

## COLLEGE FOR A DAY



COURTESY PHOTO

**Hardee Senior High School senior Antonio Servin won a \$500 scholarship to South Florida State College by attending College For A Day, an annual morning-long event that brings hundreds of area high-school students to SFSC's Highlands Campus to explore the college's academic and occupational programs. Shown with the check are (from left) Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel, SFSC president; Jamie Bateman, executive director, SFSC Foundation; Antonio; Dr. Timothy Wise, dean of Student Services; and Pete the Panther.**



# SFSC welcomes students to spring term

By **MARC VALERO**  
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — South Florida State College welcomed its students to the spring term and the first spring flex session on Wednesday during a cloudy morning that was brightened by an increase in enrollment.

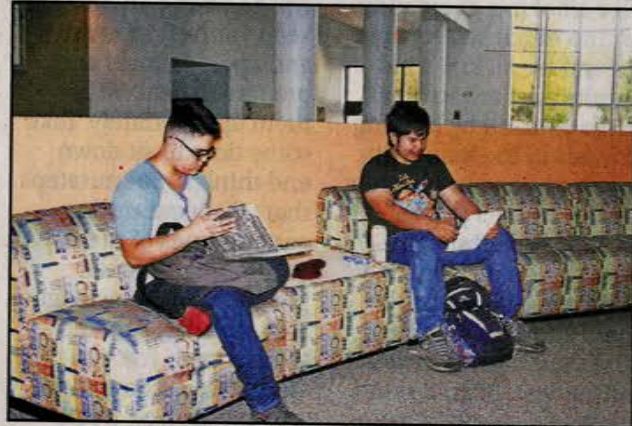
President Thomas Leitzel, who was among the welcoming committee handing out bottled water, said he sees “lives that will be changed.”

Without offering a specific percentage, Leitzel said the college’s enrollment is up compared to last year at this time.

Registrar Deborah Fuschetti checked last year’s data to make an accurate enrollment comparison.

“Technically at this time we are up [in enrollment] compared to last January,” she confirmed.

Does the college have any funding requests for



From left: Alex Rodriguez and John Mondragon wait to go to their first classes of the spring term on Wednesday at South Florida State College.

the Legislative session, which convenes in March?

Leitzel believes the Legislature supports what the colleges in the Florida College System are doing to prepare students for work or to transfer to a university.

“It is an incredibly important job that we do for the students that we serve,” he said. “Coming up on the new session, we always look with optimism of what can happen at all of our

colleges from a funding perspective.

“We follow the lead of our Council of Presidents and what they put forward as their Legislative priorities.”

The hope is for what is called “impact funding,” which continues the college’s operations especially to put students to work, Leitzel said. Also, the college hopes funding will continue for new technology and state-of-the-art equipment.



PHOTOS BY MARC VALERO

South Florida State College welcomes students to the start of the spring semester on Wednesday.

Hardee Senior High graduates and college freshmen John Mondragon and Alex Rodriguez were among the students preparing for their first classes of the spring term.

Mondragon said he would be having a biology and calculus class on

Wednesday.

He is studying for an Associate in Arts degree with plans to transfer to a university to study to become a veterinarian.

Rodriguez plans to study for an AA degree and then transfer to the Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota.

He had an art and English class on his Wednesday schedule.

How did he do in the fall term?

“It was a big transition going from summer freedom to college and I didn’t do too well with that transition,” Rodriguez said.



**THE  
Herald-Advocate**

**Thursday, January 5, 2017**

# College Students Get To Test Their Future Careers

Adson Delhomme and Jazmin Gonzalez, two Hardee County residents planning on careers in law enforcement, are getting a firsthand look at what police work is really like.

Students at South Florida State College, the pair are taking part in a cooperative education program that puts them in a patrol car, in the courtroom and at a desk in the Hardee County Sheriff's Office.

"After enrolling in SFSC, I thought about a career in business or nursing," Delhomme said after class on the college's Highlands Campus in Avon Park. "But I discovered I wanted to be on the front lines, so I'm getting geared up to work in law enforcement."

Delhomme's hankering to get into police work got all the more intense after he went on a ride-along with a Hardee deputy as part of a cooperative education plan developed between SFSC and the Sheriff's Office. "I'm certain now of one thing," said the former defensive lineman for the Hardee Wildcats. "I'm working in law enforcement."

"Cooperative education, or co-op in education speak, is a custom-built program that gives students an opportunity to learn about a career not in the classroom but by experiencing it themselves at a worksite," said Colleen Rafatti, the director of SFSC's Career Development Center. "What's more, they earn college credit for their time at the worksite."

Rafatti explained that students who have a career in mind can structure a cooperative education program with her, an SFSC instructor and an employer. Together they craft an educational plan that re-

volves around job shadowing, with the student putting in several hours each week at a worksite. The plan includes regular one-on-one progress reviews with the students' college instructor and written assignments capturing what the students discover about their proposed career.

"A well-developed co-op program will help a student affirm the career choice they've made, giving them invaluable experience," Rafatti said. "Other times, the co-op experience will pull a student in an unexpected and different direction, with positive results for the student."

Delhomme, apart from his ride-along with the deputy, has spent hours sitting in County Judge Jeff McKibben's courtroom translating the proceeding to creole-speaking families and taking on an assortment of tasks at the Sheriff's Office in Wauchula.

Gonzalez, Delhomme's classmate, shares her yearning to get on the front lines helping people. The fellow Hardee High School graduate has her sights set on a career as a state trooper with the Florida Highway Patrol.

"Taking part in the co-op program at the Hardee Sheriff's Office through SFSC is helping me confirm my passion for law enforcement," said Gonzalez, the first in her family to attend college.

"Along with Delhomme, I've been at the courthouse and in the sheriff's headquarters seeing the day-to-day workings of how police work gets done."

Gonzalez said the hours she has spent pouring over police reports has her thinking she

might consider investigative police work after she has garnered enough patrol experience.

Both Gonzalez and Delhomme are on track to graduate from SFSC in May 2017. Gonzalez plans to pursue her education at Polk State College, and Delhomme wants to study criminal justice at Florida Gulf Coast University.

Both students know moving up the career ladder in law enforcement requires a four-year degree. They plan to earn their degrees before entering their respective police academies.

"Having these two students here with us has been tremendous, and not just for them but for us, too," said Dep. Sylvia Hendrickson. "They listen well, help us in our own work and, what's more, they learn about law enforcement."

Hendrickson, who oversees Gonzalez and Delhomme's cooperative education activities while at the Sheriff's Office, said the "real world" experience the students get is invaluable.

"So many of our folks are involved with the students," Hendrickson said. "From the judge to the probation officer, our accounting staff, the deputies, even Sheriff (Arnold) Lanier finds time to spend with them — this has been a great experience for all of us."

For their efforts learning about the "real world" of criminal justice, Gonzalez and Delhomme earn college credit that counts toward getting their degrees at SFSC.

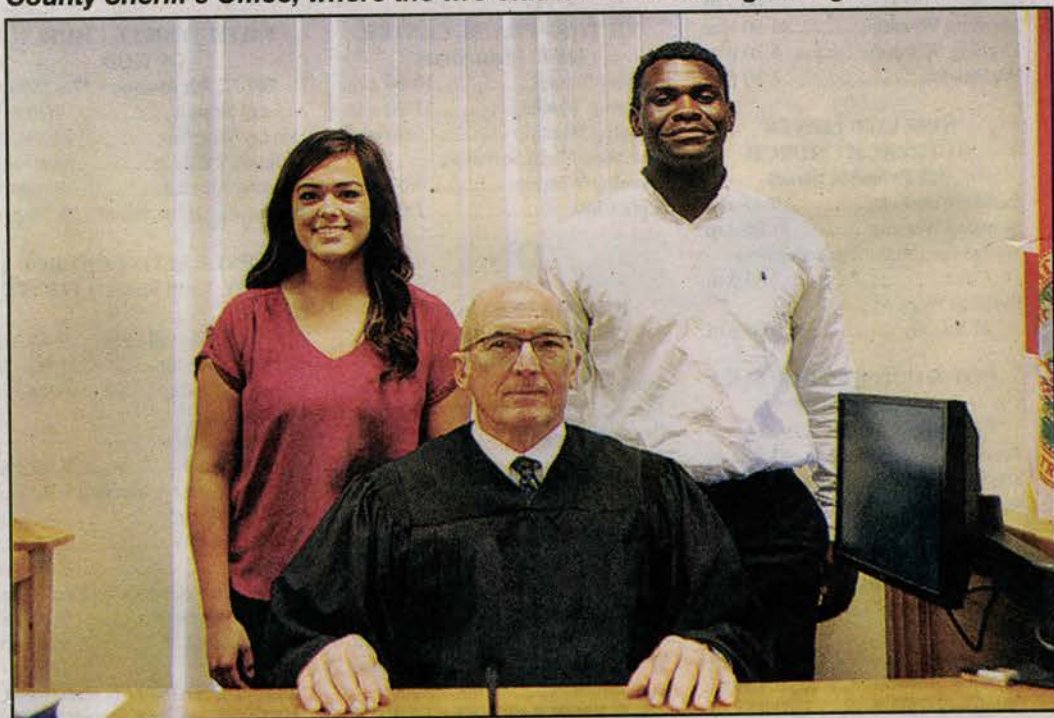
"The college credit doesn't come just from being there," said Rafatti of SFSC's career center. "The students come back to campus and produce





COURTESY PHOTOS

**Adson Delhomme and Jazmin Gonzalez with Sheriff Arnold Lanier at the Hardee County Sheriff's Office, where the two students are earning college credit.**



**In a courtroom at the Hardee County Courthouse are (from left) Jazmin Gonzalez, County Judge Jeff McKibben and Adson Delhomme.**

written assignments describing their experience that must pass muster with their instructor."

In all, Gonzalez and Del-

homme must clock in 135 hours of onsite time to earn their credits.

"To us it seems as if they're

here for such a short time," said Hendrickson. "But in that time they see and learn a great deal."



“We are in the midst of an epic transition.”

Stephen Klineberg, sociologist, Rice University



# Growing DIVERSITY



KILE BREWER/HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

Lucio Anaya and his wife Maria E. Anaya stand with their sons Alejandro, left, and Lucio Jr. at the family's fruit stand in Avon Park. The Anayas have five children in total, all with careers ranging from nursing to education, and Alejandro spent eight years in the United States Marine Corps. The stand opened in the early 1990s after Lucio Sr. spent years working mostly 24-hour days as a migrant worker picking fruits and vegetables to support his growing family.



# Census: by 2050, U.S. will not have a white majority

## HIGHLANDS COUNTY CHANGING MORE SLOWLY

By **GARY PINNELL**  
STAFF WRITER

SEBRING — Lucio Anaya was born in Mercedes, Texas, a few miles north of the Rio Grande. When he was three weeks old, he and his parents were deported.

"I came back when I was 15. They call me wetback," Anaya said several times, the pain on his face clearly expressed. "That's not right."

He and his wife, Maria E. Anaya, moved to Avon Park in 1992 and he operates Avon Park's oldest existing fruit stand at 500 U.S. 27 S. Anaya picked crops until 2010.

Anaya considers himself an American, he says with a strong Mexican accent. But his five children are clearly Americans. One son was a U.S. Marine for eight years. One daughter is a nurse, another is a school director. Two still live at home. The Anayas are one reason why Highlands County's Hispanic population has grown from 3,500 in 1990 to an estimated 18,704 by July 1, 2015.

"We are in the midst of an epic transition," Stephen Klineberg, sociologist at the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University, told NewsOne Now. "Those individuals born during the baby boom generation are moving on to retirement, and are being replaced by a very different generation: a mix of all

the ethnicities of all the villages of the world."

It's what NewsOne, National Public Radio and web publications are calling "The Browning of America."

More than 60 percent of the American population is white today, but by 2050, more than 50 percent will be multiracial or non-white, the U.S. Census has predicted. Klineberg said America is on the cusp of a "remarkable moment." This country, founded on principles of inclusion, will become the first "universal nation" in human history.

Highlands County is also becoming progressively minority, said Dr. Sonji Keizs Nicholas, a sociology professor at South Florida State College. "Maybe not to the extent of the country and the state and the region, but we're part of a larger demographic shift. We are going to

experience it also. We've been watching this trend for 20 years or so."

"The United States, throughout all its history, was an amalgam of European nationalities, and is now becoming a microcosm of the world," Klineberg said.

Did sociologists see this coming in the 1800s, as open immigration policies filled an empty America?

"I'm not sure they had the tools we have now," Keizs Nicholas said. "I'm not sure that people looked ahead that far."

"Here at the college, in sociology, we emphasize cultural diversity and understanding," Keizs Nicholas said. "We always have had students do projects so they can get to know

### Minority report

	1990	2000	2015*
White	59,735	72,926	85,164
Black	6,848	8,155	10,446
Hispanic	3,500	10,542	18,704

\*Estimate  
Highlands County's racial makeup shows the number of Hispanics is growing at a faster rate than whites and blacks.

Source: U.S. Census



# CENSUS

FROM PAGE 1

groups other than the ones they belong to.”

SFSC is even more diverse than the county; 31 percent of students are classified as Hispanic. The college was awarded a \$5 million grant from the Department of Education Hispanic Serving Institutions to improve access to science, technology, engineering, and math, Keizs Nicholas said.

Some Americans see a dark side to multiculturalism. Roland Martin reminded NewsOne viewers of the “white fear” that grips many Americans as the nation becomes browner.

“The fear is driven by the something, the fear of the unknown, something that you believe to be primal to your way of life is threatened,” Keizs Nicholas said. “You don’t think they share your culture. We are all socialized to prefer what we know.”

Brookings Institution demographer William Frey describes it as “fear of losing privileged status, or fear of unwanted groups in their communities.”

“I don’t really have the problem with who is the majority, if they are legal,” said John Nelson, chairman of the Highlands County Tea Party. He thinks the majority of California’s Hispanic population is illegal. White Californians will be in the minority by 2030, he predicted.

“When is our government going to enforce immigration laws and remove people not allowed to be here?” Nelson asked. “Single (illegal immigrants) should go back home. Couples should go back home. Married people with kids, they’d have to work out an arrangement. They should be given a visa to work for a number of years, get the proper paperwork, then go back to Mexico and immigrate legally. Don’t just give them citizenship. No one is just entitled to citizenship.”

“No force in the world is going to stop it, [not] Houston or Texas or America from becoming more African-American, more Asian, more

Latino and less Anglo as the 21st century unfolds,” Klineberg said.

“You would be hard pressed to stop that kind of human interaction,” Keizs Nicholas said.

Frey said white populations in 53 percent of this nation’s counties declined by the first decade of the 21st century. Demographer James Johnson of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, said only 17 percent of Americans from 2000 to 2010 were white.

Black numbers are growing, but by less than 1 percent, the census said. Hispanics are not a race or a genetic inheritance, they share a common language, the Census said. Most Hispanics are black, white or both.

The U.S. labor force will grow 5 percent before 2030, but would have shrunk considerably if not for immigrants, Frey said.

Hispanics are pumping new blood into the economy, said Mark Barie of Sebring, who counsels business owners for the Service Corps of Retired Executives.

“Absolutely,” said Barie, who looked at the most recent census numbers. Of Highlands County’s 5,835 total businesses, 2,500 are women owned, 2,000 are minority owned. A third of SCORE mentoring sessions are held with minorities, 56 percent with women.

Minority-owned establishments are growing four to five times faster than others. “It’s been going up across the county,” Barie said. “Florida is third in the country. Orlando and Miami are seven and eight out of the best 10 start up cities in the country.”

His sense of new minority-owned businesses is that they are mostly service sector and retail. “There were not too many doing heavy duty manufacturing in 2015.”

Minority and women-owned businesses face the same hurdles and obstacles, Barie said. “Entrepreneurs I have seen in 30 years have hard work in their veins. It’s not easy to be an entrepreneur, I don’t care what your race or ethnicity is. They have to work hard. Otherwise, they won’t

survive.”

Anaya said he has taught his five children the lesson about hard work, and all are successful.

Second-generation Americans — the 20 million adult American-born children of immigrants — are substantially better off than immigrants themselves on measures of economic attainment, according to a new Pew Research Center analysis.

The census estimates 71.5 percent of Avon Park households speak English only, and 77 percent of Sebring households; 24.6 percent speak Spanish in Avon Park, 37.8 percent in Lake Placid, 21 percent in Sebring.

His children, said Anaya, have higher incomes and college educations. Most are homeowners and fewer live in poverty than their parents, Pew said. “Their characteristics resemble those of the full U.S. adult population.”

Pew Research surveys find the second generations are much more likely than the immigrants to speak English. Both Lucio Jr. and Alexandro speak fluent English. Pew said nine in 10 second-generation Hispanics are proficient English speakers. However, only eight in 10 second-generation Hispanics speak Spanish at least pretty well.

Pew said second generations usually have friends and spouses outside their ethnic or racial group, get along well with others, and

think of themselves as typical Americans. About 26 percent of married second-generation Hispanics have a spouse of a different race or ethnicity, compared with 8 percent of all immigrants and 8 percent of all U.S. adults.

South Florida State College has recently revived its studies abroad with London, Dr. Sonji Keizs Nicholas said.

“There is a humanities course,” she said. “It breaks down the barriers and they understand other cultures. It teaches global understanding.

“London: the City Experience,” will be open to the community

More info: call Dr. Sonji Keizs Nicholas at 863-784-7286 or email [sonji.nicholas@south-florida.edu](mailto:sonji.nicholas@south-florida.edu)





KILE BREWER/HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

**Sociology Professor Sonji Keiz Nicholas sits in her South Florida State College office on the school's Highlands campus in Avon Park.**



## SFSC closed for Martin Luther King Day

AVON PARK — In observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, all South Florida State College campuses will be closed Jan. 16. The college will reopen Jan. 17.

## SFSC BRIEFS

### Certified forklift driver course available

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Corporate Education Department is offering a certified forklift driver course at the Highlands Campus, 900 W. College Drive, Avon Park.

In the course, participants will learn skills and gain experience needed to operate heavy machinery safely. Training meets OSHA Standard 1910.178. The course is offered in two sessions: Tuesday, Feb. 28, from 5:30-8:30 p.m.; and Saturday, March 4, from 8-11 a.m. The cost for both

sessions is \$199. The course number is (CRN) 21173.

Register in Building B at the Highlands campus or any SFSC campus or center. For more information, contact Lorrie Key at 863-784-7033 or email corporatetraining@southflorida.edu.

### Basic Corrections Academy applications open

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Criminal Justice Academy (CJA) is accepting applications for its next Basic Corrections Academy course, which is required to become a state of Florida

certified corrections officer.

Basic Corrections Academy classes will be held Monday through Friday, beginning Monday, Feb. 13, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. 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 CJA is located on SFSC's Highlands campus, 900 W. College Drive, Avon Park. For more information, contact the academy at 863-784-7282.

Applications are currently being accepted online through Friday, Feb. 3.



# MOFAC looks at the art, history of Florida cattle ranching

AVON PARK — The Museum of Florida Art and Culture at South Florida State College will host a talk on the history of cattle ranching in Florida from 1-2 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19 on the SFSC Highlands campus at Avon Park.

“Florida Ranching-Yesterday and Today” is a free event featuring two ranchers, each giving their perspective on cattle ranching in the Sunshine

State. The talk will be held in the SFSC MOFAC gallery.

John Skipper, a native Floridian whose family has raised cattle in Florida for seven generations, will offer a look at the origins and history of the oldest cattle industry in the United States. He has titled his talk, “Cattle Ranching from a Florida Cracker’s Perspective.”

SFSC MOFAC’s curator

Megan Stepe said Skipper’s family has ranched for almost 200 years in the area. He will explain why things are done a bit differently here.

Stepe said the talk coincides with MOFAC’s current exhibition featuring art from Florida ranching duo Sean and Sharon Sexton. The husband and wife team have mounted an exhibition “The Art of Life: Works by Sean and Sharon Sexton”

at MOFAC that opened in December.

“For rancher, landscape artist, and third-generation Floridian, Sean Sexton, the state’s landscape and history are interwoven with his art,” Stepe said. “His work not only features landscapes of Florida but also examines subjects such as, religion, mortality, and humans’ connection to nature.”

The talk is one of a

series of MOFAC’s “Third Thursday” public discussions that shine a spotlight on current exhibitions and works from the museum’s collection.

SFSC MOFAC is on the

SFSC Highlands campus at 600 W. College Drive. For more information contact Stepe at 863-784-7240 or email [stepem@southflorida.edu](mailto:stepem@southflorida.edu). Visit the MOFAC website at [mofac.org](http://mofac.org).



# South Florida State College offers batik workshop

AVON PARK — South Florida State College's Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC) will offer a two-day workshop introducing artists and non-artists to batik, an Indonesian-style cloth painting technique using wax on Feb 17-18.

The workshop will also introduce students to rozome, a Japanese-style batik process.

"Using both techniques, anyone can create unique artwork on fabric that can be used with everyday household objects,

clothing, or works of art," said Muffy Clark Gill, an artist who will lead the workshop.

Gill said the workshop will employ environmentally-friendly soy and bees wax and fiber reactive dyes for vivid colors. She said the technique is ideal for silk painters, fiber artists, or anyone who would like to work with fiber to add new techniques and ideas to their toolkit. Artists of all abilities are invited to attend, Gill said.

A professional batik artist, Gill has shown her

work in more than 70 regional, state and national juried exhibitions.

The workshop runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 17, and Saturday, Feb. 18. In the Friday session Gill will focus on simplifying designs, introduce the materials, and help students create dye and wax. In the Saturday session she will concentrate entirely on teaching the batik technique.

The workshop will be in Building A, Room 16, on the SFSC Highlands

campus at 600 W. College Drive. Cost is \$75 per person, plus an additional \$20 fee for instructor-provided supplies, which include stencils, soy and bees wax, dyes, and two silk handkerchiefs.

"We encourage everyone to bring lunch each day," said Megan Stepe, MOFAC's curator, who organized the workshop. "We want folks to hang around so that they don't want to miss out on any fun time.

Stepe said workshop participants should bring

a sketchbook, some of their own designs and symbols for reference, two small clean white towels, a few clothes pins, 20-by-20-inch wooden stretcher bars or commercial system for stretching fabric, push pins, four to six small glass jars (baby food jars are ideal), and any Japanese or Indonesian wax, dye, brushes, or tools they may own.

Workshop participants can find supply sources at these websites: dye, [www.prochemical.com](http://www.prochemical.com); Thai

[www.thaisilks.com](http://www.thaisilks.com); and [www.dharmatrading.com](http://www.dharmatrading.com). Stepe welcomes participants to contribute: heavy duty orange extension cords, electric wax and frying pans, electric blender, iron and ironing board, duct tape, and newspapers.

For more information about the batik workshop or MOFAC and its programs or to request a museum tour, email Stepe at [stepem@southflorida.edu](mailto:stepem@southflorida.edu) or call 863-784-7240. Visit the MOFAC website at [mofac.org](http://mofac.org).



# SFSC MOFAC looks at art, history in cattle ranching

**SUBMITTED BY MANUEL CORTAZAL**  
SFSC PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Museum of Florida Art and Culture at South Florida State College will host a talk on the history of cattle ranching in Florida, Thursday, Jan. 19, 1-2 p.m., on the SFSC Highlands Campus, Avon Park.

Titled "Florida Ranching- Yesterday and Today," the free event will feature two ranchers, each giving their perspective on cattle ranching in Florida. The talk will be held in the SFSC MOFAC gallery.

John Skipper, a native Floridian whose family has raised cattle in Florida for seven generations, will offer a look at the origins and

history of the oldest cattle industry in the United States. He has titled his talk, "Cattle Ranching from a Florida Cracker's Perspective."

"Hear why things are done a bit differently in the Sunshine State from a native whose family has ranched for almost 200 years in the area," said Megan Stepe, SFSC MOFAC's curator.

Stepe said the talk coincides with MOFAC's current exhibition featuring art from Florida ranching duo Sean and Sharon Sexton. The husband and wife team have mounted an exhibition "The Art of Life: Works by Sean and Sharon Sexton" at MOFAC that opened in December.

"For rancher, landscape

artist, and third-generation Floridian, Sean Sexton, the state's landscape and history are interwoven with his art," Stepe said. "His work not only features landscapes of Florida but also examines subjects such as, religion, mortality, and humans' connection to nature."

The talk is one of a series of MOFAC's "ThirdThursday," public discussions that shine a spotlight on current exhibitions and works from the museum's collection.

SFSC MOFAC is located on the SFSC Highlands Campus, 600 W. College Dr., Avon Park.

For more information about MOFAC and its programs or to request a museum tour, contact Stepe



PHOTO PROVIDED

**The Museum of Art and Culture at South Florida State College in Avon Park will host a talk on the history of Florida cattle ranching Jan. 19.**

at 863-784-7240, or email [stepem@southflorida.edu](mailto:stepem@southflorida.edu).

Visit the MOFAC website at [mofac.org](http://mofac.org).



# Last call for Heartland Games registration

**SUBMITTED By NEIL SIMPSON**  
HEARTLAND GAMES AMBASSADOR

This is the last call to sign up for the 2017 Heartland Games.

Registrations are due at SFSC two weeks prior to the first event in which you are entered.

The registration fee is just \$15 for one day of competition and \$25 for multiple days. That means you could play both days of pickleball or bowling for \$25 or all three days of tennis for just \$25. It also means you can add on other events at no extra cost. A real bargain considering each competitor will get a dri-fit shirt and a complimentary lunch will be provided at several of the events.

Please be sure to arrive at your event at least 30 minutes prior to the announced start time.

For those who finish in the top five in your age/gender bracket in the events listed below, you will be eligible to register for the Florida Senior Games — bowling, cycling, golf, pickleball, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis, tennis, track & field. It will be your responsibility to make certain that you do register for the 2017 Florida Senior Games that will be held in Clearwater Pinellas December 2 to 10.

PHOTO PROVIDED

**Don't miss the last chance to sign up for this year's Heartland Games.**

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**AGE CATEGORIES**

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60-64	66-69
70-74	75-79
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*Refunds are not given for cancelled registrations.*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
<http://www.southflorida.edu/heartlandgames>  
Lauren Redick 863-784-7388  
CommunityEducation@SouthFlorida.edu

**SOUTH FLORIDA State College**

South Florida State College is an equal accessional opportunity institution. South Florida State College is coordinated by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4057 or call 404-479-4501. For questions about the accreditation of South Florida State College.

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★ FOR ACTIVE ADULTS ★

**2017**

**SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE**  
AVON PARK



**FEBRUARY-MARCH 2017**



# Register for SFSC's Fall Flex C session

SPECIAL TO  
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK —

Heartland residents who didn't register in time for the start of classes on Jan. 4 at South Florida State College have an opportunity to get into class without having to wait for the next academic term.

Registration for SFSC's spring Flex C Session is now open. Classes scheduled for the spring Flex C Session run 13 weeks, Jan. 25 to May 3.

SFSC introduced the Flex C Session last year to offer opportunities for new students to get on campus and for existing students to earn more college credits. With the Flex C Session, new students can register for spring term classes three weeks after the regular term kicked off in early January.

Students who started classes earlier this month can also benefit by adding classes to earn more credit hours, accelerating their graduation.

"This is a great opportunity for students who couldn't register at the start of the spring academic term to earn credit hours without having to wait for the summer academic term," said Lynn MacNeill, the interim dean for the Division of Arts and Sciences.

New students looking to start classes can apply for admission to the college by clicking the "Apply Now" button at the top of SFSC's home page at [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu). Current students

can register and pay for classes through the college portal, Panther Central.

New students should apply soon to ensure they can start class on Wednesday, Jan. 25.

The spring Flex C Session features introductory classes in humanities, psychology, computer graphics, and art history. The schedule of classes is available on the SFSC website at [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu). Go to "Current Students" on the home page and to

"Schedule of Classes" in the drop down box.

SFSC's Advising and Counseling Center accepts walk-in registrations 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Fridays. Students can register in Building B of the Highlands Campus in Avon Park, at the Hardee Campus in Bowling Green, at the Lake Placid Center in Lake Placid, or at the DeSoto Campus in Arcadia.

Financial aid is

available to those who are qualified. For more information about financial assistance and scholarships, contact the SFSC Financial Aid Office at 863-784-7134.

For more information about registration, call 863-453-6661 (Highlands Campus), 863-773-3081 (Hardee Campus), 863-993-1757 (DeSoto Campus), or 863-465-3003 (Lake Placid Center). For information about SFSC and its programs, go to [southflorida.edu](http://southflorida.edu).



**LOCAL LOOK** by GABE CLOGSTON

C A N ' T S T O P T H E

**D R E A M**



To the highest degree



**INK IN MY VEINS**

**David Dunn-Rankin**

What is wrong with our politicians in Florida? Why can't they create a college system that would be a road the average high school student could travel to gain the essential college degree? Rather than just complain about the lack of a great college system for the average Florida high school graduate, I thought I would do a bit of research. Which state in America has the number one rated college system?

A state's college system is more important than the university system in lifting incomes. The university system is made up of the research institutions like the University of Florida and Florida Gulf Coast University. In addition to providing undergraduate education, they offer master and doctorate programs. The students at those institutions don't need much help in creating a road to success.

The college system institutions are the two- and four-year undergraduate programs geared to the average high school student like Southwest Florida State College, State College of Florida, and South Florida State College.

These institutions are key to overcoming income inequality and stagnant wages for middle America by creating an opportunity to get a college degree outside the university system. Which state's college system should Florida copy?

I found the nation's best state college system. Sixty-five percent of all high school graduates pursuing higher education start in this state's college system. Eighty-two percent of all freshman and sophomore minority students are in this state's community college program. Over half of all the juniors and seniors at the public research universities in this state actually started in the state

college system. Clearly, this state has discovered a fantastic college education model geared to the average high school graduate.

Transfers from this state's college system into their research universities system are just as likely to graduate as the freshman class that started directly at the university. The college system kids are no slouch in the classroom either. Their academic performance, once they transfer to a university from a state college, is very similar to kids who started directly as a freshman in one of the research universities.

Every year, an individual best community college from across America is selected. This state has had a different community college win the nation's best college award more times than all the other state's colleges combined.

This state makes it easy for the college kids to transfer to the university, if they so desire. Freshman English 101, or Mathematics 401 uses the same books and covers the same material in a college class or a university class. Smart idea for Florida too.

At this state's best

practices college system, they've made getting a college degree incredibly affordable. The average college student carries about \$5,000 in Federal student loan debt.

Finally, a proven model for higher education, even our state representatives in Tallahassee could figure out.

You probably guessed who the state is, with the best college system in the country — California.

Actually not California. Massachusetts? New York? Michigan? Ohio?

Not any of those either.

Surprise. The number one ranked state college system in America is located in my favorite state — Florida. That's right, the college system you are helping to support with your tax dollars, is the nation's best at creating a world-class college education path for the average high school student.

Share your thoughts. *David Dunn-Rankin is CEO of Sun Newspapers, the family- and employee-owned group that owns the Highlands News-Sun and Highlands Sun. He can be reached at daviddr@sun-herald.com.*



# Art teachers feted at reception

By **SHARON WEATHERHEAD**  
CORRESPONDENT

SEBRING — Art teachers of Highlands County were the stars at the Highlands Art League's artist reception Friday evening at its Yellow House Gallery. A large crowd enjoyed meeting the artists, browsing the gallery and enjoying snacks and wine.

"This month we are pleased to present some of our talented Highlands County art teachers," said Lindsay Ebert Damon, operations manager at HAL. Damon and artist Kathryn Obidzinski were on hand to greet guests.

When guests walked into the gallery they immediately saw a large painting of a tiger lily created by Karla Respress, a fine arts instructor at South Florida State College. Respress teaches painting, pottery, photography and other types of arts. "My grandmother grows tiger lilies," she said. "I photograph and then paint them. I love all flowers, especially those that have right colors with lots of contrast."

Jack Van Dam, art instructor at Sebring High School, had some very intricate and interesting



Sharon Weatherhead/  
Highlands Sun

**Above: Ginger Adelstone (front) talking with Jim Leary at the artist reception at Highlands Art League's Yellow House gallery.**



**Artist Megan Paquette Stepe with some of her mixed media works.**

pencil and watercolor works on display. "I studied the work of Chuck Close who did this technique on very large canvases," Van Dam said. "I use pencil in my design. Each square is a separate line design. There are hidden messages and words."



Van Dam's pencil creations were "The Beatles" and "The Gentle Shepherd." The Beatles piece had names, dates and songs they were famous for hidden in the intricate squares of the picture. The Gentle



**Jack Van Dam with his works, 'The Beatles' and 'The Gentle Shepherd'.**



# HAL

FROM PAGE 34

Shepherd had hidden scripture and bible references.

Megan Paquette Stepe, the new curator at SFSC'S Museum of Fine Art and Culture, also teaches art and art appreciation and had her works on display. "I use a dremel tool to carve out designs," she said. "I also use acrylic, alcohol, pastels, china markers, rice paper and even turpentine." These unique textures are reflected in her interesting works of art.

Stepe said she loves art history and reading. She doesn't start with any preconceived ideas. "Every work is like an experiment," she said. "Something just emerges."

Andy Hammett is from Lake Placid High School. She teaches a comprehensive Visual Arts program built upon the virtues of cultural awareness, self-expression and real work activities in the



classroom. One of her works on display was titled, "A Man is Real – Not Made of Steel." It is a soft pine hand carving with stain and its uniqueness makes quite a statement.

Mary Lou Herald

displayed several pencil works, including "Man in a Hat." She teaches fourth- and fifth-grades at St. Catherine's Catholic School. She calls her class, "Let's Take a Line for a Walk."



Above: The works of Karla Respress include sedona cactus, rhoedendron and lillies.

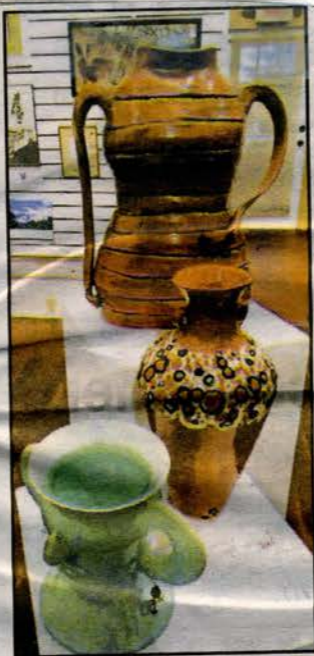
Left: Karla Respress standing in front of 'Tiger Lily' with her children Rayleigh, 4, and 15-month-old Raymond.





**'On Interior Design' by  
Hammett.**

**'Man in Hat' is a pencil  
drawing by Mary Lou Herald.**



**Sharon Weatherhead/  
Highlands Sun**

**Pottery vases by Karla  
Respress were on display as  
part of the artist reception at  
the Yellow House gallery.**



Thursday, January 19, 2017

## **Morning Mixer Jan. 19 at SFSC LP Center**

LAKE PLACID — A morning mixer for chamber of commerce members will be Thursday, Jan. 19 from 8-9 a.m. at South Florida State College's Lake Placid Center at 500 E. Interlake Blvd. The mixer is hosted by SFSC. Those attending are encouraged to bring business cards and network with other business leaders from the community.





COURTESY PHOTO

***Danielle Ochoa (left) was at first reluctant to become a mentor, thinking she did not have enough to offer. Students such as Daniela Villalva (right) proved to her that support and encouragement are more than enough.***



# IN THEIR OWN WORDS ... Become A Mentor!

*The following was written by Daniela Villalva, a sophomore at Hardee Senior High who will receive a two-year tuition scholarship through the Take Stock in Children program.*

Since I was young, I would see my parents work long, hard hours. They did not receive a good income.

My parents have always told me that a good education would lead to a better life.

I did not understand that when I was young, but I do now. I see how my parents struggle with all their expenses. I see how they prefer to buy me or my siblings something over themselves. They have taught me how to be thankful and to be grateful for what I have, even if it is small.

When I was first selected to be in the Take Stock in Children program, I was dumbfounded. I did not know if I was chosen by mistake or if it was real. There had been many good students that had applied. I thought to myself, "Why me out of everyone else?"

I could not believe that I had this wonderful opportunity, an opportunity that will later help me achieve one of my many dreams.

Being the youngest of three children allowed me to view certain things differently as I was growing up. With an older sister in college, I saw how much she pushed herself to get a good GPA while working a part-time job. As a sophomore in high school, I strive every day to ensure that when I reach college, I will be ready.

Take Stock in Children has impacted my life in more ways than one. It gave me a friend when Ms. Danielle Ochoa became my mentor. I am glad I can count on a visit from her every week.

Take Stock also helped relieve some of my parents' stress. We are now a step closer to being able to afford a higher education.

But the way it has impacted me the most is that I no longer am just a statistic. The youngest of three children from a low-income family, Take Stock gave me a fighting chance to pursue my dreams. With the combination of the people in my life who want me to succeed and resources available to me, I cannot fail.

I plan on becoming a biomedical engineer to improve the lives of others. I am humbled to be a recipient of this scholarship and look forward to sharing my future experiences in the program.

*The following was written by Danielle Ochoa, college coach for the Take Stock in Children program and former recipient.*

Daniela's story is similar to many students' stories who have gone through the Take Stock in Children program. Her story is now part of my Take Stock story, as I have the pleasure of being her mentor.

Fourteen years ago, I was selected to be a Take Stock scholar. At the time, I did not realize the scope of the opportunity ahead of me. I did not realize the

**See MENTOR A2**



# MENTOR

Continued From A1

lasting impact newly introduced individuals would have on my life.

As I met my college coach, Irene Castanon, and one of my mentors, Katrina Blandin, I slowly began to understand the work, time and effort that goes into all of our students.

Thinking back, I remember the little things about my experiences with Take Stock. I remember my first tour of South Florida State College as an eighth grader; it was a point of realization that college was probable. I remember lunch with my mentor and sharing silly conversations.

When I was asked to mentor, I hesitated before saying yes. I was unsure if I had anything to offer a student. But once I agreed and met my first mentee, it was clear that my support and cheerleading, for them, was enough.

When I go to visit with Daniela at Hardee Senior High School, we usually do not stop laughing. We can speak unlimitedly about various topics, but we always come back to education and family.

Also, the youngest of my siblings, I understand the perks and responsibilities of watching them grow up. I want her to gain from my experiences as well. We both take pride in being non-conformists, slight rebels, but we also discuss how our actions reflect back on us.

My hopes for Daniela are that she realizes her dreams and full potential, that she stays as thrilled about education and giving back to her community as she is now.

I honestly have no doubt that she will.

And finally, I hope she comes to a point where she makes the decision to mentor, to give back to another person in a way her community gave to her.

We chose to share some of our feelings about Take Stock in Children in hopes of highlighting the importance of education and mentoring. Our stories are not over, but they have been boosted by the amazing experience of having each other and Take Stock.



## **SFSC Panthers fundraiser**

The South Florida State College Panthers will be holding their annual barbecue on Saturday, Feb. 11, at Panther Field. Both the baseball and softball teams will be in action that day. The event is sponsored by Nut'n Fancy Grillin' and proceeds benefit Panther

athletics. The barbecue consists of pulled pork, Cole slaw, baked beans and ice tea for a \$9 donation. Advance tickets may be purchased by calling 863-784-7036.



# Welcome partner



COURTESY PHOTO

From left: Kerry Thompson, Eileen May Chamber Director, Lori Thompson, Kris Rider and Mike Rider all welcoming Kyle Thompson as partner in the Law Office of Rider and Thompson located at 13 N Oak Ave., Lake Placid.



# SFSC offering real estate course

SPECIAL TO  
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

Register in Building B on  
the Highlands campus or  
any SFSC campus or center.  
For more information,

contact Corporation  
Education at 863-784-7033  
or email [corporatetraining@  
southflorida.edu](mailto:corporatetraining@southflorida.edu).

AVON PARK — South  
Florida State College's  
Corporate Education  
Department is offering  
a Florida Real Estate  
Principles, Practices and  
Law course at the SFSC  
Highlands campus.

The eight-week course  
teaches how to become  
a professional real estate  
agent, take charge of your  
future, direct your own  
business and choose your  
own schedule. The course  
is held on Tuesdays, Jan.  
24 through March 28, from  
6-10 p.m., and on Saturdays  
Jan. 28, Feb. 11, 25, and  
March 25, from 8 a.m. to 5  
p.m. The cost is \$299 and  
the course number (CRN)  
is 20825.

The course requires  
the purchase of the  
coursebook, Florida Real  
Estate Principles, Practices  
and Law, 39th Edition,  
ISBN-13:978-1475430011.



# SFSC president's contract extended

By **MARC VALERO**  
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — South Florida State College President Thomas Leitzel's employment contract has been extended to the year 2020.

SFSC Board of Trustees Member Ken Lambert said Monday: "I am absolutely happy with his performance.

"I am delighted he is adhering to those things that have always been traditional for our college,

but at the same time he is making those changes necessary to position us for the future."

Leitzel became the college's president on July 1, 2013.

SFSC Vice President of Administrative Services

Glenn Little said the board of trustees unanimously approved a one-year extension to Leitzel's contract, which keeps him on a three-year contract.

The board originally approved a three-year contract with Leitzel, and

every year it has added one year to the contract, Little explained. Leitzel will be on another three-year contract effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020.

Little noted that Leitzel met or exceeded in all

categories of his performance review, according to board chairman Derren Bryan.



LEITZEL

The Sun / Thursday, January 26, 2017

# SFSC offers certificate in basic law enforcement

By **REBECCA McCONNIEL**

SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE

The South Florida State College Criminal Justice Academy is accepting applications for its next Basic Law Enforcement course. This is the course required to become a state of Florida certified law enforcement officer.

Basic Law Enforcement classes start March 6 and will be held Monday-Friday, plus some Saturdays and Sundays, from 6 p.m. - 10 p.m. By successfully completing 770 contact hours of training, students earn occupational certificates and are eligible to take the state certification examination for law enforcement officers.

The CJA is located on SFSC's Highlands Campus in Avon Park. For more information, contact program coordinator Michael Huften at 863-784-7285. Financial aid is available to those who qualify. Applications must be picked up in person by appointment only.



## ***SFSC Names Kesterson New Human Resources Director***

South Florida State College has a new director of its Human Resources Department.

Don Kesterson will succeed Susie Hale, who will retire on Jan. 31.

Kesterson assumed his post on Monday, giving him a one-week overlap with Hale and time to tap into her store of SFSC-specific knowledge.

Kesterson comes to SFSC after nearly six years as DeSoto County's director of human resources.

Before taking on the top human resources job in DeSoto, Kesterson worked in Sebring as a human resources specialist for Highlands County. He started with the county in 2007, not long after retiring from a near 21-year career with the U.S. Air Force.

Kesterson retired with the rank of master sergeant. During his time in the military, he worked in communications, health administration, and personnel services.

"Kesterson is a seasoned human resources professional with a deep background in the



**Kesterson**

field," said Glenn Little, vice president for Administrative Services. "He has a solid history of service in the public sector, including the military and local government in our service district, all of which make him superbly qualified to succeed Susie Hale."

Kesterson holds certification as a human resources professional from the Society for Human Resources Management.

He earned a Bachelor's Degree in public administration from Barry University.



# X SFSC director of nursing education named

Mary von Merveldt has been  
an instructor since 2009

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS  
NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — Mary von Merveldt, a nursing instructor at South Florida State College since 2009, has been promoted to director of the college's Nursing Education program.

She succeeds Michele Heston, who took over as dean of the Division of Health Sciences last September.

"I approach my promotion with a dedication to our students and our faculty," von Merveldt said. "Dr. Heston has done a beautiful job of forming a strong foundation for us and I'm eager to take up the challenge of making this the best learning environment for our students and faculty."

A native of Union City, Pennsylvania,

von Merveldt attended Allegheny College, where she studied psychology.

Her academic interests at graduation centered on graduate work in behavioral pharmacology, with a thought of entering medicine.

"The University of Florida has one of the best behavioral pharmacology programs in the country," von Merveldt said. "So, I started their program right out of Allegheny in 2004."

During her graduate studies, von Merveldt felt a pull that steered her in a new, though complementary direction.

"I did behavioral analysis with young people challenged by autism and Down syndrome for a spell

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## DIRECTOR

FROM PAGE 1

while in Gainesville," von Merveldt said. "I found that I enjoyed the people aspect to this work."

She added: "I came to the conclusion my newfound draw to the human side of the work would harmonize with my interest in health sciences by pursuing a career in nursing — it's a profession that pulls in both the caring and the science."

Von Merveldt switched programs at Florida, entering the university's accelerated nursing education track. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing and moved directly into the master's program, preparing her for work as nurse practitioner. She graduated in 2008.

Von Merveldt gained clinical experience in pediatric primary care at Gainesville's Shands Rehabilitation Hospital and at Central Florida Healthcare in Avon Park, where she relocated to be closer to her husband's family.

"I met Joseph in Gainesville at church," von Merveldt said. "We wanted to be close to both of our families, but settling in Tennessee so that we would be midway between both was a nonstarter, so we chose Highlands."

Von Merveldt's clinical background and studies in the health sciences got her the attention of SFSC's nursing education program. She was hired as an adjunct instructor in 2009 and achieved full-time instructional status in 2012.

When the nursing

director's positioned opened late last year, she decided to apply.

"I thought I might be too much of a newbie here at SFSC and that made me hesitant to apply," von Merveldt said. "But I see so much opportunity here and I'm willing to work and do my part to build on what Dr. Heston has achieved."

She officially assumed her new role as director on Jan. 2.

"As a new year commenced, so did a new era in leadership for our college's Nursing Education department," Heston said. "From pharmacology to psychology to primary patient care to classroom nursing instruction, Mary von Merveldt has seen the broad picture of healthcare and is poised to provide strong leadership with a focus on student engagement, lifelong learning, and a commitment to advancing caring science."

Von Merveldt will continue to teach students, at least through the end of the spring academic term. "I think it's a good idea to keep your head in the classroom," she said.

Her husband, who studied agriculture at Florida, currently stays at home to care for their 3-year-old daughter. "She's a handful and keeps Joseph occupied the whole day," von Merveldt said. The couple, who live in Sebring, also have a 7-year-old boy.

"I go home tired," she said. "But it's not a bad tired. It's the tiredness one gets from applying oneself, learning a new job, and knowing you've put in a good day's effort for your students and peers."



# College math teacher employs non-traditional teaching formula

James J. Moye has been with SFSC for 25 years

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — A recent Friday saw SFSC mathematics professor James J. Moye — who drops James in favor of J.J. — holed up in classroom B310 on the Highlands Campus, a room where he teaches all his classes. Sporting a dark blue untucked SFSC T-shirt and jeans, he sat grading quizzes.

“I guess you can say I’ve belonged to SFSC ever since I was

in high school,” Moye said. “After all, I attended SFSC college classes while in high school, I graduated from the Highlands Campus, and I’ve been teaching classes for the college in one form or another since I earned my bachelor’s degree and started teaching.”

Moye has been a fixture at SFSC for 25 years.

Moye teaches the most rigorous of mathematics courses on the SFSC Highlands Campus:

precalculus algebra and trigonometry, and Calculus II and III.

When it comes to teaching mathematics, Moye leaves no room for yield or curves. He expects much

from his students. Students learn on day one that Moye doesn’t allow late entry into class. He stands out for his non-traditional approach to teaching mathematics. He asks calculus students to do the occasional term paper. Students tell others considering Moye’s courses that they should expect quizzes at the

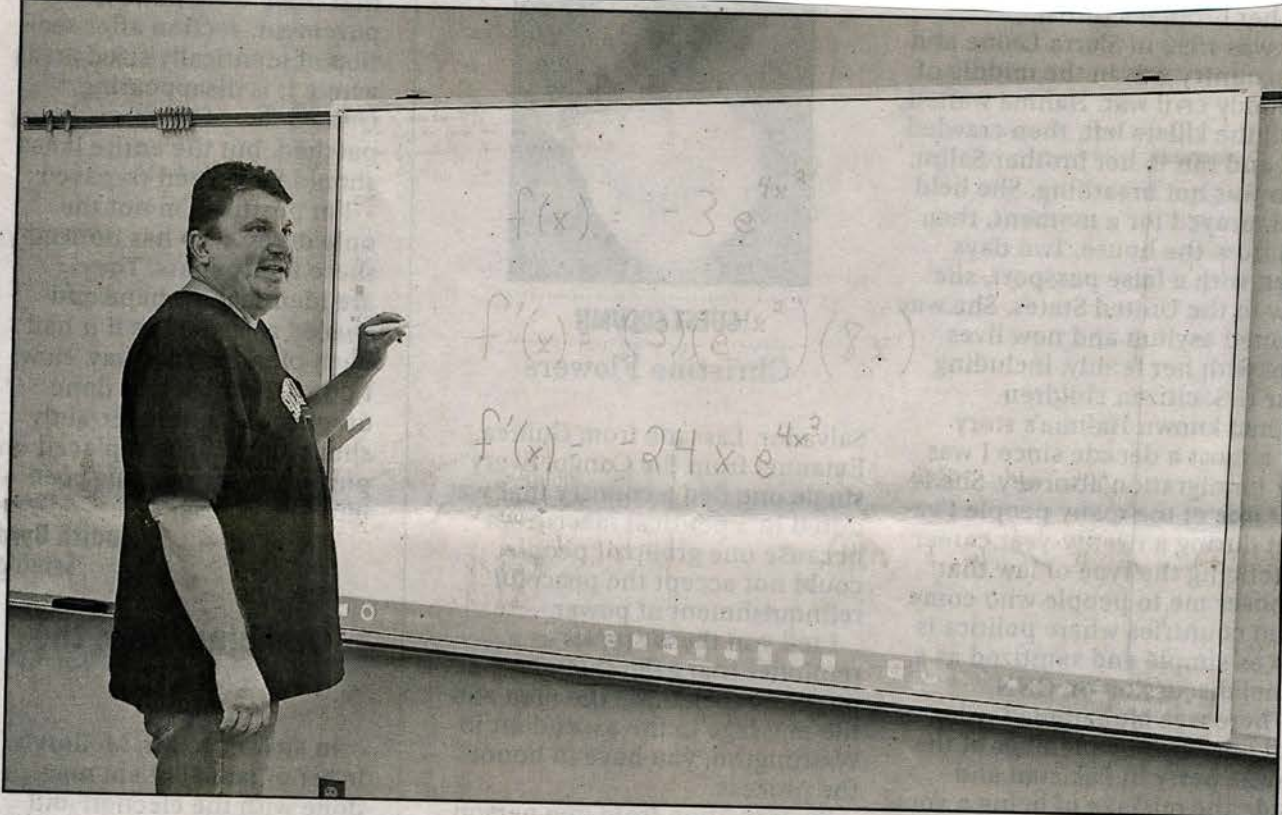


MOYE

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*“I guess you can say I’ve belonged to SFSC ever since I was in high school.”*

— James J. Moye,  
SFSC mathematics professor



COURTESY PHOTO

SFSC mathematics professor James J. Moye has been teaching classes for the college in one form or another since he earned his bachelor's degree and started teaching.



# TEACHER

FROM PAGE 1

start of class. Moye said that's the case, noting students learn when expectations are set high.

"I'm always here for my students," said Moye, who noted he can't recall when he last missed a teaching day. "If I'm not here, the students aren't learning. Consequently, I expect them to be on time. So once I walk in, it's all about me teaching them math as best as I can."

Moye said students appreciate his approach to teaching. "I find students readily and easily accept that learning a rigorous subject matter requires focus."

Lynn MacNeill, interim dean of Arts and Sciences, said of Moye, "I've known him since he was student in my speech class as a freshman. His commitment to getting his students engaged with their often difficult coursework has earned him their respect year after year."

"He has a knack for taking difficult math problems and getting students to understand them," said Daniel Witt, after taking a couple of courses with Moye.

"I'm going to use his approach when working with my students," said Witt, a graduate of SFSC's Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education program, who now teaches mathematics to fourth graders at Bowling Green Elementary School in Moye's home county, Hardee.

**It was at Hardee Senior High School that Moye discovered he had a knack for mathematics.**

"Math just came naturally to me," Moye said. "Probably because I had to think about it, the concepts made sense to me."

Moye made his first connection with SFSC while in high school. He was one of the early dually enrolled students at Hardee Senior High School, taking a regular course load through the high school while also taking college credit courses at SFSC.

His next stop was the SFSC Highlands campus, where he earned his associate degree and the distinction of "top graduate" at his commencement.

After two years studying mathematics education at the University of South Florida — the only gap in time he wasn't associated with SFSC — Moye returned to Hardee County and resumed his connection with the college by teaching dually enrolled students at his former high school.

"While teaching a class of dually enrolled students at Hardee, SFSC's mathematics and science department chair observed me in the classroom and asked me to teach at the college," said Moye. "First I started out as an adjunct teaching part time for a few years before coming onboard full time."

Now in his 16th year teaching full time on the SFSC Highlands campus, Moye recently earned two distinctions. This year, he will conclude his two-year appointment to the Carol Emery Endowed Teaching Chair, established by Emery, a retired SFSC mathematics professor and intended to honor instructors in mathematics.

"The appointment to the endowed chair came with a monetary award that I used to fund the purchase of touch board

that replaces the old whiteboard and marker setup I had in my classroom," Moye said. "This eases the mechanics of getting formulae and equations up for the students."

In December, Moye received the 2016 President's Meritorious Award for his excellence in the classroom. Moye said the announcement of the award came at a special moment for him.

"The award was announced at our annual holiday luncheon where I happened to be seated with Professor Emery, who had dropped by to share the holiday spirit with her former colleagues," Moye recalled. "Receiving the award with her looking on meant a great deal to me."

**Moye credits his success in academia to his parents.** "Their guidance, support, and love shaped who I am," he said. "They never stopped stressing the importance of education to me and my brother."

When Moye isn't on campus, he shares a Sebring home with his wife, both of whom look forward to out-of-town trips, sometimes following Moye's beloved Tamp Bay Rays on road games.

Between grading quizzes in his classroom in the quiet of the Friday morning, Moye thought about his bond with SFSC and how he has benefited from it, both as a student and instructor.

"My constant hope is SFSC students take time to be thankful for the opportunity to come to a college classroom as often as they can," Moye said. "That time is such a wonderful opportunity to learn, one that should not be taken for granted."



Thursday, January 5, 2017

# The Bronx Wanderers take to the stage

SPECIAL TO THE  
HIGHLANDS SUN



AVON PARK — The Bronx Wanderers are on tap to perform Thursday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m. in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at South Florida State College.

Now headlining at Bally's in Las Vegas, the Bronx Wanderers will bring its celebrated combination of authentic vocals and youthful energy that includes covers of the popular classics and romantic ballads from the Four Seasons to Dion to the Belmonets.

"Their show is part Partridge Family and part Jersey Shore," said Cindy Garren, director of Cultural Programs at SFSC. "It's a toe-tapping, hand-clapping performance of hits from the past and today with a dose of Italian 'famiglia'."

The Bronx Wanderers, with just a slight New Jersey twist, perform rousing interpretations of contemporary hits and



Courtesy photo

The Bronx Wanderers will bring its unique sound to the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at South Florida State College on Jan. 12.

BRONX | 29

## BRONX

FROM PAGE 1

classic oldies like "Sherry," "Runaway," "We Gotta Get Out of This Place," "Teenager in Love," "Tie a Yellow Ribbon," and more.

Initially a father-and-son Dion tribute band, the Bronx Wanderers expanded to five performers, reinterpreting the 1960s with a contemporary sound, bringing the good old days to the modern music scene, Garren said.

Original members Yo' Vinny and his sons, Vinny the Kid and Nicky Stix, are now joined by guitarist Jimmy Fracassi and guitarist and saxophonist John Tutino. The Bronx Wanderers have performed in major venues across the country, proving themselves to be one of the most sought after entertainment groups

in the country.

Aside from their interpretations of Dion's classics, The Bronx Wanderers perform from a repertoire of hits from nearly every decade of the past 60 years. This includes popular hits from KC & the Sunshine Band, the Bee Gees, and Bob Seger. Their high-energy performance of Coldplay's "Viva La Vida" is a particular crowd favorite.

"The Bronx Wanderers have been an audience favorite here at the Wildstein Center," added Garren. "We are so lucky to book them

during their short break from Bally's in Las Vegas, so I'm looking forward to dancing in the aisles."

Tickets are available online at [www.sfscarts.org](http://www.sfscarts.org) or at 863-784-7178. Tickets are also available at the 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.

SFSC Cultural Programs are funded by the Florida Department of State's Division of Cultural Affairs. Upcoming performances include:

"So Good for the Soul: A Tribute to Motown" on Jan. 28; ArTRAGEous, a family experience of dance, music and art on Jan. 21; Pam Tillis and Lorrie Morgan: The Grits and Glamour Tour set for Feb. 8; and the top-selling Christian contemporary group Point of Grace on March 9.



# 'Flying Horse Big Band' to open Good Time Tuesdays Matinee Series



Jan.  
10



Courtesy photo

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 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 as one of the few college groups to have its first two professional

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.

# MATINEE

## FROM PAGE 1

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 Alone" 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](http://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.

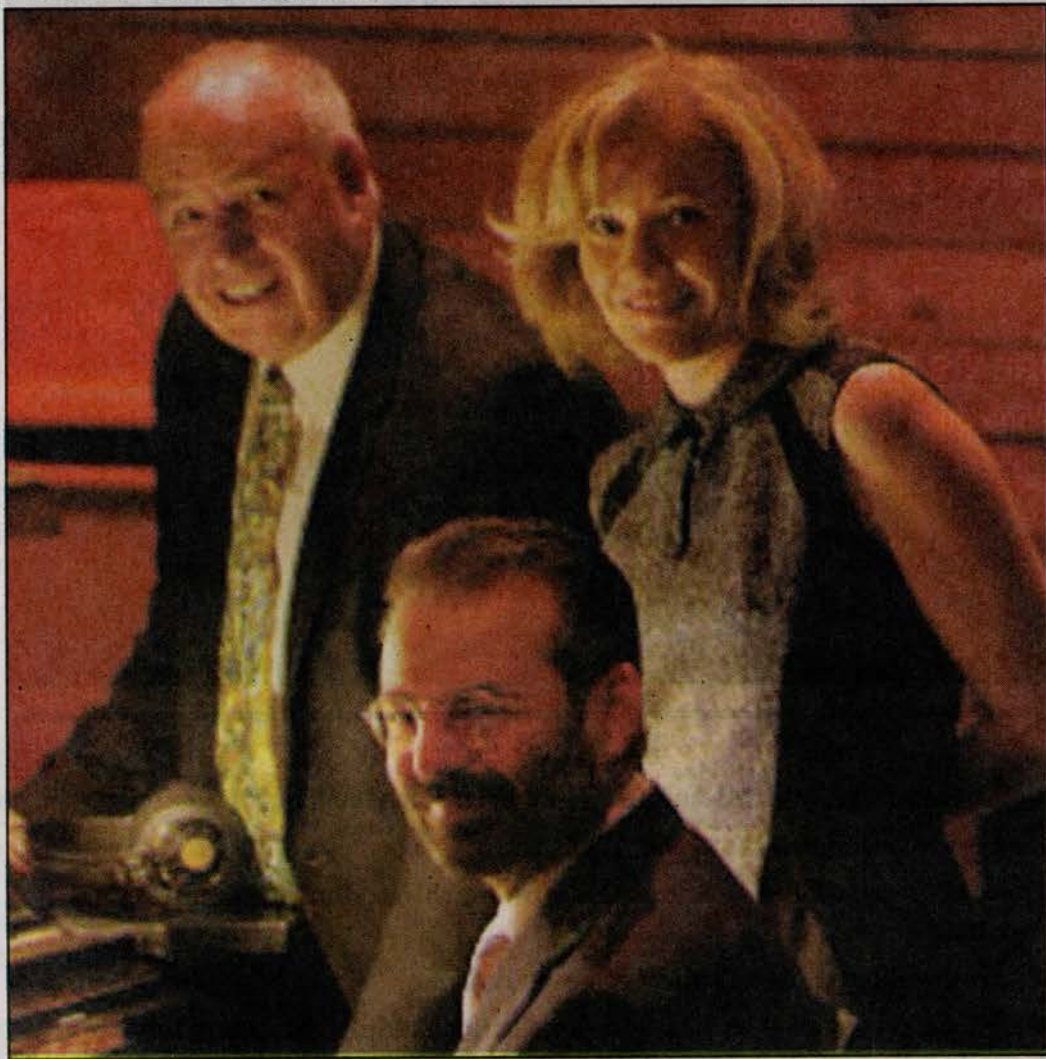




COURTESY PHOTO

**Pianist David Osborne will perform next Tuesday at 1:30 pm. at South Florida State College's Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the Highlands Campus in Avon Park. Osborne's lineup of music includes romantic, classical, jazz, pop, patriotic and Broadway show tunes. Osborne's is the second of 10 performances of this season's Goodtime Tuesdays Matinee Series at SFSC. Tickets range from \$16 to \$22. Groups of 12 or more receive a 15 percent discount plus a free ticket for the group leader. Tickets are available online at [sfscarts.org](http://sfscarts.org) or by phone at (863) 784-7178.**

## JAZZ SERIES OPENS



COURTESY PHOTO

South Florida State College kicks off its 2017 Jazz Series next week with the Eddie Metz Trio, performing Wednesday at 7 p.m. in the University Center Auditorium on the Highlands Campus in Avon Park. Metz has toured with the Count Basie Orchestra, the Bill Allred Classic Jazz Band and the Les Brown Orchestra. He has worked with such greats as Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughn, Arturo Sandoval, Sammy Davis Jr., Rosemary Clooney, Chick Corea and Patti Page. Metz continues to record with top artists and perform at jazz festivals around the country. Vocalist Nicki Parrott and pianist Rossano Sportiello round out the trio. Tickets for Jazz Series performances range from \$24 to \$35. Five-show subscription packages are available starting at \$107. Tickets are available anytime at [sfscarts.org](http://sfscarts.org) or at the SFSC Box Office. Hours are Monday through Friday, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., or phone (863) 784-7178.



# SFSC performing arts opens jazz series

AVON PARK — South Florida State College will kick off its 2017 Jazz Series with the Eddie Metz Trio performing Wednesday, Jan. 18 at 7 p.m. at the SFSC University Center auditorium on the South Florida State College Highlands campus.

“Discover some of the best jazz south of Chicago right here in Avon Park,” said Cindy Garren, director of Cultural Programs at SFSC.

Metz has toured with the Count Basie Orchestra, the Bill Allred Classic Jazz Band (performing at SFSC in February), and the Les Brown Orchestra. Metz continues to record with top artists and perform at jazz festivals around the country. Vocalist Nicki Parrott and pianist Rossano Sportiello round out the trio. This performance is sponsored by Marie and James Krenisky.

## Jazz trumpet coming Jan. 26

Trumpet sensation Bria Skonberg will light up the stage on Jan. 26. A specialist in classic American hot jazz, Skonberg expands the vocabulary and traditions of Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet with worldly rhythms and modern jazz variance, Garren noted.

Skonberg has brought home dozens of awards including the 2015 Jazz at Lincoln Center Swing! Award, DownBeat Magazine’s Rising Star, New York Bistro Awards and Outstanding Jazz Artist.

## Classic Jazz Band

Bill Allred’s Classic Jazz Band brings its love of jazz history to Florida’s Heartland on Feb. 9. The band is apt to play anything from Jelly Roll



Courtesy photos

Trumpet sensation Bria Skonberg takes to the SFSC University Center auditorium stage on Jan. 26.

Morton to Count Basie, hitting all the stops between. The band uses the five-horn front line typical of bands like Matty Matlock, Billy Maxted, and Red Nichols.

The New Orleans Nighthawks, led by clarinetist John Skillman, bring their traditional swing and

## Dixieland jazz

New Orleans Dixieland jazz is coming to SFSC on Saturday, Feb. 18. The addition of two trombone players makes the Nighthawks’ voicing and arrangement unique among bands. This performance is sponsored by Peter and Dale Caldwell.



The Eddie Metz Trio performs at the SFSC University Center auditorium on Jan. 18.

## CanAmGer Band

Representing a collection of musicians from Canada, America, and Germany, the CanAmGer Band will play their brand of classic Dixieland jazz. The band has toured worldwide since forming in 2004 and deliver a rousing performance of audience favorites.

The 2017 Jazz Series Season is sponsored by Charles and Anne Reynolds, Clem and Betz Newbold, Dr. and Mrs. Norman L. Stephens Jr., Patricia McShane, Lake Placid Health and Rehabilitation, William Browning, Rev. Lynne Josselyn and Larry

Conrad, and media sponsor Sun Coast Media Group, Inc.

Tickets are available at [www.sfscarts.org](http://www.sfscarts.org) or at the SFSC Box Office at the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts.

Box office hours are Monday through Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The box office number is 863-784-7178.



# SFSC Matinee Features Musical Storyteller

Musical storyteller Brian Gurl returns to South Florida State College's Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. with his production "You'll Never Walk Alone," a two-hour celebration of songs of inspiration and hope.

Featuring Marilyn Freemom and The Band with Good Spirit, "You'll Never Walk Alone" will feature a range of inspirational songs from "Amazing Grace" to "The Impossible Dream," to "You Raise Me Up."

"Gurl is a terrific theatrical entertainer," said Cindy Garren, director of Cultural Pro-

grams at SFSC. "Our patrons always enjoy his upbeat musical performances, and I'm sure this new production will lift spirits up"

Tickets are \$16, \$18, and \$22. Groups of 12 or more receive a 50 percent discount with the group leader receiving one free ticket.

Gurl grew up along the Connecticut River in western New Hampshire. He began studying classical piano when he was 6. His gift of perfect pitch was discovered by his father when Gurl asked, "Why is the lawn mower running in the key of G?"

By the time he was 8 years

old, he delighted his classmates and friends, playing by ear many popular melodies he had heard on radio. Much to the chagrin of his piano teacher, Gurl started sneaking in rhythmic and melodic embellishments to his renditions of Chopin and Beethoven.

By his late teens, Gurl was making his full-time living as a pianist and expanded his artistic horizons to include ragtime, jazz, blues, pop, and Broadway tunes.

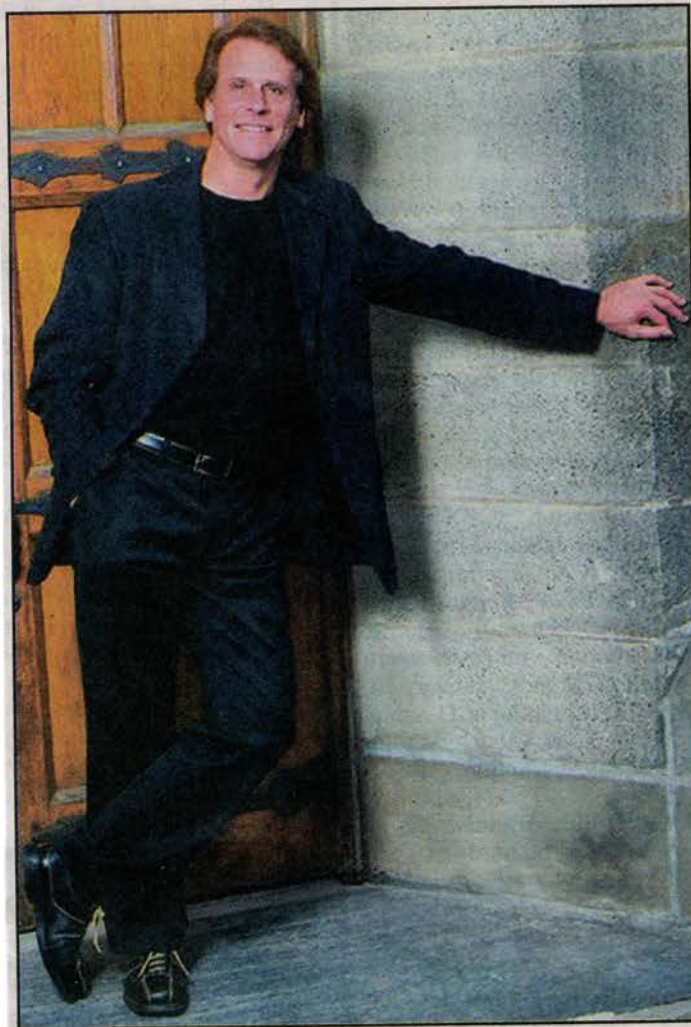
Gurl is "a combination of Liberace, Vladimir Horowitz, and Roger Williams," said the Asheville (NC) Citizen Times in a review of his work.

Tickets are available online at [www.sfscarts.org](http://www.sfscarts.org) or by phone at 863-784-7178. Tickets are also available at the Wildstein Center Box Office located on the SFSC Highlands Campus, 600 W. College Dr., Avon Park. The Box Office is open Monday – Friday, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The SFSC Goodtime 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 presents more than 30 national and internationally touring artists at its 1,460-seat Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at SFSC and the 250-seat SFSC University Center Auditorium located on the Highlands Campus. SFSC Cultural Programs receive funding from the Florida Department of State's Division of Cultural Affairs and sixty performance sponsors.

Upcoming performances at SFSC include: Murder on the Nile on Jan. 31; Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis Tribute Show, Feb. 7; and Pam Tillis and Lorie Morgan in "The Grits and Glamour Tour," Feb. 8.



COURTESY PHOTO

Brian Gurl is renowned for his piano prowess.



# The 2017 Jazz Series Is In Full Swing At SFSC

South Florida State College kicked off its 2017 Jazz Series this week.

"Discover some of the best jazz south of Chicago right here in Avon Park," said Cindy Garren, director of Cultural Programs at SFSC, invites. "Our intimate 250-seat SFSC University Center Auditorium has superb acoustics that makes for a great listening experience."

Next up is trumpet sensation Bria Skonberg, who lights up the stage on Thursday, Jan. 26.

A specialist in classic American hot jazz, Skonberg expands the vocabulary and

traditions of Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet with worldly rhythms and modern jazz variance, Garren noted.

Skonberg has brought home dozens of awards including the 2015 Jazz at Lincoln Center Swing! Award, DownBeat Magazine's Rising Star, New York Bistro Awards Outstanding Jazz Artist, and nomination for the Jazz Journalists' Association's "Up and Coming Artist" award. This is one performance not to be missed, Garren added.

Bill Allred's Classic Jazz Band brings its love of jazz history to Florida's Heartland on Feb. 9. The band is apt to

play anything from Jelly Roll Morton to Count Basie, hitting all the stops between. The band uses the five-horn front line typical of bands like Matty Matlock, Billy Maxted, and Red Nichols.

The New Orleans Nighthawks, led by clarinetist John Skillman, bring their traditional swing and New Orleans Dixieland jazz to SFSC on Saturday, Feb. 18. The addition of two trombone players makes the Nighthawks' voicing and arrangement unique among bands

Representing a collection of musicians from Canada, America, and Germany, the CanAmGer Band will play their brand of classic Dixieland jazz. The band has toured worldwide since forming in 2004 and deliver a rousing performance of audience favorites.

Patrons of the Jazz Series will find the SFSC University Center Auditorium by using Entrance 1 at the SFSC Highlands Campus, 600 W. College Dr. Avon Park.

Tickets for Jazz Series performances range from \$24 to \$35. Five-show subscription packages are available starting at \$107. Tickets are available anytime at [www.sfscarts.org](http://www.sfscarts.org) or at the SFSC Box Office at the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the SFSC Highlands Campus. The Box Office hours are Monday through Friday, 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. The Box Office number is 863-784-7178.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Trumpet sensation Bria Skonberg will enthrall jazz enthusiasts.**





# The Florida Orchestra to perform on SFSC stage

By **KIM LEATHERMAN**  
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK—The Florida Orchestra is celebrating its 50th season this year. As part of the orchestra's first state residency program, a special concert will be held tonight (Thursday, Jan. 19) at 7 p.m. at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at the South Florida State College.

The concert will be Brahms, Mozart and

Mendelssohn, conducted by guest principal conductor Stuart Malina.

Malina has been with the orchestra for five seasons. He is also a pianist and composer, winning a Tony Award for orchestration with Billy Joel in the musical "Movin' Out."

There will also be a pre-concert talk at 6 p.m., free to concert ticketholders. The Florida Orchestra public relations manager Kelly Smith said the talk



will enrich the concert experience. "We highly encourage it and find it makes the concert experience even

better," said Smith. "The talk will be given by conductor Stuart Malina and the general manager, Edward Parsons, who are

both incredible speakers. Expect it to be engaging and informative."



The concert will be Brahms, Mozart and Mendelssohn, conducted by guest principal conductor Stuart Malina

Courtesy photos

The Florida Orchestra brings masterworks, pops, rock and coffee-style music to communities throughout the state.



# STAGE

FROM PAGE 1

The concert will feature principal oboe player John Upton performing Mozart's "Oboe Concerto." The Juilliard and Eastman School of Music graduate has held the principal oboe position with The Florida Orchestra since 2015. The Florida Orchestra's professional musicians are hired through national and international auditions. They come from prestigious institutes including Juilliard, Central Conservatory of Beijing, and Eastman School of Music, among many others.

The Florida Orchestra is the largest professional orchestra in the state with over 60 musicians performing over 100 concerts each year to 175,000 people. Based in Tampa, The Florida Orchestra brings

masterworks, pops, rock and coffee-style music to communities throughout the state.

## Youth concert set for Friday

The full orchestra will perform the same concert Friday, Jan. 20, for the youth of Highlands County at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts.

The state residency is sponsored by the Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, The Florida Council of Arts and Culture and the State of Florida.

"What we've seen and heard in Tampa Bay has been so rewarding and uplifting that we want to share it and help enrich these and other vibrant communities in

Florida," music director Michael Francis said in a press release. "The power of live music on people's lives is truly extraordinary."

Tickets for today's (Thursday) concert can be purchased at [sfscarts.org](http://sfscarts.org) or by calling 863-784-7178. More information on The Florida Orchestra can be found at [www.floridaorchestra.org](http://www.floridaorchestra.org).



# 'Grits and Glamor' coming to SFSC

Country music stars Lorrie Morgan, Pam Tillis perform Feb. 8

By **MARC VALERO**

STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — A double dose of "Grits and Glamour" will take place at the South Florida State College's Wildstein Center stage on Feb. 8 with country hit makers Lorrie Morgan and Pam Tillis.

Morgan and Tillis combined have recorded 28 top 10 hits, including 12 number one songs and sold more than 18 million records.

Morgan's hit list includes: "Something in Red," "Five Minutes" and "Except for Monday."

Morgan spoke to Highlands News-Sun by phone on Tuesday from her Nashville home.

She has been touring with Tillis for five years with the "Grits and Glamour" tour, Morgan noted. She originally toured with her and Carlene Carter in the 1990s in the "Kraft Macaroni and Chicks Tour" as Tillis jokingly called it.

Tillis approached Morgan at the Grand Ole Opry about five years ago and suggested they tour together.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Lorrie Morgan's hit list includes: "Something in Red," "Five Minutes" and "Except for Monday."**

"We've already done one album ('Dos Divas') and we just had a meeting Sunday night about our second album together, so we are pretty serious about this," Morgan said.

Tillis is a "great professional" and

has a great sense of humor and a very sentimental side, Morgan said.

"We were both single mothers and on the road (performing), trying to run a business," she said. "We just have a lot in common; we



# SFSC

FROM PAGE 1

are the same age and we've been through the same stuff.

"I respect her music; she is a perfectionist when she sings, which puts me on my 'A-game.'"

Morgan is the daughter of Country Music Hall of Fame member George Morgan.

She never had a sit-down lesson with her father about the music business, but learned from always being with her dad while he was on the road, at the Opry, performing, signing autographs, etc.

"One thing my dad always did say - 'never say you can't, until you try,'" Morgan said. "So I always tried to push myself to the max."

Along with performing with Tillis, Morgan said she has been doing shows with Joe Diffie and Mark Chesnutt called, "Country Unplugged."

Morgan's first three albums, "Leave the Light On" (1989), "Something in Red" (1991) and



COURTESY PHOTO

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"One thing my dad always did say - 'never say you can't, until you try,' So I always tried to push myself to the max."

Country singer Lorrie Morgan, on her father, George Morgan

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"Watch Me" (1992), all earned Platinum Record awards.

Her Greatest Hits collection (1999) is also Platinum.

Tillis is the daughter of country star Mel Tillis

Her hit list includes: "Shake the Sugar Tree", "Mi Vida Loca", "Don't

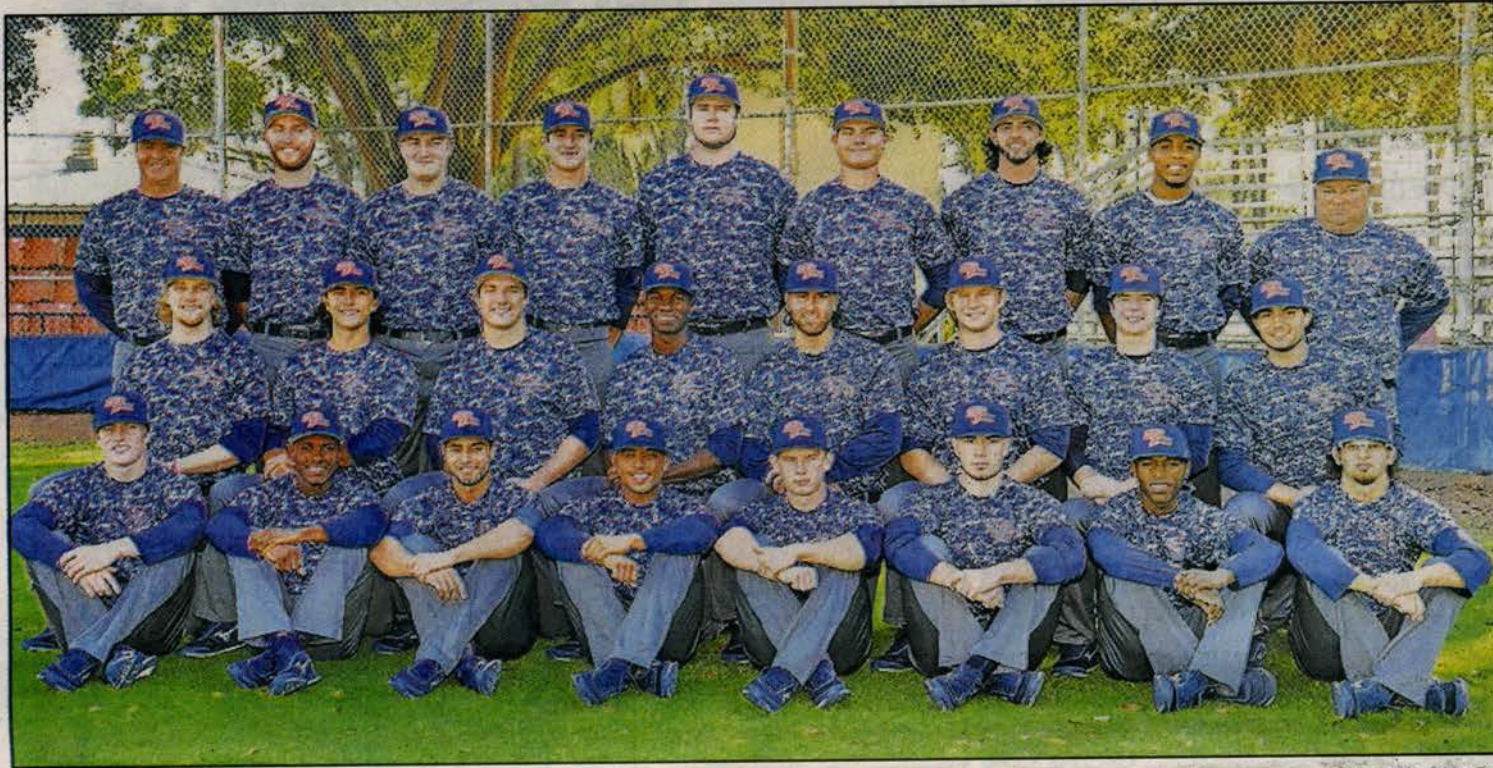
Tell Me What To Do" and "Maybe It Was Memphis."

Seats are limited for the 7 p.m., Feb. 8 show, which is nearly sold out.

Check the college's website, under performing arts, for ticket information at [www.sfscarts.org/shows](http://www.sfscarts.org/shows).



# Panthers take the field



COURTESY PHOTO

The South Florida State College baseball team opens the season with a home game today against the Eastern Florida State College Eagles at Panther Field.



# South Florida baseball, softball teams ready for action

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

The South Florida State College Panther baseball and softball teams take to the field for their opening games of the 2017 season today.

Both teams kick off the season at home on the Panther athletic fields at the SFSC Highlands Campus in Avon Park.

The Panther baseball team goes up against Eastern Florida State College at 3 p.m. and the Lady Panther softball team takes on Palm Beach State College at 2 p.m.

"We're coming off a solid fall season and are ready to play ball again," said SFSC baseball coach and athletic director Rick Hitt. "We had a lot of good days in the fall with plenty of opportunities for the players to improve themselves and solidify a position on the spring roster."

This spring, Hitt will field nine players from last year's season, joined by 14 freshman. While this year's team features many first year players, Hitt said the returning Panthers form a "solid nucleus whose peer leadership makes for good team chemistry."

"All the players, new and returning, showed great effort level during the fall and I'm pleased with where we are as we open the season," Hitt said.

Hitt will coach his 19th year at SFSC, and his 29th season overall. In recognition of his dedication to student athletics, Hitt was inducted into the Florida College System Activities Association (FCSAA) Hall of Fame in 2015 on the recommendation of athletic directors and coaches from across the state.

The Panthers went 27-27 overall in last year's season, with a .285 batting average.

In preparation for the season opening, a recent practice session saw Hitt throwing pitches to the players from behind a netted screen, bellowing out instructions, advice, and encouragement.

"We work very hard on the details," Hitt said. "We concentrate on the little things a lot."

This season marks the second year baseball teams play the flat seam baseball, introduced by the National Junior College Athletic Association to inject more offense into the game, doing away with the high seam baseball.

"The flat seam ball has definitely added some pop into the game offensively," Hitt noted. A sentiment he said many other coaches voiced while at a recent national conference.

The opening game has the Panthers take on the Titans of

Eastern Florida State College. The Titans went 33-19 last season, ranking seventh in the NJCAA Region 8 Baseball Coaches' Poll.

"Eastern Florida went to the state tournament last year so they are a solid opening day opponent," Hitt said. "They're coached by former big leaguer Jeff Tam and he coaches a very talented roster."

This year, Hitt is assisted by Mark Ward, a former assistant coach at Indian River State College. "Mark teaches at Okeechobee High School and his dedication to our team shows in his driving an hour and half to and from each practice and game," Hitt said of his new assistant coach.

Conference play starts for Panther baseball March 1, when they travel to Bradenton to play the Manatees of State





COURTESY PHOTO

The South Florida State College softball team kicks off the season with a home game today against Palm Beach State College at Panther Field.



# PANTHERS

FROM PAGE 10

College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota.

Former Major League player Willie Hernandez will be on hand for the Panthers opening day ceremonies.

In 1984, Hernandez became only the third player ever to win the Cy Young Award, the MVP Award, and the World Series title all in the same season (Sandy Koufax was the first to accomplish this feat, in 1963 and Denny McLain did it in 1968.)

Hernández signed with the Philadelphia Phillies as an amateur free agent in 1973. He was selected by the Chicago Cubs from the Phillies in the 1976 Rule V Draft.

In his first two years in the majors (1977 and 1978), Hernandez went 16-9 with a 3.03 ERA in '77 and a 3.77 ERA in '78. The Cubs gave him a try as a starter in 1980, but he went 1-9 that year in 7 starts and 53 games pitched.

From 1979 to 1982, Hernández was 9-19 and gave up 128 earned runs in that time. After being traded to the Phillies for Bill Johnson and Dick Ruthven, he went 8-4 with 3.29 ERA and 7 saves. The Phillies made the World Series that year, losing to the Baltimore Orioles in 5 games.

Prior to the 1984 season, Hernández was traded to the Detroit Tigers with Dave Bergman for Glenn Wilson and John Wockenfuss. He had a 9-3 record, 32 saves and a 1.92 ERA in 140 innings pitched, while recording 112 strikeouts. In the

entire season Hernandez gave up only 6 home runs, 30 runs, 36 base on balls, and 96 hits. His 32 saves came in 33 opportunities.

Hernández won the 1984 American League Cy Young Award, beating out Dan Quisenberry. He also became one of the few relievers to ever win the Most Valuable Player Award (the others are Jim Konstanty, Rollie Fingers, and Dennis Eckersley), edging out Kent Hrbek.

The Tigers finished 104-58 that season, and went on to sweep the Kansas City Royals in the American League Championship Series and defeat the San Diego Padres in the 1984 World Series, four games to one. Hernandez pitched five innings in the series, had two saves, and gave up only one run.

His overall postseason stats include a 2-2

record and a 1.32 ERA in 10 games, 13 innings pitched. He walked 2, and struck out 7.

On opening day, fans of Panther athletics can also take in a softball game when coach Carlos Falla leads the Lady Panthers as they go up against Palm Beach State College.

Falla, now in his 13th year coaching at SFSC, will lead an experienced team. The Lady Panthers return 11 sophomores to the field this season, with nine first year students making the roster.

"We have a fair amount of potential this year," said Falla. "They're out there every day working hard and trying to get better."

The team finished its last season with overall record of 24-25, winning 17 of its games at home.

"This year I'm seeing a consistent level of

depth with this team," Falla said. "We're moving from trying to be better than we were yesterday to being better than we were the last play we made."

Falla added, "The approach means working with players to correct things between pitches instead of between innings."

In their opening game, the Lady Panthers of SFSC face off against the Palm Beach State College Panthers, who went 17-37 overall last season.

Amanda Byers returns for her second year as assistant coach to the Lady Panthers. "Amanda is an amazing assistant who shows true dedication to the players," Falla said of Byers, an SFSC alumna who played under him. "She hammers home the basics, both on and off the field,

with an emphasis on academics.

The Lady Panthers don't start conference play until March 7, when they go up against Hillsborough Community College.

"We invite everyone out to the ball park this season to see great baseball and softball," Hitt

said. "Folks shouldn't forget that admission to all games is free."

Hitt had a message for everyone at SFSC.

"We can't say enough about the support we get from the campus and the community," he said. "We just want to thank everyone for their support."



# Titans power past Panthers

## Eastern Florida State College beats SFSC on opening day

By **MARK PINSON**  
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — Opening day of a new baseball season is always special.

For South Florida State College, things didn't go quite as well as they had hoped in Friday's game against Eastern Florida State College at Panther Field.

The opening ceremonies were awesome as Highlands County

Sheriff Paul Blackman threw out the first pitch, and former Major League Baseball player and Cy Young and MVP winner Willie Hernandez was in attendance as well.

South Florida State College scored first, but Eastern Florida State College broke out the long ball by blasting three home runs en route to a 15-4 win over the Panthers.

"It was great having Sheriff Blackman and Willie being part of the

opening ceremony and we appreciate them being there," said South Florida State College baseball coach Rick Hitt. "It was nice to see a big crowd on hand, but it certainly wasn't the way we wanted to start the season. Eastern Florida swung the bats extremely well and we really didn't have much for them. That's baseball sometimes."

South Florida starting pitcher Evan

**TITANS | 7**



PHOTO BY MARK PINSON/HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

**South Florida State College's Jordan Austin puts the ball in play during Friday's 15-4 opening day loss to Eastern Florida State College at Panther Field.**



# TITANS

## FROM PAGE 1

Lumbert breezed through the top of the first inning and the Panthers went to work in the bottom half of the frame as leadoff batter Equon Smith was hit by a pitch, moved to second base on an errant pickoff throw and advanced to third base on a wild pitch.

Quentin Davis followed with a booming one-out double to right-centerfield to score Smith for a 1-0 lead.

Eastern Florida right-hander Tommy Romero settled down and retired the next two batters to escape any further damage.

The Titans took advantage of Lumbert's wildness to erupt in the top of the second inning.

Jeff Korte and Ian Acevedo drew walks to

open the rally and designated hitter Elian Merejo blasted a three-run homer over the left-field fence.

Dylan Owens singled, stole second base and raced home on a single to right field by Norberto Navarro.

Sammy Duran worked a walk off Lumbert and Jacob McFadden capped the uprising with a home run over the right-field fence to give Eastern Florida a 7-1 lead.

South Florida threatened in the bottom of the inning as former Sebring standout Matt Portis roped a one-out single to right field and Pedro Castellano smacked a two-out single to right field.

But once again, Romero bore down to retire the next batter to stifle the Panthers rally.

Eastern Florida went back to work in the top of the third inning as Merejo

reached on an infield error and Owens singled to left field.

A wild pitch moved the runners into scoring position.

South Florida brought in left-hander Riley Degnan in relief and Navarro ripped a single to centerfield to plate Merejo and Owens to give the Titans a commanding 9-1 lead.

Romero set South Florida down in order in the bottom of the frame and the Eastern Florida offense went back to work in the top of the fourth inning.

Korte drew a leadoff walk, Acevedo was hit by a pitch and Merejo walked to load the bases with one out.

Owens followed with a high arching shot over the left-field fence for a grand slam to put the Titans on top by a score of 13-1.

"We need to pitch better than we did," said Hitt. "We

also need to have a little better defense."

Eastern Florida tacked on a run in the top of the sixth inning to increase its lead to 14-1.

South Florida managed some offense in the bottom of the seventh inning as Smith launched a two-run homer over the right-field fence to trim the Panthers deficit to 14-3.

Both teams added a run to account for the final score.

"A tough way to start but we have high hopes for the season," Hitt said. "Our players are working hard and they are doing a lot of good things in practice. It may take a us a little while of playing games to try and find out who we might be."

South Florida is back in action with a home game on Wednesday against Lake Sumter State College.

First pitch is set for 5 p.m. at Panther Field.

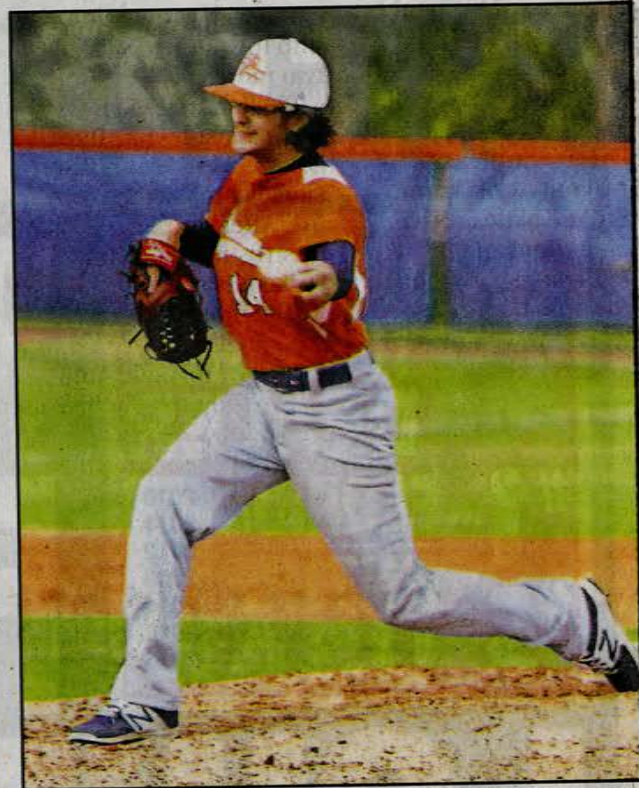


PHOTO BY MARK PINSON/HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

South Florida State College left-hander Riley Degnan came on in relief during Friday's game against Eastern Florida State College.



# Panther softball team splits

## SFSC comes back to win 2nd game

By **CHARLES A. BAKER III**  
CORRESPONDANT

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Panthers opened their 2017 softball season by splitting games in a doubleheader against Palm Beach State College Friday afternoon.

South Florida State College lost their opening game 5-0 and came back to win the nightcap by a 5-1 score.

At the start of the second game, South Florida State College softball head coach Carlos Falla looked over at the baseball scoreboard on another field and saw they were down by a bunch of runs.

“One of us today has to put up a win,” Falla said.

Eleven of the 20 members of the team are returning sophomores including the two starting pitchers Thursday. Vandy Futch struck out nine in game one and Amanda Ross pitched the entire game two, allowing a solo home run and a line-drive base hit.

Sophomore Cristina Colli had a lead off triple to start game two. Newcomer Kimberly Derringer, of Wauchula, drove her home with an RBI single with one out but on the next play one of the Panthers hit into a double play to end



CHARLES A. BAKER III/CORRESPONDENT

**Sophomore Cristina Colli had a lead off triple to start game two. Colli had the second most hits on the team last season with 34.**

the first.

In the top of the second, Ross gave up a solo home run and the score remained tied until the fifth inning when the Panthers had an offensive burst.

Freshman Alyssa Whittington led off the bottom of the fifth with a single

and speedy freshman outfielder Raven Gobourne, of Lake Placid, came in as a pinch runner. Nicole Caruso had a nice bunt putting runners on first and second with one out. After a failed



# SOFTBALL

FROM PAGE 1

follow up bunt made if two outs, Colli came up to the plate for the second time and hit an RBI single bringing Gobourne home.

After a walk, the Panthers had bases loaded with two outs and Hardee High School graduate Derringer got her second hit of the

game with a low ball hard into the outfield scoring two more.

Pitcher Amanda Ross helped insure that she got the win with an RBI single to make the score 5-1. After the game Ross wasn't sure how many strikeouts she had.

"I'm more of a ground ball pitcher," Ross said.

Coach Falla said both Futch and Ross pitched well Friday. He said neither have an overpowering fast ball but both

have good control of the ball.

"Amanda was throwing so well I never wanted to change her out," Falla said.

Ross led South Florida State College in hits last season with 36 and she had a .350 batting average. On the mound, Ross only allowed 25 hits last season and she had a 1.84 ERA.

The Panthers play 50 games over the course of their regular season

between now and late April when the playoffs begin. The Panthers have a bit of time before their next games, which will take place on Friday when they visit Pasco-Hernando Community College. The Panthers return home on Feb. 7 to host Lake Sumter.

Gobourne is the only Panther from Highlands County but there are a few players from nearby Polk and Hardee Counties.



CHARLES A. BAKER III/CORRESPONDENT

**Sophomore Amanda Ross pitched a complete game in the nightcap of a doubleheader against Palm Beach State College on Friday. The Panthers split the two games.**