

College Displays Ranching Art

The art of an unusual Florida couple will be on display starting next week at the South Florida State College in the Museum of Florida Art and Culture.

Sean and Sharon Sexton of the 619-acre Treasure Hammock Ranch in Vero Beach will bring their paintings, sculpture, tile murals and other art to the college for display from Dec. 7, 2016 to Feb. 9, 2017.

Pinecone quilting by Betty Ford Smith will also be on display at the museum at the same time.

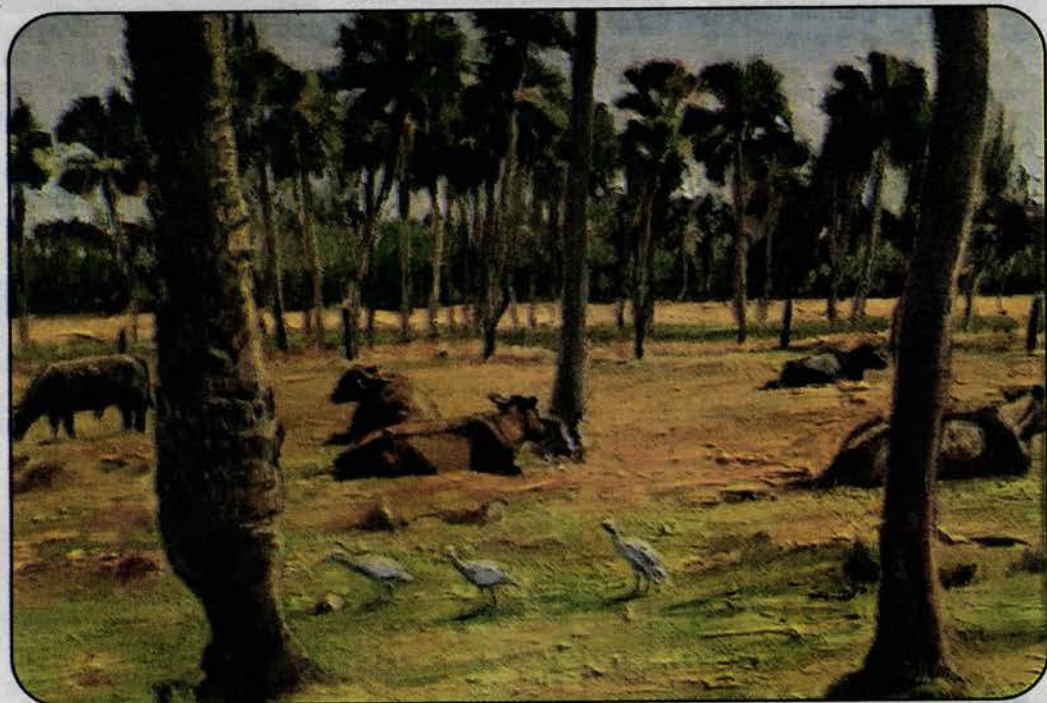
Sean Sexton's Florida-inspired art is often first sketched from horseback while herding cattle. They depict rugged landscape, natural beauty and touch upon topics such as religion and mortality. he also writes poetry and creates ceramic sculptures.

Sharon Sexton is also a recognized artist, in paintings, ceramic sculptures and tile murals. She is one of the owner-operators of the Tiger Lily Art Studios and Gallery in downtown Vero Beach, now in its 25th year.

Smith says the pinecone

quilt is also called the "pineburr or cucklebur" quilt because of its pinecone design, using hundreds of 5-inch squares folded into triangles and hand-swenn onto an old flatbed sheet base.

The college museum, in the Wildstein Center, 600 W. College Dr., Avon Park, is open on Wednesday through Friday 12:30-4:30 p.m. or by appointment for group tours. For more information, contact Megan Stepe, museum curator, at 863-784-7240 or stepem@southflorida.edu or mofac.org.



COURTESY PHOTOS

"Bright Morning" is one of Sean Sexton's ranch paintings on display.



Sharon Sexton works on one of her sculptures which

High school students check out SFSC



PHOTOS BY MARC VALERO

SFSC academic advisor Rob Hampton talks to students during College for a Day at South Florida State College.

More than 800 attend 'college fair'

By **MARC VALERO**
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — Area high school juniors and seniors packed into the Panther Gym Friday to check out the educational opportunities at South Florida State College's third annual College for a Day event.

As students from Highlands, DeSoto and Hardee counties started filing in around 9 a.m., Dean of Student Services Timothy Wise said he expected about 700 to attend. About 45 minutes later he said they were printing more sign-in cards because it appeared that attendance would hit 900.

The event has been done in the past, but this is the "revised version" where it is more like a college fair, Wise noted.

Representatives from the college's academic and vocational programs and clubs and organizations provided hand-outs and spoke to students about their programs.

The event features several displays, Wise said, such as a simulated firing range from the Criminal Justice program.

Chemistry professor Peter Hamlet, dressed in a wizard hat and black gown, drew a crowd as he provided a fun demonstration using liquid nitrogen. He tipped a cup of the



Avon Park High seniors, from left, Kinley Bennett, Taylor Massey and Morgan Jones chat with the College Republican Club President Jordan Rademaker at the College for a Day event on Friday at South Florida State College.

cryogenic fluid, as if pouring it on the floor, which gave out a brief circular vapor cloud on the gym's concrete floor.

Avon Park High School senior Kinley Bennett said she wanted to go into nursing school so she checked out the program's display.

"It looks really fun; I like that it is close to home so we can just come to school," she said.

Academic Advisor Rob Hampton spoke to students about general college information and academic counseling.

A lot of students don't

really know what they want to major in, he said. But, it is very important for them to know because it dictates what elective and general education classes they should enroll in.

Students may be taking pottery and art classes and thinking they can transfer to a major university's business program, Hampton said. But, they need the appropriate lower-level classes.

Students spent about an hour at the fair in the gym and received information



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about how to be admitted to the college and how to apply for financial aid. Also, there were walking tours of the

campus to visit some of the key programs.

During the half-day event, students received a T-shirt and refreshments and pizza at lunchtime.

The college will have a drawing to give away two \$500 scholarships, Wise added.

Photo by MARC VALERO

Left: A Lake Placid High School senior, left, participates in a demonstration with liquid nitrogen under the director of chemistry professor Peter Hamlet.



The turnout of about 900 juniors and seniors from five high schools exceeded the expected attendance of 700 at Friday's College for a Day event at South Florida State College.

Tuesday, December 6, 2016 | NEWS-SUN |

SFSC grad sets sights on career early

AVON PARK — When it came to what Laura Patino wanted out of life, she was laser focused since childhood. From elementary school and on, she saw herself working in a science-intensive job.

As a sixth-grader, Patino, a 2012 graduate of South Florida State College, wrote in an essay outlining her career plans: "When I grow up, I hope to be an astronaut or astronomer."

In time, the science-centered career path she mapped out took a detour, albeit a minor one. Now, with a degree in nuclear engineering in hand, Patino has scored a position working with a team operating a nuclear power plant.

"I work in an industry that's vital to the economy and everyday people," Patino said. "My colleagues and I have to keep this plant running 24 hours a day and seven days a week so that our customers have the energy they need for their businesses and homes."

Patino immersed herself in the sciences undergirding nuclear engineering at SFSC. In fact, she began attending classes at SFSC even before she graduated from Avon Park High School, where she placed fourth in her class of 233.

A native of Colombia, who moved to Florida when she was 7 years old, Patino excelled in high school with the help of a mentor from Take Stock in Children. Schoolchildren considered at-risk of not earning their high school diploma get regular visits from a Take Stock mentor who offers guidance and a supportive ear.

The extra attention Patino received propelled her along. She took advanced placement coursework, played drum major in the band, and earned a coveted research internship at Archbold Biologic Station in southern Highlands County. She even started taking college classes while in high school.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Laura Patino celebrates her graduation from the nuclear engineering program at the University of Florida.

"I was eager to get a head start on college, so I opted to dually enroll at SFSC while still a high school student," Patino said. "I had accumulated enough college credits as a high school student that I finished up at SFSC in just three semesters."

Those three semesters, though, were critical for Patino. She took physics with Erik Christensen, a former ocean and naval engineer with the U.S. Navy.

"Professor Christensen had experience with the nuclear navy and his engaging teaching style and enthusiasm got me thinking about nuclear engineering," she recalled. Patino's career choice was set.

To excel in the nuclear engineering courses Patino would go on to take at the University of Florida would require a solid grounding in mathematics. Here, too, Patino



credits an SFSC instructor with keeping her focused.

"Professor J.J. Moyne was always accessible when I needed help with higher level math work," Patino said. "Getting that level of personalized attention at a large university like Florida is not easy."

Patino settled on the Gainesville-based university because it had one of the few undergraduate nuclear engineer programs in the southeast.

After three years studying radiation dose testing and physical phantom creation at the University of Florida, Patino tailored her job search to openings in the Midwest and Northeast. "I love Florida, but at the same time I wanted to experience life in other states, especially areas where I could enjoy all four seasons."

Patino got hired on by the Exelon Corporation, a Fortune 100 company that generates, transmits and delivers energy in 48 states with 34,000 employees and \$35 billion in revenues. She is learning the intricacies of a nuclear power plant



Laura Patino (second from right) with her parents and sister at Exelon Corporation Family Day, visiting the nuclear power plant in Illinois where Patino works.

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in Illinois.

"Because we are a nuclear power plant, keeping it running is a job that's complex and carries a lot of responsibility," Patino said. "This is an industry in which you are always training and always learning."

Patino raves over her choice of Exelon Corporation. She said the company invests in its employees, expecting them to take on a fair amount of "vertical learning" to master operating a nuclear power plant.

She noted the energy sector is growing, offering careers in chemistry, engineering, and plant maintenance. Patino said she is particularly eager

to talk up career paths in the technology sector to women.

"I know from personal experience there's a belief that women are not smart enough to take on the challenges of professions like nuclear engineering," Patino said. "I can also say from personal experience that how much you achieve is driven by how much effort you put into realizing your dreams."

SFSC BRIEFS

TAG offers spring art classes

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's The Artists' Group is offering spring classes in its studio at the Hotel Jacaranda, 19 E. Main St., Avon Park.

•In oil painting, participants will learn how to mix colors and apply common oil techniques to create a painting. All supplies are included for a 12-foot-by-16-foot painting. This three-week class is for students with no prior experience with working with oils. The class will be held from noon to 3 p.m. Jan. 6 - 27.

The cost is \$85, and the course number is (CRN) 21276.

•Beginning gourd artistry, participants receive instruction in preparation, design, creation, development and finishing of a gourd art project. Basic pyrography instruction will be included. This class will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. on Wednesdays, Jan. 11 through Feb. 1 at the SFSC Highlands Campus Public Safety Building, 600 W. College Drive, Avon Park. The cost is \$95, and the course number is (CRN) 21280.

•In creations in clay/ceramics, participants learn to use clay and pottery techniques for this sculptural medium. This class will be held from 9 a.m. to noon Wednesdays, Jan. 11 through March 1, 9 a.m. - noon. The cost is \$135, and includes supplies. The course number is (CRN) 20713.

•In watercolor painting, participants learn how to paint their own subjects or participate in a project demonstrated. The application of color theory elements and principles of design will be discussed and implemented into the class project. This class will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Thursdays, Jan. 12 - 26. The cost is \$65, and the course number is (CRN) 20714.

•In acrylic painting, participants will paint subjects of their choice or work on a project with the instructor. Two paintings will be completed during the session. This class will be held from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 18 through Feb. 15. The cost is \$120, and the course number is (CRN) 20451.

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

For information or to obtain class supply lists, contact The Artist' Group at SFSC at 863-784-7376 or email tagstudioart@yahoo.com.

Register for Lifetime Learners Institute

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Lifetime Learners Institute is beginning its 2017 season with a series of educational sessions and field trips for adults

looking to expand their intellectual and cultural exploration.

To view the Lifetime Learners 2017 registration packet and schedule visit southflorida.edu/community/community-education/lifetime-learners. Register in Building B at the Highlands Campus or any SFSC campus or center. Contact Community Education department at 863-784-7388 or 863-784-7392 or email communityeducation@southflorida.edu

Education changed rhythm of life for SFSC grad

SPECIAL TO THE
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

ARCADIA — Like many of her peers at the December Commencement ceremony at South Florida State College, Edith Andrade will be proud when she crosses the stage later this month and receives her Associate in Arts degree.

"I know I'll feel great on that day," Andrade said. "But I know my mom will be super proud and happy too, and that makes me feel even better."

Unlike many of her peers, she can relish the moment, knowing she takes the walk after surmounting hurdles that were stumbling blocks to many others like Andrade.

For Andrade, the rhythm of her life departed from the norm most teenagers come to know.

During summers, when other high schoolers were at play, away at camp, or preparing for college, Andrade traveled with her mother and siblings to Michigan, New Jersey, and North Carolina to pick blueberries, apples, and other fruits for tables across America.

"By the time we finished the season up north, we wouldn't get home until October," Andrade recalled. "By then, classes were underway, and we were just getting back to school at home."

Andrade calls DeSoto County home. She was born in Arcadia, the county seat, to a

family of migrant farmworkers. They work in the agriculture industry, the main driver of the rural county's economy, but make the trek north each June to earn money when work dries up in the summer.

"Yes, getting back to our home school in Arcadia late in the year was a difficult adjustment," Andrade said when asked to recall her high school years. She only briefly mentioned the summers picking fruit and never the absence of the usual leisure enjoyed by others.

"My mother, who never finished school, knew one thing was essential," Andrade said. "Earning a high school diploma was required, so she went north and left me with relatives during my senior year so that I could start classes with everyone else and have an uninterrupted school year."

Andrade finished high school — the first in her family to earn a diploma.

"At the beginning of my senior year at DeSoto County High School, I had no plans to start college right after graduation," Andrade said. "But I got involved with a group called Links 2 Success, and they encouraged me to apply to SFSC and think hard about my options for continuing my education without interruption."

Now, just days away from getting a two-year degree, Andrade said she's glad she made the decision to enroll in

SFSC directly from high school. "I don't have a car and couldn't afford to go away to a university, so having an SFSC campus in Arcadia is what made my degree possible," Andrade said.

When Andrade entered SFSC, a counselor was available to offer guidance and support tailored to her needs. SFSC is one of dozens of colleges across the county that participate in the Farmworker Career Development Program (FCDP). The federally funded initiative aims to assist U.S. citizens and other legal residents complete their education and find success in the workforce.

"When she came to us, I remember Edith as a shy and reserved young woman," said Minerva Ortiz, a counselor with the FCDP at SFSC's DeSoto Campus. "She has blossomed and is now putting herself out there in the high schools helping others to think hard about starting college as soon as they graduate."

"I remembered the guidance I received from the folks from Links 2 Success and decided to volunteer my time with them," Andrade said. "Now I serve as one of their college coaches in the DeSoto County High School, helping students to complete their college applications and guiding them toward sources of financial aid."

This fall, Andrade will enroll in SFSC's Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management program.



COURTESY PHOTO

Edith Andrade at her DeSoto County High School graduation.

"Education is the one great hope for the young people in our farmworker program," said Tara Jefferies, the coordinator of the FCDP, who oversees the program at SFSC's DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands campuses. "They come in determined to complete college or an occupational certificate program because they've experienced life as a farmworker

and they want better for their kids."

"What's striking is Edith's genuine sense of humility," Jefferies observed. "She doesn't dwell on the past but just keeps focused on the future."

Andrade speaks little of herself. In conversation about her time at SFSC, she mentions

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those who have prodded her along and made her feel welcome on campus.

"The staff at DeSoto Campus were great," she said. "From the ladies in the front office, my counselor, and the instructors, they made being on campus a pleasure."

Andrade said her mother, younger sister and two brothers, will take their seats in the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on SFSC's Highlands Campus to watch her

cross the stage at 6:45 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 1. She wants her siblings to cherish the moment as much as she will. Asked what she wants others to know about her journey to the stage

that night, Andrade paused and seemed puzzled.

"I guess I'm just like everyone else," Andrade said. "I'm just furthering my education for a better future."

SFSC graduates second class of fire science students

SPECIAL TO
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — South Florida State College graduated its second class of Fire Science Program students at an evening ceremony on Dec. 12.

The graduates are now eligible to join the ranks of career firefighters working in county and municipal fire departments, with three already serving with county volunteer fire units.

Family members of the graduates, SFSC officials, and fire firefighters were on hand to watch the newly minted first responders mount the stage in the SFSC University Center Auditorium to receive their diplomas.

"You folks made the cut after 16 weeks of focused, intense training," said Paul Shannon, SFSC fire science program coordinator, told the graduates. "You've proven yourself, and now you're ready to be

firefighters," he said, wearing the dark blue uniform of his full-time job with Polk County Polk County Fire Rescue.

Receiving their diplomas were Maria Albarran, Max Damour, Efrain Herrera, John Herrera, Brandon Hutson, Kody Littles, Ralph Meeks, Joshua Mink, Noel Reynoso and Barry Smith.

The 10 students represented a range of backgrounds. Some were recent graduates of SFSC's Emergency Medical Technician program, who aim to move directly into firefighting. Others, like Damour and Herrera, volunteer with Station 36 in Lake Placid. A third graduate, Reynoso, serves with the Sun 'N Lake Station 41 volunteer unit.

Recently retired Polk County Fire Chief David Cash, one of the region's most experienced fire officers, was on hand to address the graduates and share what he has

learned in his 42 years as a firefighter, lieutenant, captain, deputy chief, and chief of a 700-member department.

"The training you received here at SFSC is light years ahead of what I got when I was in the academy in the '70s," Cash said. "Still, you're just getting started in your education as a firefighter and you've got a lot more to learn once you get hired on with a department."

Cash encouraged the nine men and one woman seated before him to keep one piece of his advice in mind always: "Be nice to the people you serve."

"One day, you may very well respond to someone lying in the gutter, maybe with no place to call home," he said. "But you'll be in the uniform of your department, representing your community, and that person is someone who deserves to be treated well—he or she is



COURTESY PHOTO

Members of SFSC's second graduating class of Fire Science Program students are (from left) Efrain Herrera, Joshua Mink, Ralph Meeks, Barry Smith, Brandon Hutson, Noel Reynoso, Maria Albarran, Max Damour, Kody Littles, and John Herrera.

someone's loved one."

SFSC graduated its first class of 11 students from the fire science program in April. The program was 10 years in the making, taking final form after State Sen. Denise Grimsley shepherded a \$2.6 million grant through the 2014 Florida Legislature. The funding went toward refitting existing classroom space, erecting a water and fire towers, and acquiring

training equipment, including two fire engines.

Shannon, the program coordinator, praised the work a cadre of assistant instructors - all seasoned firefighters - put into moving the class through the 16 weeks of training at the new facilities on SFSC's Highlands Campus in Avon Park.

SFSC counts itself among 42 state-approved training centers across the state training

firefighters, including 15 of Florida's publicly-financed state colleges.

Entry into the SFSC Fire Science Program requires a candidate to have a high school diploma or its equivalent, undergo a background check, and pass a physical examination.

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

SFSC health sciences students receive scholarships

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS
NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — Students studying for careers in the health sciences at South Florida State College received nearly \$11,000 in scholarships thanks, in part, to the state's leading health insurer, Florida Blue.

The scholarships will go to students in SFSC's nursing, dental education, and radiography programs.

The funding for the scholarships comes from a partnership forged by the Florida College System Foundation and Florida Blue. Together they launched the scholarships to meet the growing need for nurses and allied health professionals who serve Florida's growing population.

"Because of Florida Blue's support for health sciences education, SFSC can ensure



From left, Tami Cullens, SFSC district board of trustees; nursing students Angela Hester, Mishel Franklin, and Shea Young; and Jamie Bateman, SFSC Foundation executive director.

students studying toward careers in radiography, nursing, and dental assisting and hygiene will have the assistance they need to complete their studies," said Jamie Bateman, SFSC's executive director of institutional advancement. "This year we will award \$10,852 to students who will soon start high-wage careers in

one of our region's most important sectors of the economy."

The students received their scholarship awards at the December meeting of SFSC's district board of trustees on the college's Highlands Campus in Avon Park.

The FCS Foundation, a Tallahassee-based nonprofit, solicits gifts and donations from corporations and



COURTESY PHOTOS

Tami Cullens, SFSC district board of trustees; radiography students Toi Reaves, Melissa Hernandez, Derek Whitten, and Rachel Ohly; and Jamie Bateman, SFSC Foundation executive director.

individuals for distribution to Florida's 28 community and state colleges. SFSC has received scholarships for health sciences students since 2006. Florida Blue, formerly known as Blue Cross and Blue Shield, provides individual and group health insurance

to millions of Floridians. The SFSC Foundation provided a 50 percent match to draw down the funding.

Students can use the

scholarship for tuition, lab fees, child care, and textbooks. For some students, this will be the only financial assistance they receive.

Former MOFAC curator and SFSC student artists craft ornaments

For National Christmas Tree Lighting in Washington

SPECIAL TO
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — Ornaments by local Florida artists dazzle President's Park at the White House in Washington, D.C., as part of the 94th annual National Christmas Tree Lighting display.

Mollie Doctrow and art students from South Florida State College — Ann-Louise Abbott, Missy Simpson, Leighton Skipper, and Taylor Webb — designed ornaments that showcase Florida native wildflowers. The hand-crafted ornaments adorn one of 56 trees representing each U.S. state, territory, and the District of Columbia through Jan. 1, 2017 as part of the America Celebrates display. The National Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony took place Dec. 1.

"It is an honor to decorate my home state tree and help the nation celebrate the holidays in one of our most

recognizable national parks," said Doctrow, artist/printmaker and Curator Emerita of SFSC's Museum of Florida Art and Culture. "We are excited to be a part of the America Celebrates display because we have an opportunity to highlight the beauty of Florida native wildflowers."

Inspired by the variety and diversity of Florida wildflowers the artists created drawings from original photographs. The drawings were carved into clay tiles, kiln fired and glazed. Flowers represented on the ceramic tile ornaments include sky blue lupine, spiderwort, prickly pear, fetterbush, Pine lily, Ashe's wild savory, scrub mint, and honeycomb-head.

"The Florida Division of Cultural Affairs called me and asked if I was interested in designing the ornament," Doctrow said. "Each year, a Florida artist is invited to design the ornament."



Honeycomb-head ornament by Ann-Louise Abbott.

Sometimes the artist works as an individual artist or they can choose to work with a group. This year the National Christmas Tree ornaments from the states was coordinated by the National Parks. Because of my work with the parks and the Wayside Shrine Trail, FDCA thought of me. I selected

the Florida native wildflower theme and everyone liked the idea.

"The students and I started working on the ornaments at the beginning of the semester, at the end of August," she said. "We finished the project in mid-October. We spent about 120 hours on the project."

Presented by the



COURTESY PHOTOS

Four wildflower ornaments by Mollie Doctrow, Taylor Webb, Missy Simpson and Ann-Louise Abbott.

National Park Service and National Park Foundation, the National Christmas Tree Lighting is one of America's oldest holiday traditions. The first National Christmas Tree lighting took place 94 years ago on

Christmas Eve in 1923, when President Calvin Coolidge lit a Christmas tree in front of 3,000 spectators on the Ellipse. Since 1923, each succeeding president has carried on the tradition.



Chris Miller (from left), Garrett Roberts, Meredith Keiber, Tres Stephenson, and Michael Keiber mix among the guests who turned out for the SFSC Foundation Holiday Luncheon.



SFSC Foundation hosts annual holiday luncheon



Courtesy photo

DeeDee Stidham (from left), Carolyn Phypers, State Senator Denise Grimsley, and Donna Howerton were among dozens who turned out for the annual SFSC Foundation holiday luncheon at the Hotel Jacaranda in Avon Park. The event featured a drawing that raised money for scholarships and South Florida State College's capital campaign, the Partnership Project.

SFSC fall commencement celebrates graduates

AVON PARK — South Florida State College celebrated the academic achievements of its students with its fall commencement, Dec. 15, in the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the Highlands Campus.

The evening ceremony saw 75 graduates of SFSC's academic and occupational programs cross the stage to receive their diplomas. Each graduate wore academic regalia adorned with variously colored cords signifying their academic achievements.

In 2014, SFSC started honoring its graduates with a December commencement in addition to a customary ceremony held in May.

"Tonight we celebrate great things," said Derren J. Bryan, the chair of SFSC's district board of trustees, who delivered the welcome remarks to family and friends. "For most of you, especially your parents, tonight may be a dream come true."

Focusing his attention squarely on the students, Bryan said, "For you students, it is an accumulation of long hours, sacrifices both personal and family. It's about setting a path, setting out on that path, making adjustments when needed, but enduring forward into our world."

Before the students mounted the stage to receive their diplomas, Thomas C. Leitzel noted the commencement marked a historic moment. "We have three new

public school leaders in the three counties served by SFSC, and they are all here tonight to show their support and to extend their best wishes to our graduates."

Seated on the stage were the newly elected school superintendents, Adrian Cline of DeSoto County, Bob Shayman of Hardee County, and Brenda Longshore of Highlands County.

"I look forward to establishing new relationships and new initiatives that allow us to implement and support our collective missions that make learning a kindergarten-to-college integrated system that will culminate in events like this," Leitzel said.

Audra F. Weeks, a Hardee County resident who has been a dual enrollment student at SFSC since her sophomore year in high school, delivered the student address.

"For the sake of full disclosure, I profess that I have no profound words of wisdom to offer you this evening," Weeks told her classmates. "Instead, I want to share with you my biggest fear best summed up by Nelson Mandela: 'There is no passion to be found in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living.'"

Weeks went on, "The problem with 'settling' is that it is so easy to do. But this monotonous way of life leaves you with potential not fulfilled, passion never pursued, and God-given talent never put to use. You see, my fear is not of what will happen when I try to pursue my dreams; my fear is what will happen-or not happen- if I do not pursue



Audra Weeks, a Hardee County dual enrollment student who earned her Associate in Arts degree, challenged the class of 2016 not to "settle for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living."

them wholeheartedly.”

Weeks, a dual enrollment student who earned her Associate in Arts degree from SFSC at the same time she graduated early from high school this month, encouraged her classmates to cast aside fear and complacency, and “to strive for greatness and remain determined to pursue your dreams.”

After Weeks delivered her remarks, each graduate was called up to the stage with SFSC’s trustees alternating in handing them their diplomas.

Some 207 students had met the SFSC graduation requirements for the December commencement. Of these, 10 students earned their Bachelor of Applied Science degrees in Supervision and Management, 103 their associate degrees, 83 their vocational certificates or college credit certificates, and 11 graduated of SFSC’s adult education program.

Thomas Bush, chair of



Amanda Byers looks for family and friends as she prepares to accept her Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Supervision and Management.

technical-industrial and agricultural education, served as the mace bearer and chief marshal for this year’s ceremony. Assisting as marshals were Beth Andrews, Davida Austin, Brian Bohlman, Kathleen Cappo, Robert Hampton, Melanie Jackson, Lorrie Jaques, Dr. Theresa James, Cindy Kinser, Kristina Lewis, Michelle Macbeth, Adam Martin, Claire Miller, Ricardo Pantoja, Lena Phelps, and Bobby Sconyers.

In addition to Bryan, other members of the SFSC district board of trustees in attendance were, vice chair Timothy D. Backer, Tami Cullens, Dr. Louis H. Kirschner, Kenneth A. Lambert, Lana C. Puckorius, Kris Y. Rider, and Patrick “Joe” Wright.

After the ceremony, the graduates joined their families for a reception on campus, posing for pictures, with many heading off to dinner to celebrate their achievement.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Maria Del Rocio Flores accepts her Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Supervision and Management from Derren J. Bryan, chairman of SFSC district board of trustees.

SFSC graduates 12 law enforcement officers

SPECIAL TO THE
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — South Florida State College graduated a class of 12 law enforcement officers on Dec. 13. SFSC officials handed the graduates their diplomas, challenge coins, and advice, with some already having landed a job, even as they were handed their diplomas on stage.

The 12 cadets of Basic Law Enforcement Class 250 filed into the SFSC University Center Auditorium on the Highlands Campus for the 6 p.m. ceremony and stood at attention while a color guard presented the Stars and Stripes. The auditorium's seats were filled families, well-wishers, and law enforcement officers from surrounding counties.

Before picking up their diplomas, the cadets heard a send-off speech from Christopher Gunter, a sergeant in charge of training for the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. Gunter also serves as an adjunct instructor at SFSC, helping to teach the cadets

during the 770 hours of state-mandated training.

"You've decided to travel on one of the most amazing career paths available to you," Gunter told the graduates. "You will be looked to by the public to serve and to protect—it's a career that will bring you a sense of accomplishment, excitement, and the most prideful moments in your life."

Still, he sounded a note of caution in his remarks delivered from a stage on which he was flanked by area sheriffs and police officers. He told the cadets they will be "resented" by some simply for what they stand for by wearing the uniform of a law enforcement officer.

"You'll find yourself in situations where you are the only person standing between law and order and total chaos," Gunter said. "But have no apprehension because you will be able to perform your duties after the training you have received here."

Michael Huften, SFSC's coordinator of criminal justice training, then called up the 12

graduates to the stage to hand them their challenge coins, specially minted medallions that signify their achievement and bond as future law enforcement officers. Beaming with a smile, Huften announced two graduates, Brandon A. Griesemer and Kaleigh Anderson had already passed their state certification examinations and landed jobs. Griesemer with the Okeechobee and Anderson with the Melbourne police departments.

Erik Christensen, dean of Applied Sciences and Technologies, then presented a diploma to each cadet, congratulating them on their achievement. Seconds after cadet Kevin Howell shook hands with Christensen, he walked passed David Hardin, the sheriff-elect of Glades County, one of the dignitaries on stage.

"Cadet Howell has a job with the Glades County Sheriff's Office," Hardin bellowed out, bringing the audience to applause.

Graduating that night were: Brandon A. Griesemer, Ediberto



COURTESY PHOTO

SFSC Basic Law Enforcement Class 250 gathers before their graduation ceremony on Dec. 13. Back row, from left: Blair Tomlin, Anthony D. Ray, Brandon A. Griesemer, Tristen Lanier, Dennis Pipal, and Kevin Howell. Front row, from left: Mary Pinon, Tomas Cruz, Kaleigh Anderson, Ann R. Ledford, Ediberto Soto and Kyanna Matta.

Soto, Kaleigh Anderson, Dennis Pipal, Ann R. Ledford, Tomas Cruz, Blair Tomlin, Anthony D. Ray, Kevin Howell, Tristen Lanier, Kyanna Matta and Mary Pinon.

Huften singled out two cadets for their achievements during the nearly six-month course. Blair Tomlin earned top honors for academic excellence. Griesemer scored the firearms award for his work on the shooting range.

Griesemer, who was

tapped as class leader and will soon start patrolling the City of Okeechobee, had his badge pinned to his uniform by his fiancé Rebecca Priest while on stage. He stepped up to the lectern to single out each of his fellow cadets with a compliment before thanking all the families and friends who had supported the class during the course.

From his fellow cadet who kept all on their toes to the one who

helped others with study questions to the cadet who served as class clown, Griesemer acknowledged their graduation was a team effort.

For more information about the SFSC Criminal Justice Academy, which includes a program that prepares students for a career as a corrections officer, call the SFSC Advising and Counseling Center at 863-784-7313 or visit www.southflorida.edu.

SFSC graduates 13 from EMT program

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS
NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — South Florida State College graduated 13 emergency medical technicians during an evening ceremony on Dec. 14 in the SFSC University Center Auditorium, Highlands Campus.

Earning their EMT certificates after four months of training were: Travis Anderson, Jonathan Bash, Bradley Batz II, Josiah Berry, Jarvis Carper, Kelly Gibson, Desarea Newcomb, Cody Ouverson,

Crystal Parker, Clay Sapp, Jordan Whatley, Katelynne Wigton and Stephen Young.

"The purpose of education is to give you the tools to adapt to a changing world," Erik Christensen, dean of Applied Sciences and Technologies, told the graduates. "In other words, our goal is to ensure you can solve the problems we did not give you with the tools we did give you."

Christensen then went on to laud the graduates, telling the audience the students' instructors had reported

back that the class had excelled by exceeding all expectations.

Upon completion of the program, graduates are eligible to take the Florida EMT State Board examination.

Before handing the students their diplomas, Richard Shepard, EMT instructor, told the audience the class opened a new chapter in EMT education at SFSC. He said they were the first class to graduate under a new state rule requiring 300 hours of instruction. Before the new rule, the EMT curriculum required

students to complete only 250 hours of training.

Shepard singled out three graduates for special awards. He handed Crystal Parker a certificate for "Highest GPA for Lecture." Clay Sapp and Travis Anderson received a certificate for "Highest GPA for Lab." Shepard presented Wigton with the "Most Heart" award for her passion and determination in completing the course.

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



COURTESY PHOTO

SFSC EMT graduates assemble before the ceremony on Dec. 14. Back row, from left: Josiah Berry, Jarvis Carper, Jordan Whatley, Clay Sapp, Stephen Young, and Cody Ouverson. Front row, from left: Bradley Batz II, Kelly Gibson, Katelynne Wigton, Jonathan, Bash Travis Anderson, Desarea Newcomb, and Crystal Parker.

SFSC classes

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Corporate and Continuing Education Department is offering classes in first aid and Commercial Driver's License classes in January.

For information about class meeting times, call 784-7033 or email corporatetraining@southflorida.edu or corporatetraining@southflorida.edu.

•The American Heart Association's basic life support class provides training in CPR and other lifesaving techniques. Students participate in simulated clinical scenarios and learning stations, work with an American Heart Association

certificated instructor, and complete a written exam. Cost is \$60.

•The first aid training class provides training for employees who are designated as their workplace's first responder and for persons who need credentialed training to meet job or regulatory requirements. It covers the basics of first aid, dealing with medical, injury, and environmental emergencies, and using automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Students complete a written exam. Cost is \$60.

•Commercial Driver's License (CDL) classes are available by appointment. The Class A and B

Refresher Course is for experienced drivers who have allowed their CDL to lapse. It is offered in eight-hour and 72-hour increments and provides the one-on-one training truck drivers need to pass the CDL skills test. Students should be competent in driving a Class A or B vehicle.

State of Florida CDL exams are available by appointment. The exam consists of the pre-trip inspection, basic controls skills test, and driving skills tests. It takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

Register for Corporate Education classes in Building B, Highlands Campus, or at any SFSC location.

Zumba classes scheduled for January

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Corporate and Community Education Department has released its January schedule of aerobics and Zumba toning classes at the SFSC Lake Placid Center.

Aerobics stimulates the heart rate, improves stamina, and burns calories. Classes meet 8-9 a.m., 4:30-5:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, Jan. 2-30. Toning exercise are part of the Wednesday morning classes. Each month-long course is \$35. Request course registration number (CRN) 20078 for the morning class and 20674 for the afternoon class.

During the same period, another series of aerobics classes are available 4:30-5:30 p.m. and 5:30-6:30 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays with Zumba toning as part of the 4:30 p.m. class. Cost is \$35 for each class. Request CRN 20077 for the 4:30 p.m. class and 20128 for the 5:30 p.m. class.

Low Impact Aerobics is gentle on joints but gives a heart-pumping workout. The class is 9-10 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, Jan. 3-30. Cost is \$35, and the CRN is 20129.

A Chair Aerobics class is designed for seniors and other individuals with limited mobility. It raises the heart rate above resting levels and improves cardiovascular fitness. It meets on 9-10 a.m. Thursdays, Jan. 5-26. Cost is \$15, and the CRN is 20674.

Register at the SFSC Lake Placid Center or at any SFSC location. You are welcome to attend any single class session for a drop-in fee of \$5. For more information, contact the SFSC Lake Placid Center at 465-3003.

Community education classes improve life skills, fitness

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS
NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — This spring, South Florida State College's Corporate and Community Education Department is offering spring classes that improve life skills and fitness.

In Just Because Cards DIY Workshop, learn how to make greeting cards for any occasion. Students will make three greeting cards. Participants must bring their own acid free adhesive, but all other materials will be provided. The workshop meets 5:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 11. The cost is \$30.34, and the course number (CRN) is 21302.

Pine Cone Quilting is rich in history and makes a

24-by-24-inch design that is suitable for framing or for making a large pillow. This four-week hands-on class will teach hand-sewing techniques, color selection, and scissors skills, while aiding relaxation and increasing patience. Sewing machines are not required, but participants will need their own needles, thread, scissors, and fabric. Old clothes and other scrap fabric are ideal for this design. Sessions meet 10:30 a.m.-noon and 5:30-7 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 17-Feb. 7. Cost is \$40 for each four-week session. Request CRN 21298 for the morning session and 21299 for the evening session.

A Pilates class will be offered 12:05-1:05 p.m. Monday and Fridays, Jan.

23-Feb. 17. Pilates is a type of exercise that improves flexibility and strength through stretching and other moves. Cost is \$43. Request CRN 21336.

Basic Home Computer I teaches novice computer users how to use a mouse, create email accounts, use the task bar, and navigate the Internet. It meets on 5:30-7:30 p.m. Mondays, Jan. 23-March 20. Cost is \$80, and the CRN is 20294.

Learn how to set up a Facebook account, add friends and photos, post to Facebook, and send messages in Introduction to Facebook. The class is offered on 9-11 a.m. Fridays, Jan. 27-March 3. Cost is \$45, and the CRN is 21285.

Ageless Grace(r) meets on 1-2 p.m. Tuesdays and

Thursdays, Jan. 24-Feb. 16. This fitness program for your brain is based on neuroplasticity that activates all five functions of the brain: analytical strategies, kinesthetic learning, memory and recall, creativity, and imagination. It simultaneously addresses all 21 physical skills for lifelong optimal functions. Cost is \$43, and the CRN 21303.

Introduction to Nia Technique(r) will be offered on 5:30-6:30 p.m. two Thursdays, Jan. 12 and 19. Nia is a holistic fitness practice that combines 52 movements of dance, martial arts, and healing arts to tone your body and transform your mind. Workouts increase strength and flexibility, improve coordination,

and leave you energized, mentally clear, and emotionally balanced. Nia is non-impact, practiced barefoot, and highly adaptable to individual needs and abilities. This two-part course teaches you about Nia and helps you determine whether this form of exercise is right for you. The cost is \$20, and the CRN is 21392.

A Nia Technique(r) course will be offered on 5:30-6:30 p.m. Thursdays, Jan. 26-Feb. 16. Cost is \$30, and the CRN is 21304.

Beginning Spanish I helps you learn conversational Spanish skills that you can use in real-life situations. The class meets 5:30-6:45 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, Jan. 23-March 21. Cost is \$81,

and the CRN is 21300. The required course book is VISTAS 3rd edition.

Intermediate Spanish continues building a mastery of the Spanish language in conversational settings. The class is offered 5:30-6:45 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, Jan. 24-March 23, and also uses the VISTAS 3rd edition course book. Cost is \$81. The CRN is 21301.

All classes meet at the Highlands Campus. Register for Corporate and Community Education classes in Building B, Highlands Campus, or at any SFSC location, or call 784-7405. For more information about the classes, call 863-784-7388 or email communityeducation@southflorida.edu.

MOFAC to exhibit 'quintessentially' Florida art

AVON PARK — The Museum of Florida Art and Culture at South Florida State College will mount an exhibition featuring the work of a husband and wife who split their time between art and cattle ranching.

"The Art of Life: Works by Sean and Sharon Sexton" will be on display Dec. 7 through Feb. 9, 2017 in MOFAC's gallery on the SFSC Highlands campus.

The Sextons live and work on their 610-acre Treasure

Hammock Ranch in Vero Beach. They're known equally for their environmentally sensitive cattle ranching and quintessentially Florida-inspired art.

"The Sextons integration of art-making into their daily lives is an inspiration," said MOFAC curator Megan Stepe. "I remember Sean Sexton giving a talk about carrying a sketchbook with him so that he could draw even while sitting in a saddle as he herded cattle. That dedication has

always stayed with me."

Stepe said some of Sexton's best-known paintings depicts Florida's rugged landscape and traditional ranching lifestyle. His work not only portrays the natural beauty of South Florida, and the human connection with nature, but also touches upon themes such as religion and mortality.

In addition to his painting, Sexton writes poetry. He also channels his creativity into ceramic sculptures.

The creativity in the Sexton

household extends to Sean's wife, Sharon. She is a recognized artist for her work with paintings, ceramic sculptures, and tile murals. Sharon is one of six owner-operators of the Tiger Lily Art Studios and Gallery, now in its 25th year operating from a space in downtown Vero Beach. Her work will join that of her husband's on display in the exhibition.

Accompanying the Sexton



COURTESY PHOTO

Sharon Sexton will display her work during the exhibition 'The Art of Life: Works by Sean and Sharon Sexton' at MOFAC.

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ART

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exhibition, MOFAC will also feature "Keeping Tradition Alive: Pinecone Quilts by Betty Ford Smith." This part of the show will

showcase the quilting of Betty Ford Smith.

The pinecone quilt is also called the "pine-burr" or "cuckleburr" quilt because of its pinecone design. An old, flat bed-sheet is used for the base. Hundreds of 5-inch squares are cut, then

folded twice to create individual triangles. Each is then hand-sewn onto the sheet in a circular fashion. Pinecone quilts can weigh anywhere from 15 to 30 pounds — a welcome addition for cold nights in northern Florida.

"Quilts have

traditionally played an important role in many peoples' lives, for both their functionality and beauty. Ford's quilts seamlessly embody the theme of the exhibition," Stepe said.

MOFAC is located in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the

Performing Arts at 600 W. College Drive. The museum is open to the public on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 12:30–4:30 p.m. or by appointment for group tours. Patrons of the Wildstein Center may visit the museum one hour prior to

matinee and evening performances.

For more information about MOFAC and its programs or to request a museum tour, contact Stepe at 863-784-7240, or email stepem@southflorida.edu. Visit the MOFAC website at mofac.org.

SFSC offers new courses for January

Community Education offers Advanced Driver Improvement

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Community Education Department is offering a 12-hour Advanced Driver Improvement Course for drivers who have a suspended license or who have too many points on their license.

The course will be held, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, Jan. 24, 25, and 26, 5:30 – 9:30 p.m., SFSC DeSoto Campus, 2252 N.W. Turner Ave., Arcadia. Students must complete all three nights to receive their certificate.

Pre-registration is required, and the cost is \$155. Register in Building B on the Highlands Campus or at any SFSC campus or center. For more information, contact the Community Education office at 863-784-7388, or email CommunityEducation@southflorida.edu.

Alcohol Drug Accident Prevention Training on tap

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Corporate and 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, Jan. 14, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., SFSC DeSoto Campus, 2252 N.E. Turner Ave., Arcadia, and Saturday, Jan. 28, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., SFSC Hardee Campus, 2968 U.S. 17 N., Bowling Green.

Pre-registration is required. The cost is \$55 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.

Safe Driving Accident Prevention Program being offered

AVON PARK — 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, Jan. 11, 5:30 – 9:30 p.m., SFSC DeSoto Campus, 2252 N.E. Turner Ave., Arcadia; Saturday, Jan. 21, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., SFSC Highlands Campus, 600 W. College Drive, Avon Park; and Saturday, Jan. 28, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., SFSC Hardee Campus, 2968 U.S. 17 N. Bowling Green.

Pre-registration is required. The cost is \$55 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.

Corporate Education Offers First Aid, CDL Classes

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Corporate and Continuing Education Department is offering classes first aid and Commercial Driver's License (CDL) classes in January. For information about class meeting times, call 784-7033 or email corporatetraining@southflorida.edu.

The American Heart Association's Basic Life Support class provides training in CPR and other lifesaving techniques. Students participate in simulated clinical scenarios and learning stations, work with an American Heart Association certificated instructor, and complete a written exam. Cost is \$60.

The First Aid Training class provides training for employees who are designated as their workplace's first responder and for persons who need credentialed training to meet job or regulatory requirements. It covers the basics of first aid, dealing with medical, injury, and environmental emergencies, and using automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Students complete a written exam. Cost is \$60.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL) classes are available by appointment. The Class A and B Refresher Course is for experienced drivers who have allowed their CDL to lapse. It is offered in eight-hour and 72-hour increments and provides the one-on-one training truck drivers need to pass the CDL skills test. Students should be competent in driving a Class A or B vehicle.

State of Florida CDL exams are available by appointment. The exam consists of the pre-trip inspection, basic controls skills test, and driving skills tests. It takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

Register for Corporate Education classes in Building B, Highlands Campus, or at any SFSC location.



Hardee Senior High School Seniors and AVID students attended "College for a Day" at South Florida State College. Students attended a general college fair that provided information on programs and admission to South Florida State College. Students also had the opportunity to tour specific areas of interest. Pictured above are some of the HSHS students who attended the annual college fair event.



The South Florida State College Foundation held a drawing for two \$500.00 scholarships at SFSC's College for a Day. Hardee Senior High School senior Antonio Servin was one of the recipients. Pictured from left to right: South Florida State College President, Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel; South Florida State College Foundation Executive Director, Jamie Bateman; Hardee Senior High School Senior, Antonio Servin; and Dean of Student Services and Student Compliance Officer, Dr. Timothy G. Wise.

Herrera, Mink Graduate From SFSC Fire Science Program

South Florida State College graduated its second class of fire science program students at an evening ceremony on Monday of last week.

The graduates are now eligible to join the ranks of career firefighters working in county and municipal fire departments, with three already serving with county volunteer fire units.

Family members of the graduates, SFSC officials, and fire firefighters were on hand to watch the newly minted first responders mount the stage in the SFSC University Center Auditorium to receive their diplomas.

"You folks made the cut after 16 weeks of focused, intense training," said Paul Shannon, program coordinator, told the graduates. "You've proven yourself, and now you're ready to be firefighters," he said.

Receiving their diplomas were Maria Albarran, Max Damour, Efrain Herrera, John Herrera, Brandon Hutson, Kody Littles, Ralph Meeks, Joshua Mink, Noel Reynoso, and Barry Smith. John Herrera and Joshua Mink are Hardee County residents.

Recently retired Polk County Fire Chief David Cash, one of the region's most experienced fire officers, was on hand to address the graduates and share what he has learned in his 42 years as a firefighter, lieutenant, captain, deputy chief, and chief of a 700-member department.

"The training you received here at SFSC is light years ahead of what I got when I was in the academy in the '70s,"

Cash said. "Still, you're just getting started in your education as a firefighter and you've got a lot more to learn once you get hired on with a department."

Cash encouraged the nine men and one woman seated before him to keep one piece of his advice in mind always: "Be nice to the people you serve."

"One day, you may very well respond to someone lying in the gutter, maybe with no place to call home," he said. "But you'll be in the uniform of your department, representing your community, and that person is someone who deserves to be treated well – he or she is someone's loved one."

SFSC graduated its first class of 11 students from the Fire Science program in April. The program was a project 10 years in the making, taking final form after state Sen. Denise Grimsley shepherded a \$2.6 million grant through the 2014 Florida Legislature. The funding went toward refitting existing classroom space, erecting a water and fire towers, and acquiring training equipment, including two fire engines.

SFSC counts itself among 42 state-approved training centers across the state training firefighters, including 15 of Florida's publicly-financed state colleges.

Entry into the SFSC Fire Science Program requires a candidate to have a high school diploma or its equivalent, undergo a background check, and pass a physical examination.



COURTESY PHOTO

Fire science certification is presented to graduate John Herrera.



Joshua Mink accepts the challenge as a new first responder.

Spectacular sunny winter entertainment

Performances, art exhibits,
festivals and unique events in
Highlands County

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

SEBRING — With 2017 just around the corner, Visit Sebring has announced an exciting line-up of live performances, art exhibits, festivals, unique events and auto racing across Highlands County.

Harder Hall Women's Invitational will be Jan. 4-7 in Sebring. Open to women amateur golfers age 12 and older, the 62nd annual tourney will be conducted in two divisions. The field is limited to 132 players. Previous champions include such prominent names as Cristie Kerr, Natalie Gulbis, Brittany Lincicome, Morgan Pressel, Stacy Lewis and Charley Hull.

The Bronx Wanderers will be on stage Jan. 12 at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of South Florida State College at Avon Park. Tap into the infectious energy of the music from "American Graffiti," "Happy Days," and "A Bronx Tale." The Bronx Wanderers weave that nostalgic adrenaline into a soundtrack of the greatest hits of rock 'n roll.

PGA Latinoamerican qualifying tournament Jan. 12-15 at Sun 'N Lake Golf Club in Sebring. The PGA Tour Latinoamérica is a third level professional golf tour formed in 2012 and operated by the PGA Tour. This is the first tournament of the 2017.

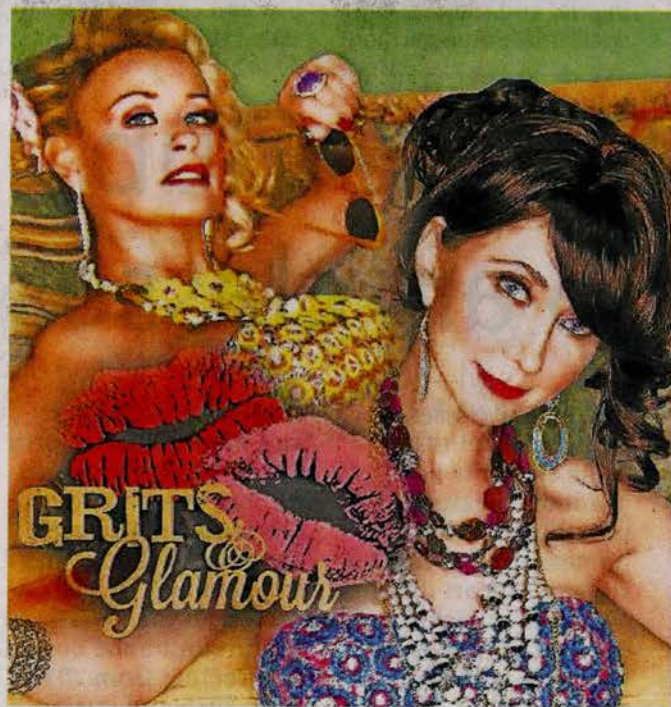
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof will be on stage for select dates from Jan. 20-Feb. 5 at Highlands Little Theatre in Sebring. The play first heated

up Broadway in 1955 with its gothic American story of brothers vying for their dying father's inheritance

amid a whirlwind of sexuality, untethered in the person of Maggie the Cat. At its core, Tennessee Williams' masterpiece is about nothing more than that everyone wants and needs someone to listen to and accept them.

Artrageous will be Jan. 21 at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of South Florida State College at Avon Park pays tribute to famous icons and music through live art, live music, and dance. A palette of color swirls across the stage as a team of artists paint giant portraits to the sounds of songs you love and remember. You will be transported from the 1940s to present and everywhere in between. These giant artworks jump to life with amazing speed, unveiling larger-than-life masterpieces in just moments. The constant activity on stage will hold your attention and delight your senses with energy, spirit and action. Bring your dancing shoes and be ready to join be on the stage for unforgettable audience interaction.

U.S. Sport Aviation Expo is set for Jan. 25-28 at Sebring Regional Airport. The Expo is the place to see, try, buy and sell Light Sport Aircraft and learn about LSA and Sport Pilot Certification. Exhibits highlight



Lorrie Morgan & Pam Tillis



aircraft operating under the LSA rules and include fixed-wing trikes, powered parachutes, motor-gliders and gyroplanes in addition to electronics and related products.

Fine Arts & Crafts Festival, Lake Placid Art League's 30th annual, will be Jan. 28 at the Bert J. Harris Jr. Agricultural Center. Fifty artists will display their artwork at this free show that includes paintings

ENTERTAINMENT

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in watercolors and oils, jewelry, pottery, metal crafts, wood carving and wood turning, clothing, and children's books. Artists meet with visitors on a personal level at the small and intimate setting of the show. Visitors receive free tickets for art drawings that occur every 30 minutes throughout the day. Also featured is an Art League food court that includes barbecue chicken, hot dogs, doughnuts, home-baked desserts and beverages.

So Good for the Soul is set for Jan. 28 at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of South Florida State College at Avon Park. A fabulous cast, backed by a band of incredible musicians, represents Motown royalty — performing beloved songs from the greatest groups, artists, and songwriters of all time: The Four Tops, The Temptations, The Supremes, Smokey Robinson, Mary Wells, Lionel Ritchie, Marvin Gaye, Tammi Terrell, and Stevie Wonder.

Lake Placid Arts & Crafts Country Fair will be Feb. 4-5 in Lake Placid. More than 100

arts and crafts booths will convene for the 51st year. DeVane Park will feature professional arts and crafts vendors and local, non-profit food booths, live entertainment, and children's activities. Local talent will be exhibited for judging at nearby Lake Placid Elementary School where there will also be arts and crafts demonstrations. Free admission.

Lorrie Morgan & Pam Tillis will take the stage Feb. 8 at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of South Florida State College at Avon Park. Combined, they have recorded 28 "Top 10" hits with more than 18 million records sold, and a dozen No. 1 hit songs. There have been Grammys, CMA Awards, movie credits, television appearances, and Broadway performances for Morgan and Tillis, and now they appear onstage together as "Dos Divas."

The Art of Life: Works by Sean and Sharon Sexton will be on exhibit until Feb. 9 at the Museum of Art & Culture on the campus of South Florida State College in Avon Park. Sean Sexton

chose a career path that combines his passions of ranching and art. He has helped preserve the natural beauty of Florida through his paintings and dedication to agriculture. While his roots are in the cattle industry, Sexton has made a name for himself as one of Florida's prominent artists with rugged landscape and the traditional ranching lifestyle. His wife, Sharon Sexton, is a recognized artist for her work with ceramic sculptures and tile murals.

Roaring 20s Arts & Crafts Festival is set for Feb. 11 when Downtown Sebring will be having a "roaring" good time during the 34th annual festival from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nearly 80 craft, art and food vendors will convene around the historic downtown Circle Park. Enjoy live Big Band music and an arts and crafts festival. Period costumes are encouraged.

Beginnings: A Ultimate Tribute to Chicago is on the schedule for Feb. 11 at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of South Florida State College at Avon Park. This is a family-friendly melodic adventure, pleasing to music lovers of all ages. The performances bring to life the music of Chicago, whose songbook

spans more than 40 years, and includes five No. 1 albums and 20 "Top 10" hits.

20th Century Seminole Experience: Paintings from Florida Indian Tribes Series will be exhibit Feb. 15-March 30 at the Museum of Art & Culture on the campus of South Florida State College in Avon Park. Award-winning artist Muffy Clark Gill creates paintings in the process known as batik, a technique that uses a wax and dye resist media on cloth. Gill uses simple figures and vibrant colors as she weaves color and design with Native American history. Her Seminole series explores a modern insight with a historical perspective of the Seminole and Miccosukee Indians who live in South Florida.

Clown School is set for Feb. 17-19 at the American Clown School and Museum in Lake Placid. Since 1993, more than 1,500 clowns have graduated from this program, which is hosted by the Toby the Clown Foundation. Students learn about the history of clowning, about famous clowns, costuming, make up, expressions, character development and much more.



New Orleans Nighthawks will be Feb. 18 at South Florida State College in Avon Park. Clarinetist John Skillman fronts a solid rhythm section with the addition of two trombone players which makes the voicing and arrangement most unique among trad bands. A fun night of traditional swing and New Orleans Dixie Land.

International Motor Sports Association (ISMA) test racing is set for Feb. 23-24 at Sebring International Raceway. Fans of the 12-hour classic will get a sneak preview at the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) test racing. Admission is \$10 per day or free for those who have purchased a ticket to the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring Fueled by Fresh From Florida, set for March at the famed track.

South Carolina Ballet: Beauty & The Beast will be on stage Feb. 25 at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the campus of South Florida State

College at Avon Park. The ballet returns with a newly staged, sumptuous production of this age-old fairy tale. The tale follows the good-hearted Beauty who overlooks the Beast's ugly appearance and grows to love him. Appropriate for children in grades 1 and up.

Sebring Seafood & Music Festival will be Feb. 25-26 in Sebring. In addition to incredible seafood and other taste treats, relax with cold beer, good food and bare feet in the grass while enjoying music belting across the field with eight bands over the weekend including country, Southern rock, and blues genres.

Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring will be March 16-19 at Sebring International Raceway. This will be the 65th anniversary of America's oldest road race track. Sebring burst onto the sports car racing scene and into the history books in March 1952 with an endurance race that is now second only to Le Mans in international prestige. The world's leading sports car racing teams, featuring drivers and teams from over 20 different countries, compete in four different classes.

Lanier Among Basic Law Enforcement Graduates

South Florida State College graduated a class of 12 law enforcement officers on Dec 13, one of them the son of Hardee County Sheriff Arnold Lanier.

College officials handed the graduates their diplomas, challenge coins and advice, with some already having landed a job.

The 12 cadets of Basic Law Enforcement Class 250 filed into the University Center Auditorium on the Highlands Campus for the 6 p.m. ceremony and stood at attention while a color guard presented the Stars and Stripes. The auditorium's seats were filled with families, well-wishers and law enforcement officers from surrounding counties.

Before picking up their diplomas, the cadets heard a send-off speech from Christopher Gunter, a sergeant in charge of training for the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. Gunter also serves as an adjunct instructor at SFSC, helping to teach the cadets during the 770 hours of state-mandated training.

"You've decided to travel on one of the most amazing career paths available to you," Gunter told the graduates. "You will be looked to by the public to serve and to protect -- it's a career that will bring you a sense of accomplishment, excitement and the most prideful moments in your life."

Still, he sounded a note of caution in his remarks delivered from a stage on which he

was flanked by area sheriffs and police officers. He told the cadets they will be "resented" by some simply for what they stand for by wearing the uniform of a law enforcement officer.

"You'll find yourself in situations where you are the only person standing between law and order and total chaos," Gunter said. "But have no apprehension because you will be able to perform your duties after the training you have received here."

Michael Huften, SFSC's coordinator of criminal justice training, then called up the 12 graduates to the stage to hand them their challenge coins, specially minted medallions that signify their achievement and bond as future law enforcement officers.

Beaming with a smile, Huften announced two graduates, Brandon A. Griesemer and Kaleigh Anderson had already passed their state certification examinations and landed jobs with police departments. Griesemer in Okeechobee and Anderson in Melbourne.

Erik Christensen, dean of Applied Sciences & Technologies, then presented a diploma to each cadet. Seconds after Cadet Kevin Howell shook hands with Christensen, he walked passed David Hardin, the sheriff-elect of Glades County, one of the dignitaries on stage.

"Cadet Howell has a job with the Glades County Sher-

iff's Office," Hardin bellowed out, bringing the audience to applause.

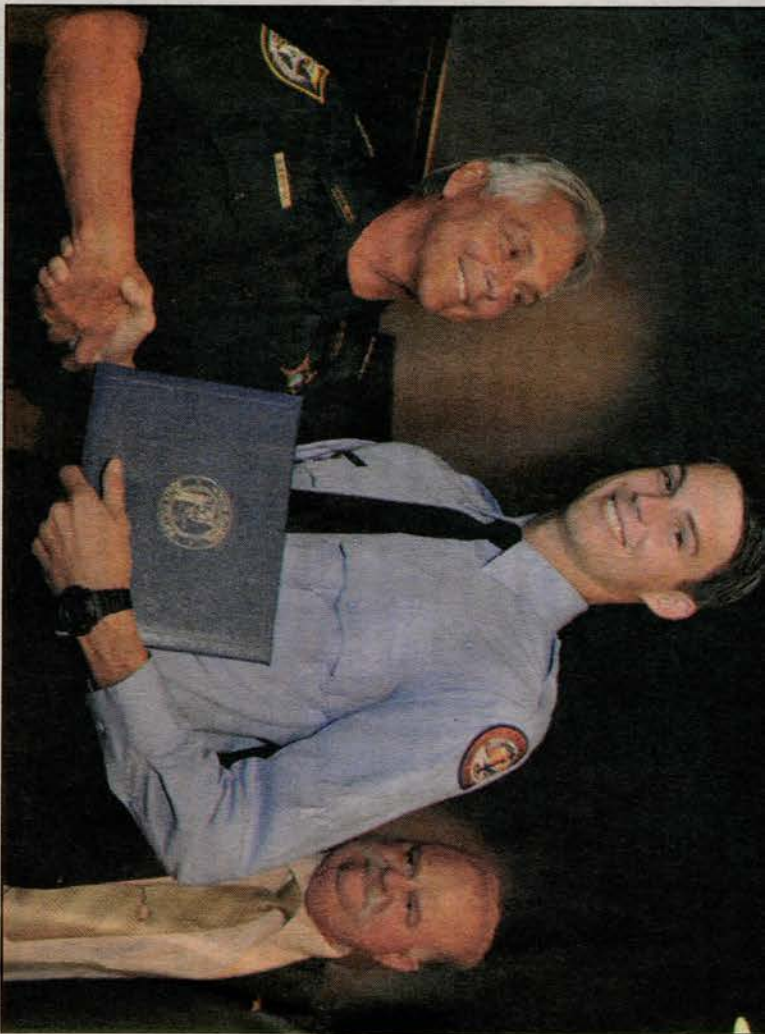
Graduating that night were: Griesemer, Ediberto Soto, Anderson, Dennis Pipal, Ann R. Ledford, Tomas Cruz, Blair Tomlin, Anthony D. Ray, Kevin Howell, Tristen Lanier, Kyanna Matta and Mary Pinon.

Huften singled out two cadets for their achievements during the nearly six-month course: Tomlin earned top honors for academic excellence; Griesemer scored the firearms award for his work on the shooting range.

Griesemer, who was tapped as class leader and will soon start patrolling Okeechobee County, had his badge pinned to his uniform by his fiancé while on stage. He stepped up to the lectern to single out each of his fellow cadets with a compliment before thanking all the families and friends who had supported the class during the course.

From his fellow cadet who kept all on their toes to the one who helped others with study questions to the cadet who served as class clown, Griesemer acknowledged their graduation was a team effort.

For more information about the SFSC Criminal Justice Academy, which includes a program that prepares students for a career as a corrections officer, call the SFSC Advising & Counseling Center at (863) 784-7313 or visit southflorida.edu.



Hardee County Sheriff Arnold Lanier congratulates his own son, Tristen, upon his graduation from South Florida State College's Criminal Justice Academy. Glades County Sheriff-Elect David Hardin is in the background.

COURTESY PHOTOS



The cadets of Basic Law Enforcement Class 250 gather before their graduation ceremony on Dec. 13. They include (front row, from left) Mary Pinon, Tomas Cruz, Kaleigh Anderson, Ann R. Ledford, Ediberto Soto and Kyanna Matta; (back row) Blair Tomlin, Anthony D. Ray, Brandon A. Griesemer, Tristen Lanier, Dennis Pipal and Kevin Howell.

SFSC presents ...

Good Time Tuesdays Matinee Series to open with Flying Horse Big Band

SPECIAL TO THE
HIGHLANDS SUN

AVON PARK — The Good Time Tuesdays Matinee Series opens its season at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at South Florida State College with The Flying Horse Big Band at 1:30 p.m. Jan. 10.

The jazz ensemble will perform music from Count Basie, Duke Ellington, and other swing tunes from the Great American Songbook.

"It's a trip down memory lane," said Cindy Garren, SFSC's director of Cultural Programs, "Music lovers will want to take in this 17-piece big band, one of the premiere musical ensembles in the state."

The Flying Horse Big Band is comprised of world-class students studying at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. They have appeared at the Montreux, Switzerland, and



Courtesy photo

The Flying Horse Big Band will perform at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on Jan. 10 at 1:30 p.m.

the North Sea Jazz Festivals, as well as jazz festival and concert appearances in the United States.

The group has had four recordings on the national jazz charts: "B.M.O.C.," "Into the Mystic," "The Blues is

Alright," and "Jazz Town." The band has the distinction

BAND

FROM PAGE 1

as one of the few college groups to have its first two professional recordings hit the top 50 of the JazzWeek charts.

Yamaha performing jazz artist Jeff Rupert directs the band and serves as the director of jazz studies at UCF. Rupert, a saxophonist, has performed and recorded with Mel Torme, Diane Schuur, Kevin Mahogany, Maynard Ferguson and Benny Carter's Grammy Award winning Harlem Renaissance. With a classic tenor sound, Rupert has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and Kennedy Center.

"Swing in the New Year and recall those days of the Andrew Sisters, Frank Sinatra,

and the Lindy Hop with the Flying Horse Big Band," Garren said.

Subscriptions are available for all 10 Goodtime Tuesdays Matinee series shows. Tickets are as low as \$14.50 when buying a subscription, and subscribers can reserve the same seat for all 10 shows.

Upcoming shows in the Good Time Tuesdays Matinee Series are: David Osborne Trio; "You'll Never Walk Along" with The Brian Gurl Band; Aquila Theater's production of the Agatha Christie mystery "Murder on the Nile"; The Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis Tribute Show; "What's New, Pussycat?," a 1960s dance and music revue; "Shake, Rattle and Laugh" with Mark and Rodi; a rock and roll extravaganza with Pauly and the Goodfellas; a Neil Diamond tribute

with Neil Zirconia; and the "popera" vocalists of Bravo Amici.

Tickets are available online at www.sfscarts.org or by phone at 863-784-7178. Tickets are also available at the SFSC box office at the Wildstein Center on the SFSC Highlands Campus, 600 W. College Drive. The box office is open Monday – Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The Good Time Tuesdays Matinee Series is sponsored by Agero, The Palms of Sebring, Lampe & Kiefer Hearing Aid Center, Highlands Regional Medical Center, Dr. Donald, Ruth and Kimberly Geldart, and the Highlands News-Sun.

SFSC Cultural Programs receive support from the Florida Department of State's Division of Cultural Affairs.

Artrageous



COURTESY PHOTO

Giant artworks jump to life

Presented as part of the Florida Hospital Trending Now Series at 7 p.m. Jan. 21 at Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts, 'Artrageous' is a creative journey. Paying tribute to famous icons and music through live art, live music, song and dance. A palette of color swirls across the stage as a team of artists paint giant portraits right before your very eyes to the sounds of all the songs you love and remember. You will be transported from the '40s to present and everywhere in between. These giant artworks jump to life with amazing

speed unveiling larger-than-life icons and masterpieces in just moments, all the while there is constant activity on stage, attracting your attention and delighting your senses with energy, spirit and action. Bring your dancing shoes and be ready to join the cast on the stage for some audience interaction.

The Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts is located on the South Florida State College Highlands campus at 600 W College Drive, Avon Park. Ticket prices range from \$26 to \$32.

For more information log on to: sfscarts.org/show/artrageous/