Loera, Arianna J. Delarose, Jordan N. Evers, Darby M. Farr, Breanna N. Godwin, Janet Guido, Logan N. Gunnoe, Melissa Hernandez, Odalis Hernandez, William T. Holton, Cory W. Jones, April M. Lazano, Brenda Martinez-Bautista, Dennis Mejia, James D. Miller, Selena Miranda and Jonathan A. Mondragon.

Also, Mireya Mondragon, Lindsay D. Moon, Crystal Morales, Marcella Narciso, Christian Pena, Sonia Perez, George Perez-Gomez, Cheyenne E. Pohl, Kayleen M. Prestridge, Magaly Ramirez, Kember M. Rios, Sylvia V. Rodriguez, Aron B. Ruiz, Vanette S. See, Holly D. Smith, Ricky M. Soria, Mason L. Stone, Danny Sustaita,

Roberto Torres, Noah D. Valletutti Azucena Venegas, Morgan T. Walters, Susan B. Watson, Sarah L. Welch, Karley M. White and Wyatt L. Zeigler.

From Zolfo Springs — Alexa A. Chapa, Daniel A. Cisneros, Maryann L. Conrad, Garrett J. Edenfield, Haley R. Edenfield, Rebeca Espinoza, Aniceto Estrada, Dalton J. Hammon, Catalina Hernandez, Claudia G. Klein and Amber N. Westberry.

Students named to the Vice President's List for receiving a grade-point average between 3.5 and 3.79 were:

From Bowling Green — Ricardo Aleman, Maria S. Gutierrez, Isaura Lucatero Zamora, Raquel Maldonado, Madison Marple, Jacqueline M. Rivera and Kayla M. Schock.

From Wauchula — Gabrielle R. Allen, Ahlam A. Alqabsi, Emily B. Bennett, Hannah G. Carlton, Soraya Castillo, Tammy M. Chapman, Leah J. Chavez, Eliasar Cleto, Alexandra T. Dotson, Wilney T. Francois, Brandon K. Holton, Jose A. Jurado, Reyna M. Kirkland, Pritesh Limbachia, Hayden K. Lindsey, Rebeca Lopez, Postenea E. Louisjeune, Wyatt A. Maddox, Jakayla M. Mosley, Angelica B. Navarro and Araceli M. Navarro.

From Zolfo Springs — Kayla B. Albritton, Yailene Del Rio, Marisol Estrada, LaQuachious M. Faulk, Monica M. Graham, Emily J. Laughlin, Julissa Ortiz-Ortiz, Rosario Piedad-Camacho, Amilia S. Rivera, Angela M. Salinas, Alexi A. Santana, Miranda L. Smith, Katrina A. Swindle, Genesis D. Torres and Gustavo Villalva.

South Florida State College

SFSC accepts applications for Basic Corrections Academy

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Criminal Justice Academy is accepting applications for its next Basic Corrections Academy course. This is the course required to become a State of Florida certified



corrections officer.

Basic Corrections Academy classes

will be held Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., beginning Aug. 22, for those who wish to become certified correctional officers in Florida.

By successfully completing 420 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 SFSC's Highlands Campus. For more information, call (863) 784-7282. Applications are accepted online through Aug. 12.

Mentors, mentees celebrated

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — Family, friends, and mentors with Take Stock in Children (TSIC) came together on Tuesday for an evening of celebration and recognition at South Florida State College.

They filled the seats of the SFSC University Center Auditorium on the SFSC Highlands Campus to honor the accomplishments of 23 TSIC mentees who had just graduated from high schools in DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

"This is that wonderful evening each year when we come together for our mentor appreciation and mentee recognition ceremony," said Jamie Bateman, executive director for Institutional Advancement at SFSC who also heads up the SFSC Foundation.

The SFSC Foundation serves as the lead agency for TSIC within the college's service district of DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties.

"Before I talk about our students' accomplishments, it's only fitting to say 'thank you' to our mentors," Bateman said. "They have given so much of their time to help shape these students into the young ladies and men we see here tonight."

The 23 graduates had completed the journey to high school completion with the help of their TSIC mentors. TSIC matches students at-risk of not completing high school with mentors who guide them to-



COURTESY PHOTO

From left are Irene Castanon, coordinator for the local TSIC program; Wally Cox, school superintendent; and Jamie Bateman, executive director for Institutional Advancement at SFSC.

ward earning their diplomas, with college scholarships awaiting those who graduate and enroll in college.

Bateman illustrated the students' achievements.

"The average grade point average for the 23 graduates was 4.71," she said. "One student graduated with a 5.4052 — I had to get that number two in there," she said to the laughter of the audience.

"One of our graduates just finished high school and simultaneously earned her associate degree from SFSC and another earned an occupational certificate," Bateman said.

Collectively, the students earned \$228,627 in college scholarships, Bateman said.

She added that they had already earned 360 hours of college credit toward their undergraduate degrees by participating in the dual enrollment program at SFSC.

TSIC mentors typically meet with their assigned students each week during the school year, offering en-

couragement, advice and a sympathetic ear. A TSIC college success coach provides support and guidance to the mentor and the mentee.

Bateman then called each graduate up to the stage. One by one, they mounted the stage and introduced themselves to the audience, mentioning their mentor's name, what college they would attend and what they would study.

From nursing to medicine to psychology, the students spoke of their dream careers, with most saying they would complete their first two years of college at SFSC.

"We have a bunch of bright grads here tonight," Bateman said after the parade of graduates had left the stage.

Bateman called two students back to join their mentors on stage. She asked each pair to speak about their relationship and what it meant to them.

Caroline Coley, a 92-year-old retiree from New York, joined her men-

MENTORS, Page 9



COURTESY PHOTO

From left are mentor Caroline Coley, her mentee, Genesis Castillo, and Irene Castanon, coordinator for the local TSIC program, before the start of the ceremony.

Mentors

From Page 8

tee, Genesis Castillo, at the microphone. Turning to Castillo, Coley said, "This young lady is so bright she did not need my help with her schoolwork. What she needed was someone outside her usual circle who would listen."

Castillo graduated at the top of her class at Avon Park High School. She has completed enough college credits as a dual enrolled student at SFSC to enable her to complete her associate degree in one year.

Mentor Karen Cream-

er gave her mentee, DeQua-lon Fudge, a hug after wiping away the tears she shed in recalling their years together since meeting in the seventh grade.

"I have been honored to serve as this young man's mentor on his journey to adulthood," Creamer said.

Fudge will enroll this fall at Florida Gulf Coast University, where he plans to major in accounting.

Before the evening event could come to an end, Bateman noted there was an item on the agenda that bore no name.

She asked Wally Cox, who will close out his 16 years as

Highlands County superintendent of schools, to come to the stage. Bateman handed him a framed photograph with an inscription thanking him for his service to TSIC.

The audience rose to their feet, whistling and applauding Cox as he accepted the photograph.

"What a wonderful evening we have each year when we recognize the mentors and mentees," said Irene Castanon, coordinator for the local TSIC program. "What makes it so special is watching the mentors and mentees come together for one final meeting before the grads start the next chapter in their lives."

COLLEGES: SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE BASEBALL CAMP

Panther Camp draws former and possibly future players

By **MARY KAY BERNARD**
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK— Summer is in full swing at South Florida State College's baseball camp, which has become a Homecoming of sorts for some players.

In addition to drawing former campers from yesteryear, the annual Panther camp usually draws a player or two that one day will go on to play baseball for SFSC.

Two of the Panther players helping to run this year's camp, former Sebring High School stars Matt Portis and Jordan Austin, a recent graduate, both attended the camp as youngsters.

"Jordan and Matt are campers from way back when that are now Panthers," said SFSC coach Rick Hitt. "We've had a lot of guys like that in the last five or six years. They came to camp as a 7- or 9-year-old and

are now Panthers. It's kind of neat.

"These are two outstanding guys to have out here," said Hitt. "They're very, very good with the campers and have an excellent outlook. We're looking forward to having them both here in the fall.

"We also have Zac Taylor, who's been a camper for years and is now a high school student helping out," said Hitt. "He also doubles as our bat boy. He's a fabulous kid."

Fifteen campers ranging in age from five to 14 worked on baseball fundamentals during opening day on Monday and had a great time.

"We've seen a lot of hustle out here today (Monday) and it's enjoyable to watch the enthusiasm of wanting to play baseball," said Hitt. "That's one of the things that make this the most fun."

Throughout the morning sessions of



Nelson Morales, 9, bats during the foam ball game at the end of the day on Monday in the Panther Baseball Camp at South Florida State College in Avon Park.

the four-day camp, players will have a defensive talk and learn proper throwing and catching fundamentals. Then, they will have a hitting talk followed by three or four sets of fundamental hitting sessions.

The day culminates with a foam ball game. "It's designed to help the guys get the ball on the barrel because the foam ball is very hard to square up, so to speak," explained Hitt. "If you don't hit a line drive, the ball pops up."

In light of Tropical Storm Colin that passed over Florida



SFSC player Jordan Austin, a former Sebring High standout and 2016 graduate, demonstrates bunting technique to 5-year-old Carter Gose in this week's Panther Camp.

Monday, Hitt was thankful the rain held off on the first day.

"I appreciate Mother Nature helping us out," said Hitt. "We'll see what (Tuesday) brings, but if we can't get outside, we'll be in the gymnasium and get everything done.



Mary Kay Bernard/News-Sun photos

Panther Matt Portis adjusts his pitching stance for the young baseball campers in this week's South Florida State College baseball camp. Portis is a former Sebring High star.

Either way, we'll have a complete camp the rest of the week."

Local kids will have another opportunity to learn all about baseball when the second session of

the Panther Camp is held June 21-24. Information can be found at: <http://www.southflorida.edu/community/athletics/baseball/camp> on the Internet.

SFSC Supply Chain Management and Logistics programs ready grads for work

AVON PARK — A friend tells you she works in supply chain management. Someone else says he's employed in logistics. Sounds interesting, but what do they do?

If you have ordered a book or electronic device from Amazon.com and go online regularly to check its status, then you know what logistics and supply chain management is about.

From buying the in-demand products and keeping the right amount in stock, to picking items off the warehouse shelves and packaging them, to transporting them to your doorstep, roughly 6 million Americans earn their living working in supply chain management, or, more broadly, logistics.

Those jobs are in demand in South Florida State College's service area and the college has a program in place to meet the need.

"The logistic industry is important to Florida, which is home to many distribution centers," said Tina Gottus, who heads up SFSC's series of Xcel-IT programs. "With the growth in global trade, the expansion of the Panama Canal, and the increasing capacity of Florida's ports, we'll surely see

the logistics sector."

"Supply chain management is not just telling a forklift driver in a warehouse what to do," Gottus said. "The field includes purchasing, transportation management, packaging, warehousing—the entire scope of logistics."

Gottus said the number of jobs in logistics is poised to grow 22 percent during the next decade. That growth is happening in Florida's Heartland. Amazon recently opened a distribution center in Polk County that employs nearly 500 people.

Closer to home, CitraPac, the maker of frozen fruit snacks, will open a plant at the Sebring Airport and Commerce Park this summer. The company plans to hire nearly 250 employees, with some of those positions requiring skilled logistics managers.

"SFSC has forged a partnership with CitraPac," Gottus said. "They're already hired some of our program participants."

Gottus said students can complete SFSC's logistics program within a year. She noted students can start the six-course program in any academic term. The college is accepting applications now

With its logistics program, SFSC is cultivating the future to help leaders like the airport's Willingham attract logistics-related business to our area. Local leaders can now say 'look what our college is doing— SFSC is producing the talent to fill these future new jobs.'

TINA GOTTUS
SFSC Xcel-IT program leader

for Fall Term 2016.

CitraPac is one of many companies that are tenants of Sebring's airport. The two-runway airport bills itself as a multimodal transportation facility and commerce park. "For example, five of our major tenants receive most of their raw materials by a rail link at the airport," said Mike Willingham, executive director of the Sebring Airport Authority. "The finished products are then shipped out by truck—that's multimodal."

Willingham said he talks to logistics companies frequently about locating at the airport, which is 8 miles from downtown Sebring. "One statistic I always tell companies is the airport is

within 150 miles of 85 percent of Florida's population," he said. "Even though most distribution centers are sited near major population centers, we're still strategically located and ripe for expansion." Jobs in logistics are not confined to distribution centers and manufacturing plants. One of the first graduates of SFSC's logistics program, Becky Tyson, is now a purchasing manager for the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. Purchasing managers ensure enough materials and supplies are on hand to keep operations running smoothly.

"The program is really great—it will open your eyes to the many avenues under the

Tyson. "You may think logistics only has to do with transportation or shipping, but there's so much more to it."

Tyson said the coursework helped her improve her management of inventory. "I learned the significance of holding costs and how that affects our budget. I implemented changes in my department based on the information I learned," she said.

The six-course program Tyson completed includes: introduction to supply chain management, warehouse management, transportation and distribution, purchasing and inventory management, principles of quality management, and operations management.

"Our graduates this year are taking the Certified Logistics Technician examination," Gottus explained. "This credential demonstrates they have the skills to function in a mid-level logistics position, not at merely at an entry level."

For students interested in a program leading to a degree, SFSC offers an Associate in Science degree in supply chain management.

SFSC's logistics program is growing, with

now enrolled. Those students can look forward to an expanding logistics industry.

At the urging of Gov. Rick Scott, the Legislature appropriated about \$850 million over the last five years for upgrades to Florida's ports to handle growth.

With the upcoming completion of a major expansion of the Panama Canal, Gottus said Florida is ready to take advantage of growing trade from overseas.

Trade and logistics already support about 1.5 million jobs in Florida.

"With its logistics program, SFSC is cultivating the future to help leaders like the airport's Willingham attract logistics-related business to our area," Gottus said. "Local leaders can now say 'look what our college is doing— SFSC is producing the talent to fill these future new jobs.'"

For more information about SFSC's 24-month Associate in Science degree in supply chain management or its one-year logistics and transportation specialist college credit certificate, call 863-784-7439 or email xcel-it@southflorida.edu.

SFSC Celebrates Mentors & Mentees

Family, friends and mentors with Take Stock in Children came together last week to honor the accomplishments of 23 mentees who had just graduated from high schools in Hardee, DeSoto and Highlands counties.



Escalante

Among the 23 were five graduates from Hardee Senior High School: Alexis Chavez, Jackeline Delacruz, Eric Escalante, Angelica Gonzalez and Joselyn Thompson.

"This is that wonderful evening each year when we come together for our mentor appreciation and mentee recognition ceremony," said Jamie Bateman, executive director for Institutional Advancement at South Florida State College, who also heads up the SFSC Foundation. The SFSC Foundation serves as the lead agency for TSIC within the college's service district.

"Before I talk about our students' accomplishments, it's only fitting to say 'thank you' to our mentors," Bateman said.

"They have given so much of their time to help shape these students into the young ladies and men we see here tonight."

The 23 graduates had completed the journey to high school completion with the help of their mentors. Take Stock in Children matches students at-risk of not completing high school with mentors who guide them toward earning their diplomas, with college scholarships awaiting those who graduate and enroll in college.

Bateman illustrated the students' achievements. "The average grade-point average for the 23 graduates was 4.71," she said. "One student graduated with a 5.4052, I had to get that number two in there," she said to the laughter of the audience.

"One of our graduates just finished high school and simultaneously earned her Associate Degree from SFSC and another earned an occupational certificate," Bateman said.



Gonzalez

Collectively, the students earned \$228,627 in college scholarships, Bateman said. She added they had already earned 360 hours of college credit toward their undergraduate degrees by participating in the dual-enrollment program at SFSC.

TSIC mentors typically meet with their assigned students each week during the school year, offering encouragement advice, and a sympathetic ear. A TSIC college coach provides support and guidance to the mentor and the mentee.



Delacruz

Bateman then called each graduate up to the stage. One by one, they mounted the stage and introduced themselves to the audience, mentioning their mentor's name, what college they would attend, and what they would study.

From nursing to medicine to psychology, the students spoke of their dream careers, with most saying they would complete their first two years of

college at SFSC.

"What a wonderful evening we have each year when we



Thompson

recognize the mentors and mentees," said Irene Castanon, coordinator for the local TSIC program. "What makes it so special is watching the mentors and mentees come together for one final meeting before the grads start the next chapter in their lives."



Chavez

Students go on quest to learn science at SFSC

AVON PARK — Robert Worthington, a prominent and wealthy resident of the community, was murdered in his kitchen while cutting red cabbage. Police find a knife with a strange green stain on the handle had been thrust in his chest.

When detectives arrive, they encounter a slew of suspects. Was it Worthington's cook, who was preparing a vinegar salad; his maid, who used ammonia to clean the tiles; or his nephew, who had just returned from swimming in the salt water of the ocean?

The detectives turn to chemists to help sort out a telling clue: the green stain on the knife's handle.

Those chemists were fourth and fifth graders from schools in South Florida State College's three-county service area. They were huddled in a laboratory on SFSC's Highlands Campus running a gamut of tests to determine which suspect left the mysterious green stain.

Worthington is a fictional character, but the scenario and tests were real. The students were participating in SFSC's summer STEMQuest classes.

SFSC's STEMQuest program is a series of half- and full-day classes to introduce schoolchildren to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, popularly known as STEM. SFSC faculty fashion the classes to handle the subjects in a fun and engaging manner.

"Watching the students delve into the experiments and lab work demonstrates that kids love science and technology," said Dr. Kimberly Batty-Herbert, SFSC's dean of arts and sciences. Dr. Batty-Herbert oversees the

program that runs several times throughout the year.

Leslie Comeaux, a STEM coach at Sun 'n Lake Elementary School, led the students through a series of chemical tests to determine which suspect caused the green stain to appear on the knife.

Dipping pipettes into several different acid solutions, the students sought to identify what type of chemical might have turned the cabbage juice on the knife green and, in doing so, discover who murdered Worthington.

"Wow, that ammonia really smells awful," one of the goggle-clad students said, as she tested red cabbage juice against the chemical the maid was using to clean the tiles.

Comeaux gave each student instruction on how to run the tests and ensure personal safety. All the time, she kept reminding them, "If you find out who killed Worthington, keep it to yourself. Don't blurt out the answer to the murder."

Across the hall, seventh, eighth, and ninth graders

were learning about experimental design.

Cedric Bullard, a chemistry teacher at Avon Park High School, walked students through a sample experiment: How many drops of water can a penny hold?

Students bent over their work stations with droppers of various sizes. Each gingerly placing drops of water on pennies. Then the counting started, with the students coming up with wildly varying totals.

"You see, it's important to design an experiment in a scientific manner to come up with valid results," Bullard told the students. "The size of the dropper, which side of the penny you use, and how far away you hold the dropper will affect the outcome of the experiment."

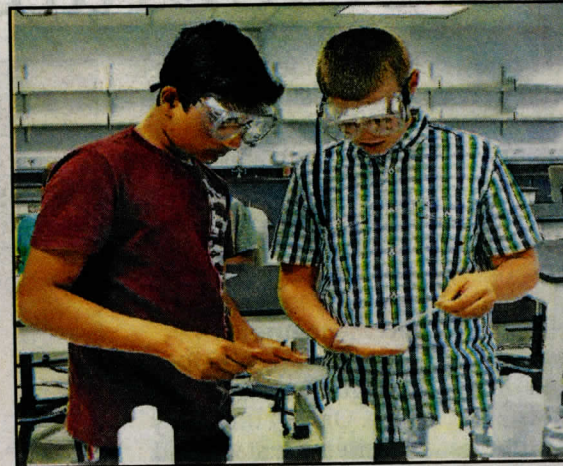
Next, the students moved on to real chemistry. Bullard designed an experiment involving acids and bases intended to teach the students how to differentiate between the two chemicals while

learning more about the importance of experimental design.

While no murder was involved, Bullard's students took up the challenge, teaming up in threes to replicate his instructions and produce valid results.

The students ran tests using a conductivity meter to see which bases and acids best served as a conductor of electricity. The students learned about ions and how their presence in the solutions affect the strength with which electricity is conducted.

Back across the hall,



Students collect acid solutions during one of SFSC's STEM-Quest classes.

at least one student's test solved Worthington's murder. "Quiet, now,"

Comeaux told the student. "We don't want anyone but the detectives to know."

Hearing that command, the other students scurried about from lab station to lab station

trying to catch up and solve the murder as well.

"Offering the STEMQuest classes is not only rewarding for the students," said Dr. Batty-Herbert. "It gives us at SFSC a sense of satisfaction that we are opening up young minds to the wonders of science."

Summer classes happening at SFSC

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Community Education Department is offering summer classes.

In yoga, learn how to reduce stress, improve circulation, calm the emotions and stimulate weight loss and realign posture. This class is offered Thursdays, June 23 through July 14, 5:30-7 p.m., SFSC Highlands campus, 600 W. College Drive, Avon Park. The cost is \$36, and the course number is (CRN) 30912.

In Beginning Spanish I, learn practical conversational Spanish skills



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that can be applied to real-life situations. Spanish grammar and pronunciation skills and simple conversation exchanges are taught in a fun manner. The class is offered Mondays and Wednesdays, July 11 through Aug. 29, 5:30-6:45 p.m. The cost is \$81, and the course number is (CRN) 30904. The course book required is

VISTAS 3rd Edition, ISBN: 9781600071041.

Register in Building B at the Highlands campus, or any SFSC center. Registration can also be paid over the phone by calling (863) 784-7405. For more information on this or any other Community Education classes, call (863) 784-7388 or email CommunityEducation@southflorida.edu

SFSC budget includes salary increase

Tuition and fees to remain unchanged in 2016-17

BY MARC VALERO
Highlands Today

AVON PARK — The recently approved South Florida State College budget for 2016-17 includes a base salary increase for eligible full- and part-time employees and no increases in fee or tuition.

The college's District Board of Trustees unanimously approved the recommended annual budget recently, which increases base salaries for all full- and part-time employees filling regularly established positions by

2.5 percent, subject to eligibility for the increase (must have been employed prior to Feb. 1 and have received a positive performance evaluation).

Also, rates for most stipends and adjunct/overload rates will also increase by 2.5 percent.

The budget development process was difficult as the internal requests for funds far exceeded the amount available from the state, according to Vice President of Business Operations Glenn Little. President Thomas Leitzel's first funding priority was to fund an increase to base compensation.

This was the college's first salary increase in three years. In re-

SFSC, Page 13



HIGHLANDS TODAY FILE PHOTO

In this 2015 file photo, students walk into South Florida State College's student services building on it's Avon Park campus. The college's District Board of Trustees unanimously approved the recommended annual budget recently.

SFSC

From Page 1

cent years some employees had received one-time pay adjustments.

Tuition and fee rates for 2016-17 remain unchanged from present rates, Little noted. In the coming year, there will be an emphasis on enrollment management to generate additional tuition-driven revenue.

In other words, the college can increase its revenue by having more students, Little said.

The focus is on increasing accessibility to the college's various programs, which may mean more

courses in the evenings or online or by offering weekend courses.

A committee met Monday to focus on enrollment management and explore ways to eliminate barriers to those who want to enroll at South Florida State College, he said.

Little noted that the college is hoping to obtain at least a 1 percent share of an additional \$10 million allocation for industry certifications earned by its students upon completion of their technical programs.

The state is encouraging students who complete technical programs to earn their certification, he explained. The state budget the last two years

included a special allocation of \$5 million that was available among the institutions in the Florida College System.

The college has to work hard to keep track of the students to know if they earned their certification, Little said, but that information could provide an additional \$100,000 in state funding.

Overall, the college's state funding increased \$256,862 (1.6 percent).

The college's operating budget for 2016-17 is \$22,985,213, which is a \$650,000 increase from the 2015-16 budget.

mvalero@highlandstoday.com
(863) 386-5826



Courtesy photo

Thirty-two new nurses were pinned Saturday at South Florida State College.

SFSC nursing graduates get pinned

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — Thirty-two graduates of South Florida State College's Associate Degree Nursing (ADN) program were honored in a traditional pinning ceremony on Thursday evening in the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts.

The graduates are Melissa Acosta, Jimmy Bunn, Bianca Cannon, Carmen Corona Zavala, Cheryl Cox, Courtney Crosby, Christian Cruz, Kyle Daniels, Megan Davidson, Alyssa Diaz, Daniel Duque, Elizabeth Etherton, Anallely Guzman, Mckenna Hellein, Erika Hernandez, Margie Herndon, William "Tadd" Holton, James Aaron Houser, Megan Hughes, Perla Mendieta-Arvizu, Laura Nieto, Maribel Perez-Badillo, I. Natalia Ramos, Taylor Ritacco, Jacqueline Rivera, Michelle "Mika" Rivera, Ana Rodriquez, Liliana Sanchez,

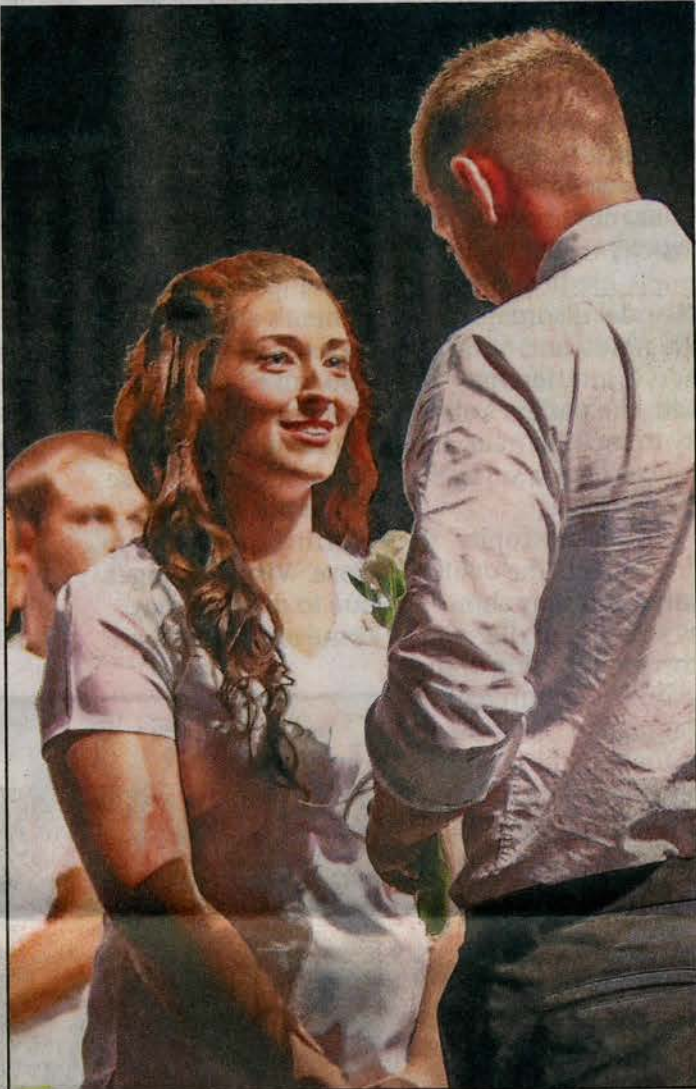
Stephanie Smith, Mary Stacy, Chiquita Stewart, and Erica Tovar.

Guest speaker Dr. Michele Heston, director of Nursing Education at SFSC, began her presentation by recounting the Seven C's of Caring at SFSC, a model of competencies for nursing program graduates.

They are competence, compassion, confidence, conscience, commitment, communication, and culture.

Heston explained that when she spoke with students about them during their final nursing practicum, students wove the seven C's throughout their own stories of caring for patients. She said, "It is in capturing such moments and turning them into stories that we shape who we become. Storytelling lifts facts from text books and drops them into our lives in powerful ways."

Heston told her own story of how a nurse



Courtesy photo

Courtney Crosby is pinned by husband Mitchell Crosby.

cared for her when she was hospitalized as a premature infant. "It is because of a practical nurse named Polly that I am standing here tonight!"

"I implore each of you to never doubt the influence you will have in other people's lives," Heston said to the graduates. "That will help your nursing heart grow and

expand and provide rich stories to illustrate your careers and lives. You already have stories that define you as nurses."

"Someone, somewhere, will breathe a little easier because you were there. Each of you will heal wounds, bring lives into this world, and help usher lives out of the world.

HIGHLANDS HEALTH

SFSC**FROM PAGE 1**

Never doubt how vitally important that work is, and look for the gifts within each day."

During the ceremony, graduates accepted their nursing pins from a person of their choice, in most cases a relative or friend who they credited with being supportive throughout their lives.

Heston said that "the highlight of completing a program of study in nursing is receiving the nursing pin, and that it is a symbol of service that includes many professional rights and responsibilities."

The practice of pinning new graduates has been a nursing school tradition in the United States since 1916. The pin is worn prominently

on a nurse's uniform throughout her or his career. One story of the ceremony's beginning goes back to 1883, when Queen Victoria awarded Florence Nightingale the Royal Red Cross on St. George's Day for her service to the sick and injured during the Crimean War. In turn, Nightingale later extended the honor to her outstanding nursing students by presenting them with a medal of excellence.

Each year, ADN graduates award the Golden Duck to someone who has served as a mentor to the students in the program. The D.U.C.K. acronym represents the foundational elements of the mentoring arrangement: Developing, Understanding, Compassion, and Knowledge.

During the ceremony, ADN graduate Cheryl Cox presented the 2016 Golden Duck Award to Laurie

Simmons, an SFSC nursing instructor. "She is an outstanding leader, exemplifying the high standards that this program demands," Cox said. "We say that she instills confidence that lets us know we can and will accomplish anything we set our minds to. She brings all that she is and has been as a nurse and says 'let me show you the way.' We'll never forget the way you've loved us with your care and dedication."

Graduates of the ADN program become registered nurses by passing the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX) exam. SFSC nursing graduates are usually fully employed in nursing within a few months of graduation.

SFSC's ADN program is the only nationally accredited nursing program in its service district of Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto

counties. It is accredited through the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, Inc. (ACEN).

SFSC offers ADN program options for students interested in becoming registered nurses: a two-year Generic-RN program and a one-year Transition-LPN to RN program. The college also offers a one-year practical nursing occupational certificate program. For program entry requirements, consult the SFSC College Catalog online at www.southflorida.edu or call 863-784-7027.

SFSC Nursing Graduates Honored In Pinning Ceremony

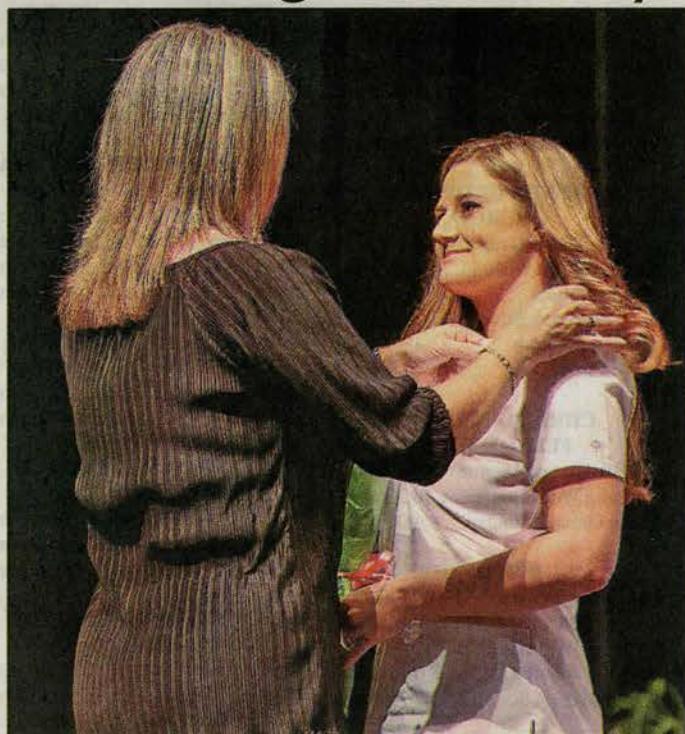
Thirty-two graduates of South Florida State College's Associate Degree in Nursing program were honored in a traditional pinning ceremony on Thursday evening in the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the main campus in Avon Park.

The graduates included Hardee County residents Mckenna Hellein, William "Tadd" Holton, Perla Mendieta-Arvizu and Jacqueline Rivera.

Guest speaker Dr. Michele Heston, director of Nursing Education at SFSC, began her presentation by recounting the Seven C's for nursing program graduates: competence, compassion, confidence, conscience, commitment, communication and culture.

"Someone, somewhere will breathe a little easier because you were there," she told the graduates. "Each of you will heal wounds, bring lives into this world, and help usher lives out of the world. Never doubt how vitally important that work is, and look for the gifts within each day."

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COURTESY PHOTOS

Mckenna Hellein is pinned by her mother, Tammy Hellein.

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Husband Ricky pinned Jacqueline Rivera.



Tadd Holton receives his pin from his wife, Katelynn.

SFSC students discover agricultural science careers on trip to Gainesville

By SHARON JONES

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-SUN

South Florida State College's inaugural AgDiscovery program introduced 15 juniors and seniors from district high schools in June to exciting science-based careers that are emerging in agriculture.

The students discovered why agriculture is important to our region and our nation at large as they learned about plant and animal sciences, natural resources, and bioenergy.

The students discovered why agriculture is important to our region and our nation at large as they learned about plant and animal sciences, natural resources, and bioenergy. AgDiscovery classes were offered for one week at the DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands campuses and the Lake Placid Center, culminating with a visit to the University of Florida in Gainesville on June 17.

AgDiscovery students from the Highlands Campus and Lake Placid Center toured UF along with lead instructor Dr. Mary Grace Danao, Lake Placid Center director Randy Paepflow, and



Courtesy photos

AgDiscovery students learn about research projects being conducted in the bioenergy lab at the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, part of UF's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.



Students in South Florida State College's AgDiscovery program visited the University of Florida on June 17. The group included Jayma Barnett (from left), lead instructor Dr. Mary Grace Danao, Sauhmad Blandin, Jocelyn Thompson, Aaron Zuniga, Jose Zuniga, Emma Heitman, Hardee Campus student services advisor Katrina Blandin, Savanna Barney, Laryn Skinner and Victoria Hays.

Hardee Campus student services advisor Katrina Blandin.

The group visited UF's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, learned about admission

requirements from biology advisor Britta Osborne, and explored the bioenergy research projects being conducted by Dr. Pratap Pullammanappallil's research group.

Class boosts knowledge of cybersecurity

Special to Highlands Today

AVON PARK — South Florida State College will conduct a one-day class on the cybersecurity practices that protect against common risks associated with using the internet from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 16.

"Introduction to Cybersecurity" covers the global implications of cyber threats, how computer networks become vulnerable to attack, and the impact of cyber-attacks on business. It will explain Cisco Systems' approach to detecting and defending computer systems against cyber-threats and explain opportunities for pursuing professional certifications in cybersecurity.

The class will be in Building I, Room 210, on the SFSC Highlands campus. Cost is \$69 per person with a maximum class size of 24 students. To register, call 453-6661, 773-3081, 993-1757, or 465-3003 and request Course Registration Number 30911.

As part of its commitment to training highly skilled I.T. workers in Florida's Heartland, SFSC also offers one-year college credit certificate programs in network security, which contains a focus on cybersecurity and digital forensics, which teaches how to recover trace material in digital devices often relating to criminal activity and how to reveal the source behind breaches of network security. College credits earned in these programs can be applied to SFSC's associate in science degree in Network Systems Technology.

For more information, visit www.southflorida.edu or call SFSC's XCEL-IT program at (863) 784-7439.

Wednesday, June 29, 2016 | NEWS-SUN |

Retirement for MOFAC curator doesn't mean no more art



Courtesy photo

SFSC president Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel (from left), Mollie Doctrow, and Kris Y. Rider, chair of the SFSC District Board of Trustees, at presentation naming Doctrow as Curator Emerita for her work with the Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC).

How did an artist who discovered a love for nature in the cool air of the High Sierra settle in flat, hot, humid Florida, and come to love her new home?

The answers lies in the story of how Mollie Doctrow came to be a landscape artist and curator of the Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC) at South Florida State College (SFSC).

Doctrow, who has served as MOFAC's curator for 11 years, will retire at month's end to tend to her love: capturing Florida's landscapes in her art. A love that has its beginnings in a trip to the mountains.

"I was 16 years old when I first went to the High Sierra as camp counselor," Doctrow said. "I remember saying to myself 'Holy cow this is nature,'" as she recalled the camping trip that included a week backpacking along the John Muir Trail.

Doctrow described her experience in the northern California mountains as a moment akin to an epiphany, saying she was never the same again.

The two weeks in the mountains were not Doctrow's first exposure to beauty. "My family moved to France for a year when I was in the ninth grade," said Doctrow, who grew up in the uninspiring sprawl she called "greater Los Angeles."

"We lived in Bois-le-Roi, a farming village outside Paris, where I was captivated by the splendor of the rural charm."

Doctrow recalled how she marveled at the simplicity of village life that left her parents befuddled. "My mother was used to supermarkets, not the open air markets of the village," Doctrow explained. "So she would send me shopping for the meat, and I loved it—so much so that I wanted my family to leave me there."

It was a year later that Doctrow would visit the High Sierra, saying that she felt half alive until then. "Both experiences—France and the mountains—are still vivid in my mind. I was never the same after that," she said.

Doctrow's love of the outdoors had not yet found an expression in art. She enrolled at the University of California at Northridge to study philosophy. "I went to college overwhelmed by questions like 'What is goodness?'" Doctrow said. "It took me four years to find out nobody had the answer."

While Doctrow concentrated on the meaning of goodness, she dabbled in art by taking drawing classes as she worked toward her bachelor's degree. "I didn't see a path ahead for me as an artist," she said. "I didn't even know what an art career was at the time."

After graduation from Northridge, Doctrow returned to Europe for nearly a year. Her second trip abroad jolted her into rethinking her career path. "When I came back home, I went to Santa Monica City College, which is a community college, to study printmaking and drawing," she said.

"I lived in the printmaking studio," said Doctrow, describing how she took to her new passion. "I started making and selling my prints, and couldn't stop."

After a year at Santa Monica, Doctrow returned to Northridge to enroll in its master's degree program in printmaking. "They told me they would accept me on the condition that I not do flowers," Doctrow said. "I agreed, finished the program, and went right back to doing flowers, landscapes, and realism's of nature."

Next came freelance work in computer graphics and a string of adjunct teaching positions. Doctrow landed her first full-time teaching job at Brevard College, located in a mountainous region of western North Carolina, where she taught art and computer graphics for 10 years.

Toward the end of her time at Brevard,

Doctrow drove to central Florida to visit a friend who owned a ranch. "By that time, I was well into doing prints of natural habitats but had not experienced the landscapes of southern Florida," Doctrow said. "I took a trip to the Everglades, and my eyes popped out because I had never seen anything like that before."

Doctrow was hooked. She immediately sought out an opportunity to return and scored a summer residency through the national parks. After

an intense period of drawing landscapes and rendering them to prints, Doctrow went hunting for place to exhibit them.

An Internet search turned up a venue: the Museum of Florida Art and Culture at SFSC. Doctrow called the curator, Jim Fitch, and the two hit it off immediately.

"I visited the SFSC Highlands Campus to meet Jim at MOFAC," Doctrow said. "I found a museum with empty shelves but I also found a man who loved art and was eager to show my work."

Fitch invited Doctrow back for a semester of teaching, which Doctrow immediately accepted. "Then Jim retired, and I seized the

opportunity to come on full time."

SFSC offered the curator post to Doctrow. "I would never have expected I would live in place without mountains, an area as flat, hot, and humid as Florida," Doctrow said. "But I've come to love this area of Florida, and MOFAC and SFSC, all of which have come to mean

CURATOR | 8



Courtesy photo

Mollie Doctrow with her "Pygmy Oak Forest," one of four woodcuts that was sent to the ambassador's residence in Niamey, Niger in 2014.

CURATOR

FROM PAGE 3

so much to me."

During Doctrow's tenure at MOFAC, the museum collection expanded and its stature as a regional venue of Florida art and culture grew.

Doctrow earned a reputation for mounting cutting-edge exhibitions of major Florida artists.

"Without a doubt, Mollie's curatorial expertise put MOFAC on the map of top-notch museums in Florida," said Cindy Garren, director of Cultural Program at SFSC. "Mollie's tenure at SFSC has raised the bar when it comes to judging the quality of an exhibition at a regional museum in the state."

Doctrow not only cared for MOFAC's collection, she taught graphics classes to SFSC's students. Collaborating with Cathy Futral, a professor in the art department, Doctrow mounted a series of exhibitions showcasing the work of SFSC's alumni, many of who have gone on to rewarding careers in the arts.

"Mollie has made a tremendous impression on the artistic abilities and creativity of SFSC's students," Garren said. "Our alumni have moved on to exciting careers in the arts but return for regular alumni exhibitions, serving as an inspiration for our current students."

Doctrow's ardor for nature found an outlet on the SFSC Highlands Campus. In 2011, she oversaw the opening of the Wildflower Wayside Shrine Trail, a quarter-mile, self-guided walking trail that honors the endangered plant species found on the Lake Wales Ridge, the oldest ecosystem in the southeastern United States. On the trail, the public can glimpse native plants: the pygmy fringe tree, the big flag pawpaw, sky-blue lupine, and St. John's Wort.

Well before her retirement at the end

of June, Doctrow will have already completed the line-up for MOFAC 2016-17 exhibition season. "Our first exhibition on Oct. 5 will open the season with works by former faculty, regional artists, and SFSC alumni," Doctrow said. "It will be a great evening to introduce MOFAC's new curator, Megan Stepe, to the museum's family."

What words of advice does Doctrow have for Stepe? "MOFAC is awesome!" Doctrow said, thrusting her arms in the air. "What's more, Megan will find a supportive community that includes the college administration, its trustees, the faculty, our students, the dedicated volunteers, and an amazing number of residents who are committed to Florida history, culture, archeology, and art."

Doctrow's retirement plans call for her to stay put in Highlands County. "People keep asking me what I am going to do after SFSC," Doctrow said. "I tell them 'art.' I am going to do art full time, like a job. I'll wake up, go to my studio and put in a day's work, then do other things."

Through her 11 years at MOFAC,

Doctrow continued to exhibit her work in venues across the state and abroad. Some of her recent work will go on display this month at an exhibition mounted by Arts on Douglas, a New Smyrna Beach gallery.

"My love for art comes from my passion for nature," Doctrow said. "It's not about the art, it's about the experience. That's what

making art is for me. That's what MOFAC has been about, the experience of a community coming together to install art shows, programs, and enjoy the art, history, and sharing."



Sharon Weatherhead/News-Sun

Mollie Doctrow with a shrine box on the Wildflower Wayside Shrine Trail at South Florida State College. Doctrow was instrumental in the establishment of the nature trail.

The Sun / Thursday, June 30, 2016

Corrections Officer crossover LEO course offered at SFSC

The South Florida State College Criminal Justice Academy (CJA) is offering a Correctional Officer crossover to Law Enforcement Officer course. This course is for current certified correctional officers who wish to become a certified law enforcement officer.

The course is offered Monday through Thursday, plus some Saturdays and Sundays, beginning Monday, Aug. 8, 6 – 10 p.m. For information, contact Michael Huften, coordinator, at 863-784-7285 or visit www.southflorida.edu/publicservice. Financial aid is available to those who qualify. Register at any SFSC Campus or center, pre-registration is required. Applications can be completed online.

Students discover agricultural science careers

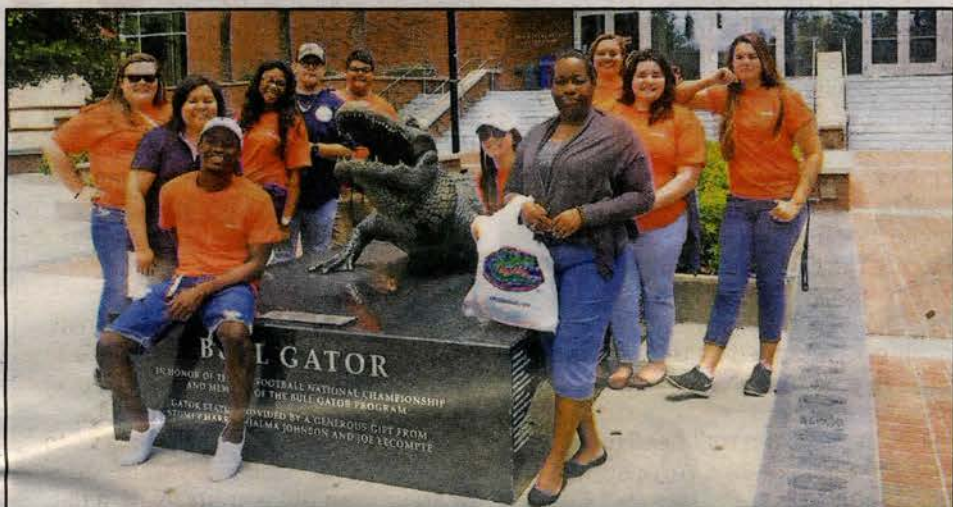
By **SHARON JONES**
SFSC COMMUNITY RELATIONS

In June, South Florida State College's inaugural AgDiscovery program introduced 15 juniors and seniors from district high schools to exciting science-based careers that are emerging in agriculture. The students discovered why agriculture is important to our region and our nation at large as they learned about plant and animal sciences, natural resources and bioenergy.

AgDiscovery classes were offered for one week at the DeSoto, Hardee and Highlands campuses and the Lake Placid Center, culminating with a visit to the

University of Florida in Gainesville. On June 17, AgDiscovery students from the Highlands Campus and Lake Placid Center toured UF along with lead instructor Dr. Mary Grace Danao, Lake Placid Center director Randy Paepflow, and Hardee Campus student services advisor Katrina Blandin.

The group visited UF's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, learned about admission requirements from biology advisor Britta Osborne, and explored the bioenergy research projects being conducted by Dr. Pratap Pullammanappallil's research group in the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Students in South Florida State College's AgDiscovery program visited the University of Florida on June 17. The group included (from left) Jayma Barnett, lead instructor Dr. Mary Grace Danao, Sauhmad Blandin, Jocelyn Thompson, Aaron Zuniga, Jose Zuniga, Emma Heitman, Hardee Campus student services advisor Katrina Blandin, Savanna Barney, Laryn Skinner and Victoria Hays.

SFSC presents

subscription packages, group rates



SPECIAL TO
THE HIGHLANDS SUN



Courtesy photos

Left: Lorrie Morgan and Pam Tillis will share the stage on Feb. 8 in the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at South Florida State College. **Right:** Human Nature, one of the world's top vocal groups, will be a part of the Artist Series lineup at the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts.

Feb. 8; "Presley, Perkins, Cash and Lewis: A Night To Remember," on March 2; bestselling contemporary Christian artists Point of Grace on March 9; Women of Ireland on March 23; and one of the world's top vocal groups, Human Nature on April 1.

All Artist Series performances

are held in the 1,460-seat Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts and begin at 7 p.m. Subscriptions range from \$258 to \$325.

The popular Goodtime Tuesdays Matinee Series includes the Flying Horse Big

AVON PARK — Season subscriptions are now available for the upcoming performance season at the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at South Florida State College. Subscriptions are available for the matinee, artist, and jazz series performances.

"In addition to saving up to 20 percent, subscribers get the best seat for the entire season, pay less in processing fees, don't have to wait in line, get a 10 percent dining discount at the Hotel Jacaranda, and receive special subscriber discounts

for select performances," said Cindy Garren, director of Cultural Programs at SFSC. "Subscribers also receive invitations to Meet the Artist receptions."

The Artist Series lineup includes the worldwide piano sensation Ethan Bortnick on Nov. 19; family holiday favorite "Miracle on 34th Street," on Dec. 1; a nostalgic evening of doo wop with the Bronx Wanderers on Jan. 12; the Florida Orchestra on Jan. 19; a tribute to Motown titled "So Good for the Soul" on Jan. 28; country stars Pam Tillis and Lorrie Morgan on

THEATRE

FROM PAGE 1



Courtesy photo

Bria Skonberg, one of today's hottest trumpeters will be a headliner in the Jazz Series at South Florida State College.

Allred's Classic Jazz Band on Feb. 9; swing band New Orleans Nighthawks on Feb. 18; and the Canamger Band on March 8.

All Jazz Series performances are held in the 250-seat SFSC University Center Auditorium and begin at 7 p.m. Subscription packages range from \$107 to \$116.

The Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts and the SFSC University Center Auditorium are located on the SFSC

Highlands Campus, 600 W. College Dr., Avon Park. Free parking is available. All areas of the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts and the SFSC University Center Auditorium are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Subscriptions can be purchased online at www.sfsccarts.org or call the box office at 863-784-7177 for a mail order form. For further information, email culturalperformances@southflorida.edu.

Band on Jan. 10; David Osborne Trio on Jan. 17; "You'll Never Walk Alone" with Brian Gurl on Jan. 24; the Agatha Christie who-done-it "Murder On The Nile" on Jan. 31; "The Martin and Lewis Tribute Show," a tribute to Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, on Feb. 7; Music of the 1960s "What's Up, Pussycat?" on Feb. 14; the "Shake, Rattle & Laugh" variety show on Feb. 21; music from the '50s and '60s with Pauly and The Good Fellas on Feb. 28; and Neil Zirconia, a tribute to Neil Diamond, on March 7.

All matinee performances are held in the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts and begin at 1:30 p.m. Subscriptions range from \$145 to \$190.

The Jazz Series lineup includes the Eddie Metz Trio with Nicki Parrott and Rossano Sportiello on Jan. 18; one of today's hottest trumpeters, Bria Skonberg, on Jan. 26; Bill