

# SFSC dental hygiene students make 100 percent pass rate

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS  
NEWS-SUN

Of the nine students who are set to graduate from South Florida State College's Dental Hygiene program, all passed the required National Dental Hygiene Board Examination.

Over the last three years, SFSC Dental Hygiene students have had a 100 percent pass rate on the national board exam, the college said.

The national board exam is an eight-hour written exam that covers every dental education course that the students took over two years.

"The significance is that once a student passes the national board exam, they can sit for the state board exam — the Florida State Clinic Licensure Examination — and then become licensed," said Dr. Deborah Milliken, chair of SFSC's Dental Education Department. The state board exam

is administered by the state of Florida and is a practical exam.

"A student can graduate from a program, but if they aren't licensed, they can't practice as a dental hygienist anywhere in the United States."

Milliken said that upon passing the national board exam, students will take the three components of the state board exam.

"The first portion of the state board exam is computerized, which is

similar to the national exam only constructed by the state," said Milliken. "The second component is a laws and rules exam, covering Florida law."

According to her, the third part is the most difficult portion of the exam because it covers patient treatment. To take the patient portion, students must have graduated from a Dental Hygiene program and passed the national board exam.

Students take a patient

to a designated treatment site. The students select the portion of the patient to treat based on specific criteria from the examiners. According to Milliken, the exam at this stage is stressful because the guidelines are complex, and the exam is timed.

"Because licensure is such an important aspect of making certain that our health care providers are knowledgeable and competent, we take that whole process seriously

at SFSC," Milliken said. "We are proud that our Dental Hygiene students prove themselves every year and go on to become skilled clinicians serving our communities."

SFSC launched its Dental Hygiene program in fall 2003. The Associate in Science degree in dental hygiene program takes approximately two years to complete. For more information about the program, call 863-784-7131.



# SFSC MOFAC presents juried student art exhibition

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS SUN

AVON PARK — The South Florida State College Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC) will present the SFSC Annual Student Art Exhibition, April 5 through May 4, in the museum's gallery on the Highlands Campus, Avon Park.

The exhibition showcases 75 pieces of art created by SFSC art students. The month-long show will feature painting,

drawing, pottery, sculpture design, and graphics.

Megan Stepe, MOFAC's curator, said student shows are always a challenge because of the diversity of art. "While a challenge, these shows are rewarding because it's great when the museum's visitors take in the variety of good art on display," she said.

The exhibition is juried and students will receive awards for their work. An award ceremony and reception will be

held from 5-7 p.m. Thursday, April 20 in the MOFAC gallery. The SFSC Alumni Association and Anne and Charles Reynolds will sponsor the ceremony.

Awards will be given for outstanding achievement in painting, drawing, pottery, sculpture design, and graphics. The Tanglewood Art League will present the Tanglewood Art League Scholarship to an outstanding art student.

The Max Gooding Award will be announced and used to purchase an exceptional student art piece for the SFSC Student Art Collection. This award is made possible by SFSC alumnus Max Gooding.

SFSC MOFAC is open to the public from 12:30-4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. For more information about the museum and its exhibitions, visit [mofac.org](http://mofac.org), or contact Megan Stepe at [stepem@southflorida.edu](mailto:stepem@southflorida.edu).



Self-portrait by SFSC student Dylan Whiteman. This is just one of 75 pieces to be displayed in the month-long art showcase.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Kimberley Wasdin in the interventional cardiac care practice at Florida Hospital Heartland Medical Center.**

## X SFSC grad's late start no obstacle to advancement

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — Kimberley Wasdin, a single working mom with two children in school, didn't let a hectic schedule get in the way of her education. Wasdin graduated from South Florida State College in 2015 with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management degree nearly 15 years after she finished high school.

Now, almost two years after graduating from SFSC, Wasdin has earned her master's degree in business and scored a promotion at work.

With wages stagnant for many working Americans, returning to college for a degree or certificate is one surefire avenue to career advancement.

"I decided to go to SFSC to finish college not only to smooth the way toward career advancement," Wasdin said. "But I also wanted to show my two girls that education is so important their mother was willing to pull out all the stops to get her degree."

For Wasdin, pulling out all the stops meant finding time for classes at SFSC while working two jobs and caring for her children.

"I'm not going to say it was easy," Wasdin recalled. "Thankfully, I have a supportive family in the area who were around to pitch in."

Wasdin, a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, graduated from Frostproof High School in 2002. She started college part time at Polk State College but, unsure of her career path, she stopped taking classes.

Wasdin said she worked in retail for several years and was fortunate to land a job at Florida Hospital Heartland Medical Center in Sebring. She started out as a unit clerk and scored a



# OBSTACLE

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promotion as an assistant working the PACS, or picture archiving and communication system.

Realizing that not having a degree limited her opportunities to climb the career ladder, in 2010 Wasdin decided to enroll in SFSC to earn her associate degree.

"With an eye on managing my time and my long-term goal, I wrapped up my associate degree within two years," Wasdin said. "I accomplished that while working and looking after my kids."

Just as Wasdin was earning her associate degree, SFSC launched its first baccalaureate program. The BAS-SM program gave associate-degree holders an opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree in business without traveling to Lakeland, Tampa, or Orlando. SFSC structured the program to accommodate working adults by offering night, weekend,

and online courses.

"I told myself 'I'm not going to stop now' and opted to apply for the BAS-SM program as soon as I finished my associate degree," Wasdin said.

**With the SFSC BAS-SM** program, Wasdin said she found the career path she had searched for when she tried her hand at college years ago in Polk County.

She immersed herself in her studies at SFSC. She joined Phi Beta Lambda, the premier postsecondary student business organization in the United States, competing in its statewide competitions on behalf of SFSC.

Wasdin excelled in her classes, earning the distinction of membership in the International Society of Baccalaureate Scholars, a scholarly society for top-ranked students who pursue baccalaureate degrees at community and state colleges.

"Kim was an exceptional student who not only wanted to achieve the best grade but truly

wanted to understand the material so that she could grow professionally and personally," said Adam Martin, professor of business administration, who taught Wasdin and also advises SFSC's PBL chapter.

Wasdin's desire to grow professionally didn't stop with her bachelor's degree. Immediately after graduation, she started the online master's degree program in business administration at Lynn University. What's more, she coaxed her mother to start classes with her.

"My mom is a career nurse who has a bachelor's degree in nursing and we agreed to work on our graduate degrees together," Wasdin said. "We completed the program in just one year and both walked across the stage during the same ceremony to claim our degrees."

**Wasdin heaped praise** on SFSC's faculty.

"The faculty at SFSC, Adam Martin, Dr. Tina Cardenas, and William Nielander, did a fantastic job preparing us not only

for careers in business but taught us how to handle rigorous expectations, which prepared me well for my graduate studies."

Last year saw Wasdin earn not only her master's degree but a promotion at Florida Hospital, where she remained employed throughout her studies at SFSC. Wasdin now serves as the practice manager for the hospital's interventional cardiac care physicians' practice.

Sitting in her office with her SFSC degree hanging above her desk, Wasdin said working adults shouldn't tell themselves they don't have the time to earn a degree. "SFSC offers evening classes and an increasing number of online classes that let one study at a time of the day when one has time."

Wasdin noted now that she has finished her degree programs, the central role education plays in a person's future hit home for her.

"I've already told my two girls there's one new rule in the house," Wasdin said. "They're not dating any boys until they have their college degrees."



# Emanon brings live jazz demonstration to SFSC Music Appreciation Class

SPECIAL TO THE  
HIGHLANDS SUN

AVON PARK — To hear David Naylor say it, music does wonders for those who take time to relish its re-freshing effects.

"Music is like a warm bath for the ears," Naylor, who plays trumpet for the Emanon Jazz band, told South Florida State College students, as he stood on the stage of the SFSC University Center Auditorium on the Highlands Campus in Avon Park.

The five-member band had mounted the auditorium's stage not for a regular performance. They were on hand to play for two dozen students enrolled in the morning session of SFSC's music appreciation class. From George Gershwin to Pee Wee Ellis to Pat Metheny, the musicians took the students on a tour of the best of American jazz.

Doug Andrews, who cofounded Emanon Jazz with Naylor six years ago, teaches music appreciation on SFSC's Highlands Campus. His name will sound familiar to many longtime residents: For years, Andrews headed up SFSC's Cultural Programs department, booking performing acts and managing its theater productions until his retirement in 2013.

"Today was an opportunity for my music appreciation students to see a top-notch jazz group up close and get to ask them questions," said Andrews, who returned to teaching last year. "The class text has only one chapter on jazz, so rather than play recordings to supplement the text, the guys agreed

to come out to play for the students."

Andrews, Naylor, and the other band members used the live session to mix in a bit of music history, describe their instruments, and tell how they fell in with love with jazz.

"Now this is the flumpet," Naylor said, holding up his brass instrument. "It's not as sharp as this B flat trumpet, but it sounds softer than this flugelhorn over here," he said, telling the students the flumpet was invented by jazz pioneer Art Farmer, while the flugelhorn served as the inspiration for creation of the saxophone.

Manny Patino, who plays bass, described the versatility of his bass guitar. "With this bass guitar, unlike a standard guitar, I can play cords and bass at the same time," he told the students. Patino said he picked up the bass guitar when he was 12 years old and hasn't put it down since.

"Having Manny on stage today was a real treat for the students," Andrews said. "Here we have an extraordinarily accomplished musician who has toured the world with greats like Arturo Sandoval playing for SFSC students and taking their questions—that's just great."

After leading Emanon Jazz in an original composition, "The Last Blues," Andrews sat at the keyboard, telling the students to watch how the five musicians interacted, sending visual and spoken cues to each other.

"One of the takeaways from today's lesson is the place improvisation plays in jazz," Andrews told the students. "Keep an eye trained on how we interact



Courtesy photos

**The Emanon Jazz band on the stage of the SFSC University Center Auditorium. From left, Doug Andrews, Manny Patino, David Naylor, Stan Mulder, and Martin Rimaldi.**

with each other, sending messages back and forth as we adapt to how we're playing."

In their next set, playing Ellis's "The Chicken," guitarist Martin Rimaldi could be seen pivoting toward Patino and Naylor, with drummer Stan Mulder looking up to watch them exchanging nods.

"Pee Wee is another jazz great and 'The Chicken' is a really funky tune," Naylor told the students, referring to Ellis. "Here's a bit of trivia: Pee Wee grew up nearby, in Bradenton."

One of the students asking questions of the band was Jonathan Mondragon, who also serves as secretary of SFSC's chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for associate and baccalaureate degree-offering colleges.

"We've just started learning about jazz in class, so today's performance really brings the lesson to life," said Mondragon, who is from Hardee County. "What makes jazz special is that it's America's music, a genre that was, so to speak, born in the United States."

Andrews, whose first

instrument as a high school student was the guitar, said he was the musical "black sheep of the family." He went on:





**Doug Andrews on the keyboard with Emanon Jazz.**

“How did I come to love Jazz? I can’t answer that because nobody in my family liked jazz, especially my father—I just fell in love with it on my own.”

After the students shuffled off to their next class, Andrews thanked his fellow musicians for coming out and agreeing to stick around for the afternoon session of music

appreciation.

“These guys are not only great to play with but they’re so amazingly talented,” Andrews said, “Sometimes I think I’m the weakest link in the chain when we’re on stage,” said Andrews, who has spent his entire career in music, arranging, composing, teaching, playing, and putting on shows.

# Anthropologist to talk about Native Floridians

SPECIAL TO  
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

**AVON PARK** — The Native Americans who once thrived along the Crystal River will be the topic of the next Kissimmee Valley Archaeological and Historical Conservancy lecture at South Florida State College.

Nigel Rudolph, an archaeologist with Florida Public Archaeology Network, will speak at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 20 in Building G, Room 101, on SFSC's Highlands campus in Avon Park. The public is invited at no cost.

Rudolph's presentation is titled "Crystal River: Culture and History." The Crystal River was once home to Native Americans and served as a sprawling ceremonial center, attracting people from great distances.

Along the river's banks lies a complex of burial and temple mounds. They are some of the

longest continually occupied ceremonial sites in Florida. Though the Native Americans who lived there are now long gone, their impressive earthen architecture remains. The mounds attracted early archaeologists who discovered decorated pottery, shells and copper artifacts.

"These remarkable earthen structures and artifacts earned the Crystal River site a place among the most famous archaeological sites in Florida," said KVAHC's Anne Reynolds, who organized the lecture. "Although the site is well known, there is still much to learn about the people who once thrived on the bountiful Crystal River."

Rudolph is the archaeology coordinator at the Central Regional Center of FPAN in Crystal River. He completed his undergraduate work in cultural anthropology at the University of West Florida and a Bachelor of Fine Arts with



COURTESY PHOTO

**Nigel Rudolph, an archaeologist with Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN), will speak at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 20 at South Florida State College. He will speak about Crystal River, which was once home to Native Americans and served as a sprawling ceremonial center, attracting people from great distances.**

a specialty in ceramics from the University of Florida. Rudolph worked as a full-time field archaeologist for more than a decade before

joining the FPAN in 2013.

The talk is one of a series at SFSC sponsored by the KVAHC. For more information, call Reynolds at 863-840-3995.



# Gregory closes out 30-year teaching career

SPECIAL TO  
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — After 30 years of teaching biology and anatomy and physiology to students at South Florida State College, Dr. Bill Gregory will meet with his final class later this month.

The St. Petersburg native began his teaching career at SFSC in 1987, after a stint working with the Florida Department of Agriculture in Miami.

"I was working in the Miami area researching insects that were damaging the citrus crop," Gregory said. "I saw an advertisement for a full-time teaching position at SFSC and decided to apply."

Gregory said his interests had begun to move toward a career in teaching while he was in Miami, so the prospect of teaching college-level biology was one he was ready try.

"I came up to Avon Park to interview for the job with no real expectations," he said. "I guess they liked me because I got a job offer and have been here ever since."

Through the years, Gregory has taught hundreds of SFSC students introductory biology and anatomy and physiology. His research training, though, qualified him as an entomologist, a scientist who studies insects.

"My area of specialty

centers on wasps that parasitize citrus pests," Gregory said. "After earning my undergraduate degree in environmental sciences at Washington State University, I returned to Florida to study entomology at the University of Florida."

Gregory earned a master's degree while in Gainesville. He completed his doctoral work in entomology at the University of California, Riverside, in the heart of the state's citrus region.

Taking on a full teaching load at SFSC left Gregory no time for research. "I was OK with teaching full time, which kept me just as busy as if I had been publishing and working on

grant-funded research," he said.

In his three decades on the Highlands campus, Gregory said he marvels at the change from a small college to a four-year institution. "I remember back when I arrived there were only three buildings taller than one story," he recalled. He noted a smaller college also lent itself to more intimacy.

"I remember when Building Y was completed and the library moved there from Sachsenmaier Hall. A bunch of the faculty got together and we carried the books over to their new home," Gregory said.

Gregory said his post-retirement calls for

him to remain in Sebring, where he shares a home his wife.

"I plan to devote more time to gardening, especially tending to my pineapples," he said. "I just had my best crop so far with nine pineapples maturing."

He also plans to visit with his two daughters, both of whom live far from Highlands County. One daughter is a registered nurse in Alaska and the other is a geologist researching plate tectonics in the United Kingdom.

"I'm delighted to have worked with so many nice people here at SFSC," Gregory said. "I guess you can say I've had a good run of it here."



# SFSC student competes in national competition

SPECIAL TO  
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — Bryce Langston, a dually enrolled student at South Florida State College, will vie for a top spot at the national competition of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) this summer.

Langston is an Avon Park High School

student who is enrolled in college credit classes at SFSC as part of the college's dual enrollment program. This academic term, he studies accounting under Michelle Leidel, a professor of Accounting and Business Administration.

Langston just returned from the FBLA's state competition in Orlando, where his accounting

knowledge was put to the test. He left Orlando earning first place in the statewide competition.

"I competed in the Accounting 1 event, which consisted of a 100-question, 60-minute test on different concepts and skills I learned in financial accounting at SFSC," Langston said.

Before reaching the state level, Langston had

to place first or second in the district competition.

"I placed first in Accounting 1 for district competitions earlier in the school year," said Langston. "This means I qualify to compete in nationals this summer in Anaheim, California."

FBLA is the largest career student organization in the nation. Each year, FBLA helps its 230,000

members prepare for careers in business.

Phi Beta Lambda, the collegiate arm of FBLA, has a chapter at SFSC for students enrolled in its Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management (BAS-SM) program.

After taking the top spot in the state competition, Langston heaped praise on his

SFSC professor.

"I could not have done it without being taught by my amazing and knowledgeable financial accounting professor, Ms. Leidel," said Langston.

"I am so very proud of Bryce placing first in both the district and state level," Leidel said. "This is a very big accomplishment."



# SFSC encourages young males to continue on to college

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS  
NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — For the second year, South Florida State College welcomed nearly 100 mainly minority male students from the five high schools in Highlands, DeSoto, and Hardee counties to SFSC's Highlands Campus in Avon Park.

SFSC had invited the students to a half-day conference

aimed at motivating them to enroll in college credit or occupational certificate programs after completing high school.

Last year, SFSC launched its Minority Male Initiative to address the faltering rate of high school males — mostly black and Hispanic men — who do not move on to postsecondary education.

After coffee and doughnuts, the students took their seats in

an auditorium-style classroom to hear from SFSC administrators, currently enrolled SFSC students, and college alumni. The common theme: Young men can find a supportive, nurturing college experience at one of SFSC's three campuses and center — an experience that will prepare them for the future.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Brian Kemp addresses high school students at the SFSC Minority Male Initiative.**



# COLLEGE

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"There's one fact that's without dispute," Timothy Wise, SFSC's dean of Student Services, told the students. "Earning a college degree or certificate will result in better employment prospects and higher wages for you."

He was followed by Erik Christensen, SFSC's dean of Applied Sciences and Technologies, who gave the students a glimpse of SFSC's new program in mechatronics, robotics, and technology. Christensen explained that mechatronics is a blend of engineering, computer technology, and electronics intended to create functional and adaptable products.

"If you like technology and producing innovative products, then you want to look into this program," Christensen told the students. He said it launches this fall on the SFSC Highlands Campus and will expand

to the SFSC DeSoto and Hardee campuses the following year.

Wise then ushered six young men to the front of the classroom. He introduced a mix of currently enrolled SFSC male students and alumni who shared their experiences at SFSC with the high school students.

"I knew for me it was important to start local to get a grasp on what college was like — that's why I decided to come to SFSC," said Nathan Mickens, a SFSC graduate working toward his bachelor's degree at the University of Central Florida, UCF, in Orlando. "Right out of high school, some guys want to go on to a big university away from home then often find themselves overwhelmed and lost amid thousands of students."

The students also heard from Emmanuel Santine, Greg Rawlings, Jose Torres, Richard Sherrill, and Equon Smith. The stories from each student were different but the message was the same: You can get into SFSC, you can

succeed, and a future is awaiting you.

Rawlings, who earned his associate degree at SFSC and is poised to graduate from UCF, lauded the individual attention students get at SFSC.

"When I was here at SFSC, I could sit down with my advisor, Rob Hampton, and get individualized guidance on what courses to take to complete my degree," Rawlings said. "At UCF, I'm just one of tens of thousands and don't get the one-on-one attention I did at SFSC."

"Let's face reality," said Brian Kemp, Hardee Senior High School's football coach and dean of students, after taking over from the SFSC panel. "Many of you come from single family homes, you're economically disadvantaged, or you have nobody in your family who graduated from college to whom you can turn to for advice, so you need to take to heart what these men just told you."

Wise had invited Kemp



COURTESY PHOTO

**From left, Richard Sherrill, Greg Rawlings, and Nathan Mickens take questions from high school students who attended the SFSC Minority Male Initiative.**

to present a motivational talk to the students, one that would jolt them.

The former college football player and track athlete energetically paced back and forth, hurling admonitions, bellowing advice, and drawing howls with his down-home wisdom.

"Listen here! You never get a second chance to make a first impression," Kemp intoned, slapping his hands together.

"When you first meet a professor or employer, your every word, reaction, and mannerism

is going to stick in his or her mind. So, look presentable, speak well, and be polite."

"I grew up in Bowling Green, I went to Hardee Senior High School, I was you 14 years ago," Kemp said. "I know what it's like, so you guys need to listen. Plus, when I played football at Hardee, we never lost to Avon Park." That zinger that brought jeers from the Avon Park students and a roar from the Hardee contingent.

Leaving the tease behind, Kemp drew

lessons from his college days, urging the young men to plug into support networks, stay focused on graduation, and make their mothers proud.

According to most metrics, male college enrollment lags that of females. The disparity is especially pronounced among minority males. While the college enrollment rate of black and Hispanic males has increased in the past decade, they still enroll in fewer numbers than their non-minority peers.

Also, fewer minority males go on to graduation.

As the conference wrapped up, Wise told the students their application fee would be waived if they applied to SFSC by month's end. He then oversaw the drawing of names, awarding one student from each high school a \$500 scholarship if they enroll in SFSC for the fall academic term.

For more information on SFSC's male initiative, contact Wise at 863-784-7104 or wiset@southflorida.edu.





COURTESY PHOTO

**Sonji Nicholas, from left, Summer Xiong, Margaret Dunn, Kelsey Pena, and Michelle MacBeth. Not pictured is Abigail Wiggins.**

# SFSC students named to All-Florida Academic Team

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

**AVON PARK** — The Florida College System, FCS, has named four South Florida State College students to the 2017 All-Florida Academic Team.

Each year, the FCS names an All-Florida Academic Team to honor students enrolled in Florida's public state and community colleges for their academic achievement, leadership, and service to the community.

The four SFSC students were recognized at an awards ceremony April 7 in Tallahassee. They are: Margaret Dunn, Kelsey Pena, Abigail Wiggins

## SFSC

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and Summer Xiong. They joined 127 of their peers from the 28-member FCS in being named to the academic team.

"This is the 23rd year that the Florida College System has selected an All-Florida Academic Team," said Madeline Pumariega, the FCS chancellor, in a message to the students. "Our state relies on students like you who earn high-quality degrees and contribute to the skilled workforce fueling Florida's economic growth."

Students named to the team were drawn from SFSC's Honors Program and the college's Tau Epsilon chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, PTK, an international academic honor society.

The students attended a luncheon where they were presented with a medallion recognizing their achievements. Sonji Nicholas,



# SFSC goes to Portugal, Spain

## Study abroad information session next week

SPECIAL TO  
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — South Florida State College will host an information session on its study abroad tour of Portugal and Spain from 6-7 p.m. Thursday, April 27 on the SFSC Highlands campus in Avon Park, in Building B, Room 112.

The information session will cover details about a nine-day trip to Lisbon, Seville and Madrid in spring or early summer 2018. Anyone interested is welcome to attend. The information session will discuss cost, payment options, scholarships, the early bird discount and college credit. Dr. Theresa James, professor of English, and Melanie Jackson, director of eLearning, will lead the information session.

The trip includes air fare, hotels, breakfasts,

several dinners, and visits to many notable landmarks in Lisbon, Seville, and Madrid led by a full-time tour guide, including use of a bus.

The itinerary includes a visit to the old world Atlantic port of Lisbon, Portugal, which once launched explorers such as Vasco de Gama. Participants visit the Moorish Alfama district, 16th century palaces and churches, a medieval castle, and Lisbon's modern neighborhoods.

Next stop is Seville, Spain, home of bull-fights, flamenco and Don Juan. Guests take in the ancient walled town of Évora, navigate the twisting alleys of the Barrio de Santa Cruz, admire the 1,000-year-old Alcázar Palace and visit the grand, gothic Seville Cathedral.

The tour proceeds to Madrid, where guests

wander through the Puerta del Sol, the heart of the Spanish capital and view the La Estación de Atocha and the Egyptian Templo de Debod. Optional excursions to Toledo and Barcelona, Spain, are available.

Those interested in SFSC's study abroad program should plan to attend the information session, where they can ask questions and receive printed information. Attendees can add their email to a mailing list to learn about future trips.

The SFSC Highlands campus is located at 600 W. College Drive, Avon Park. For more information on SFSC's study abroad program, contact James at 863-784-7185 or [jamest@southflorida.edu](mailto:jamest@southflorida.edu) or Jackson at 863-784-7018 or [melanie.jackson@southflorida.edu](mailto:melanie.jackson@southflorida.edu).



# Student to speak of affection for SFSC at commencement

SPECIAL TO  
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — Emily Swenson likes South Florida State College so much, she wants to come back after she earns her bachelor's degree.

"I cry when I think about leaving SFSC when I graduate in May," Swenson said. "There's something special about the college that got me telling the dean of Student Services, Dr. Wise, I wanted to come back here to work."

But Swenson is unlikely to act on that whim. She has her sights set on a career in broadcast journalism, one she hopes will see her on TV in a major metropolitan market.

Swenson will tell of her love for SFSC, who at the college spurred her to excel and her plans for the future when she delivers the student Commencement address at SFSC's graduation ceremony at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 4 in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the Highlands campus in Avon Park.

It was volleyball that brought Swenson to SFSC. As a young girl, she took up the game through the YMCA and,



SWENSON

under the tutelage of the same coach, continued playing through to her years at Middleburg High

School, a short drive from her family's home in Orange Park.

"SFSC was the first to offer me a volleyball scholarship, so I accepted straightaway," Swenson said. "My dad drove me down and, as the landscape grew increasingly more rural, I said 'Am I going to like this place?'"

As Swenson tells it, her worries were soon put to rest. She fell in easily with her volleyball teammates. Swenson, at 5 feet, 11 inches, plays right side hitter for the Lady Panthers. Her team spirit and easy going personality led to her selection as the team's co-captain.

"I've always been outgoing and enjoyed being out in front of people," Swenson said. "Way back in elementary school, I served as the anchor for our in-school TV news program that was broadcast to the classrooms."

Fittingly, among

Swenson's favorite classes at SFSC was Fundamentals of Speech Communications, a course required of all students and dreaded by many. "I went into this course knowing I would learn a lot I could use down the road," she said.

"The instructor, Lynn MacNeill, fulfilled my expectations. He broke down all the key concepts, giving the students the do's and don'ts."

With encouragement from Andy Polk, SFSC's coordinator of Student Life, Swenson ran for election to a post in the Student Government Association in her first year on campus. She won a spot on the SGA executive board, overseeing public relations. At Polk's nudging, she sought higher office in her sophomore year, gaining the support of her colleagues to become the SGA president.

During her tenure, Swenson served as the voice of the student body and as a liaison with faculty and administration, promoting educational and social student activities aimed at fostering an engaged student body.

So, it was only natural, Swenson, thought, to put herself out front one last time. She threw her

hat into the ring when it came time to choose a student Commencement speaker. Her leadership and achievements on campus persuaded the organizing committee they had found their speaker.

"When I first met Emily I knew she had great leadership qualities," Polk said. "I've seen her work extremely hard to bring out those leadership qualities being an outstanding leader for our student body."

For her part, Swenson lauds Polk for his support. "Andy Polk saw in me an ability, and he gave me the confidence to run. I've come to learn that at SFSC, with encouragement you get from the instructors, the coaches, and folks like Andy Polk, you can open door after door, each leading to something rewarding."

What Swenson sees as ultimately rewarding is a career in broadcast journalism. She will enroll in the University of Central Florida this fall and begin working toward a degree in the university's Nicholson School of Communication. She has a hankering to get in front of the camera, either reporting the news or anchoring a show.

First, though, she and fellow SFSC student will make their way to Haiti this summer for an eight day mission trip as part of a church's outreach to help residents on the impoverished Caribbean island.

With just a few weeks before she'll take to the stage to deliver her address to the students she led as their president and their families, Swenson is putting her remarks in their final form. "I want the speech to say who influenced me, who made my time here at SFSC so special and leave a message for those going on to university and the younger people in the audience who will soon go to college."

Swenson said her message to the students, those moving on and those who will take their place at SFSC, will mirror the advice she has given in her role as SGA president to new students during the college's regular orientation sessions.

"I wouldn't cherish my time at SFSC as much as I do now had I not gotten involved with life on campus," Swenson said. "When you get involved, you feel invested, which makes your time here all the more rewarding."



# MOFAC recognizes SFSC students for award-winning art



**AVON PARK** — South Florida State College's Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC) honored the winners of its annual juried student art exhibition during a reception on April 20.

The awards ceremony recognized drawings, paintings, sculpture, and a range of other artwork students created during their studies in SFSC's Art Department. The students' art is on display in MOFAC's gallery through May 4.

"We've had an amazing number of great pieces up for consideration this year," said Megan Stepe, the museum's curator. "This year saw 32 students submit 81 works for consideration by the jury."

Ann-Louise Abbott walked away with the Max Gooding Best in Show Purchase Award for her set of ceramic figures titled "Elephant to Heart Series." She received \$400 for the four-piece set depicting the transformation of an elephant to a human heart.

Max Gooding, an alumnus of SFSC's art department, sponsors this top prize and other awards. Gooding, who went on to earn a degree in landscape architecture at the University of Florida, owns a landscape architecture consultancy, the Max Gooding Company, in Naples, Fla.

This year, two students, Alex Rodriguez and Meagan Smith, won the Max Gooding Award of Excellence for their artwork. The honor comes with a \$100 check for each student.

Six students received the Best of Media Award, with each awardee receiving \$75. The winners were Taylor Webb,

two-dimensional mixed media; Whitney Williams for three-dimensional media; Alexis Conner, pottery; Ray Espidol, drawing; Abigail Zevallos, painting; Lindsey Mangrum, photography.

Awards of Merit were presented to Destinee Ellis, Ann-Louise Abbott, Meagan Smith, Lyla Gill, Jasmine Santana, Magdalena Rodriguez, Lizbeth Silva, and Kalani Dubberly.

This year's ceremony

included the addition of new award category: People's Choice award. Stepe said the winner was chosen by a vote of the students' colleagues. Kelsey Pena's drawing titled "This Took Forever: Morgan Antush" came out on top as the people's choice.

Also new this year, was the President's Award. SFSC president Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel selected one piece that garnered a \$100 award. Josie Wilson's photograph titled



Courtesy photos

**Best in Show winner Ann-Louise Abbot, left, with Megan Stepe.**

"The Pale Lady" was the president's choice.

Members of the Tanglewood Art League were on hand to present their sixth annual scholarship award. This year

the league tapped two students to share the award. Abigail Zevallos and Kalani Dubberly each took home \$300.

The show was juried by Joey Sacco, a local artist,



**President's Award winner Josie Wilson with SFSC president Dr. Thomas C. Leitzel.**

former SFSC adjunct art instructor, and a member of MOFAC's Advisory Committee.

The 2017 Student Art Exhibit sponsors were the SFSC Alumni Association, SFSC Art Club, Mary Coats, Max Gooding, Terri McLaren, Karla Respress, Anne and Charles Reynolds, Tanglewood Art League, and Linda Zimolzak.

The exhibition will be on view at MOFAC through May 4. The museum is open to the public from 12:30-4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, or by appointment for group tours. Patrons of the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts may visit the museum one hour prior to performances. For more information, call Stepe at 863-784-7240.



# SFSC celebrates commencement in two ceremonies

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS  
NEWS-SUN

**AVON PARK** — South Florida State College will celebrate spring commencement in two ceremonies on May 4 — at 4:45 and 7:45 p.m. — in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts, Highlands Campus, Avon Park.

The 4:45 p.m. ceremony features students who are earning their Bachelor of Science degrees in Supervision and Management (BAS-SM), Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), Associate in Science (AS) degrees, occupational and college credit certificates, and State of Florida High School diplomas. Steven Cullipher, who earns his BAS-SM degree, will be student commencement speaker at this ceremony.

During the 7:45 p.m. ceremony, students earning their Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (BSEE) and Associate in Arts (AA) degrees will march across the stage for their



FILE PHOTO

**A pair of 2015 South Florida State College grads with the school's Panther mascot. SFSC will celebrate commencement in two ceremonies on May 4 — at 4:45 and 7:45 p.m.**

diplomas.

The student commencement speaker is Emily Swenson, who earns her Associate in Arts degree.

Some 466 students will have met the SFSC graduation requirements for the spring commencement. Of these, 212 receive their AA, 68 receive their AS, 132 receive occupational or college credit certificates,

and 21 receive their State of Florida High School diplomas. The BAS-SM program will graduate 14 students, the BSN program graduates 13 students, and the BSEE program graduates six students. Participating in

the two Commencement ceremonies will be 320 students.

Receptions will be held in the Catherine P. Cornelius Students Services and Classroom Complex (Building B) immediately following each of the Commencement ceremonies.

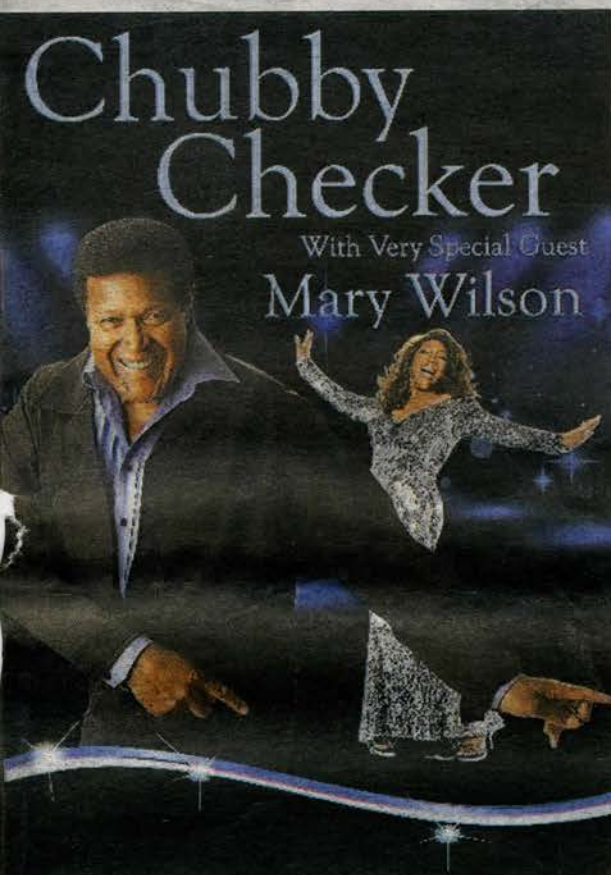
Live online streaming, accessed by clicking a website banner at [www.southflorida.edu](http://www.southflorida.edu), will allow friends and relatives to see everything from the processional to the last graduate crossing the stage. The stream begins on May 4 at 4:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Mace bearer and chief marshal for this year's ceremony is Thomas Bush, and marshals are Elizabeth Andrews, Davida Austin, Brian Bohlman, Junior Gray, Robert Hampton, Melanie Jackson, Lorri Jaques, Theresa James, Cynthia

Kinser, Kristina Lewis, Michelle Macbeth, Adam Martin, Claire Miller, Ricardo Pantoja and Lena Phelps.

The commencement rehearsal takes place at 10 a.m. May 4 in the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts.





# The BIG reveal

## SFSC announces next season's performance lineup

By JERRY MEISENHEIMER  
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK — The mounting suspense is over. Those wondering about the lineup of performances at the South Florida State College for the 2017-2018 season got their answers on Tuesday, April 18. Cindy Garren, Director of Cultural Programs for the college, excitedly announced performers or groups that will headline each of the four distinct cultural categories.

Shows will be in the 1,460-seat Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts and at the more intimate University Center, both on the SFSC campus.

The categories are: Artist Series (10 events); Matinee Series (10 events); Trending Now Series (five events); and the Jazz Series (five events).

The agenda for the 2017-2018 Artist Series includes:

- Calamity Jane, starring Louise Mandrell

- Petula Clark
- Menopause
- American Bandstand
- Chubby Checker and Mary Wilson
- Amazing Grace
- The Florida Orchestra
- The Righteous Brothers
- Music City Hit Makers
- Dancing with the Movies.

The complete list of next season's schedule, including Matinee, Trending Now and Jazz series, is available at the box office or online.

For the past 30 years or so, those in the audience for the final show of each season had to remember to bring paper and pencil to write down next year's lineup that was kept a secret until then. Many times, some of the acts and dates were tentative and subject to change.

But, this year, sponsors of the various series and season ticket holders gathered at the Grogan Center in Avon Park for an elegant night out. After enjoying hors d'oeuvres, beer and wine, music by the Turnstiles, and a delicious dinner provided by Chicane's, the nearly 250 cultural minded people in attendance got to hear the lineup. Some of the more famous artists had even provided promotional videos to show to the crowd of what to expect.

SFSC President Dr. Thomas Leitzel started things off at the podium by reminiscing about how things were before; and, how they've changed over the years. He thanked last season's sponsors who supported the 37 performances



Jerry Meisenheimer/Highlands Sun

Cindy Garren, Director of Cultural Programs, announces the 2017-2018 performance lineup for the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts and the more intimate University Center.





# SFSC

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held at either the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts or at the 250-seat University Center.

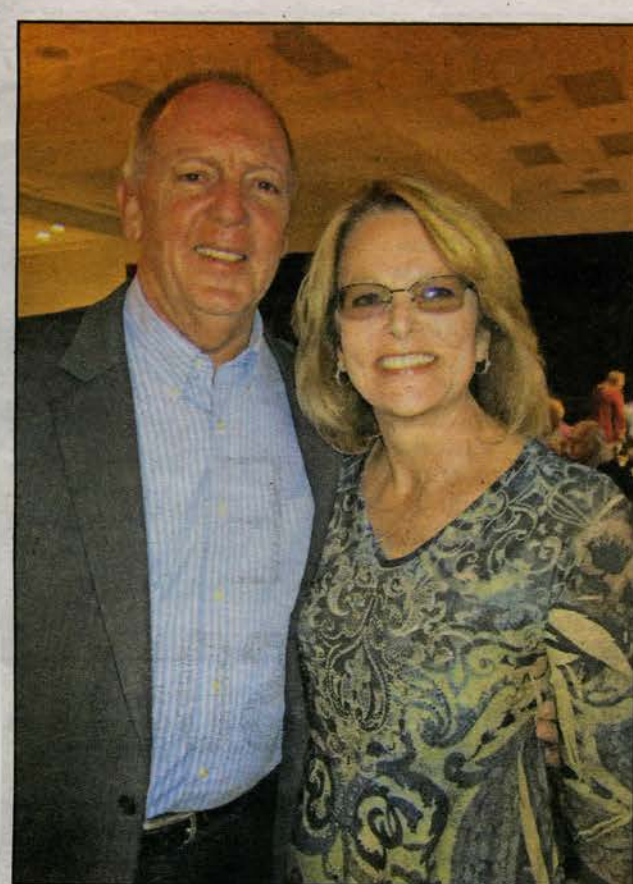
Two longtime sponsors were recognized for their commitment to the college: Bill and Lisa Jarrett, owners of Bill Jarrett Ford in Avon Park, and Michael Ewing and Peter Bloom of the Cohan Radio Group in Sebring. Next, each of the additional sponsors in the audience were introduced. The list included Highlands News-Sun executive editor Romona Washington.

A fun feature of the gala evening was a photo booth with musical instruments available to use as props. SFSC box office manager Lorrie Smith and her husband, David, took advantage of the fun and donned guitars for the photo op. David Smith was also one of the sponsors.

Last season 31,600 tickets were sold for all the performances. Most were sold out. There were 963 season ticket holders, known as subscribers, who attended every performance in the series of their choice. Plus, the ballet, "Beauty & the Beast," featured 60 local children along with the professional cast.

Subscribers will receive notice soon giving them the opportunity to reclaim their seats from last season or perhaps request to move to other available seats in the theater. After that happens, single ticket sales will be announced.

Any businesses, or individuals wishing to sponsor one of these quality shows are encouraged to learn more by contacting Cindy Garren at 863-784-7177 or sending an email to

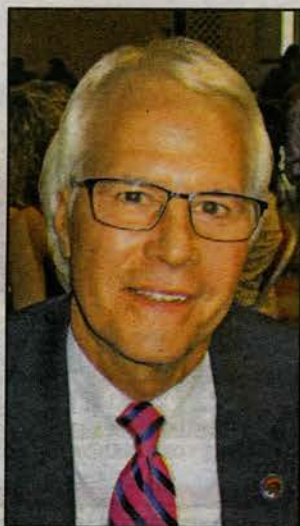


**Above: Special recognition was given to longtime Cultural Arts supporters Bill and Lisa Jarrett, owners of Bill Jarrett Ford in Avon Park.**

Jerry Meisenheimer/  
Highlands Sun

**Right: SFSC President Dr. Thomas Leitzel welcomed sponsors and subscribers to the Reveal Dinner, held at the Grogan Center in Avon Park.**

garrenc@south florida.edu.  
Sponsorships start as low as \$350 and include seats and other perks.



**Lorrie and David Smith ham it up for a photo opportunity at the SFSC Reveal Dinner. Lorrie is the box office manager at the college while her husband, David, is one of the series sponsors.**



## **SFSC Summer Volleyball Camps**

The South Florida State College Panthers volleyball program will be holding three camps this summer. Cost is

\$80 and camps are for those ages 6 to 16 and run Monday through Thursday between 5:30 and 8 p.m. Camps take place June 12 to June 15, June 26 to June 29 and July 31 to Aug. 3. Players who register by May 26 will be guaranteed shirt size. Applications may be found online at [www.southflorida.edu/athletics/volleyball](http://www.southflorida.edu/athletics/volleyball) or call coach Kim Crawford at 863-835-2377 (cell) or 863-784-7037 (office) or at [kim.crawford@southflorida.edu](mailto:kim.crawford@southflorida.edu) for more information.

## **SFSC Athletic Awards Day**

The South Florida State College Athletic Department will be hosting their 2017 Awards Day on Monday, May 1, in the University Center auditorium and lobby.

The athletic department will be recognizing all student athletes for their contributions to the 2016-17 athletic season at 5 p.m. in the auditorium, followed by a reception in the lobby with snacks and drinks. All fans, parents, friends, and SFSC employees are welcome to attend. There is no charge to attend this event, nor are reservations required.



# SFSC grad's late start opens doors

SPECIAL TO THE HIGHLANDS  
NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — On May 4, Steven Cullipher will graduate from South Florida State College with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Supervision and Management (BAS-SM) degree nearly 30 years after he finished high school.

Cullipher will talk about what brought him to SFSC and why he opted for a business degree when he delivers the student commencement address at the first of two SFSC graduation ceremonies

at 4:45 p.m. Thursday in the Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts on the Highlands Campus in Avon Park.

"One thing that bothered me throughout my working years was that I never finished college," Cullipher said. "I was doing well in my career but I knew in the end I could only go so far."

For Cullipher, that career was theater and TV lighting. "Right out of high school, I enrolled in a collegiate arts school in North Carolina," Cullipher said. "I picked up a knack for stage lighting and that evolved into the only line of work I did throughout my entire career."

Cullipher mastered the art and technique of crafting expert stage lighting for sets in the entertainment business, hospitality industry, and special events, including those for presidents.

"I worked on a lot of cool projects, and it was good work," Cullipher said. "And it did a good

job of paying the bills."

His career took him to New York City, where he advanced to lighting systems integration, helping to fashion the sets for the MSNBC network. Cullipher came to realize, though, that not having a degree was holding him back from promotion to a management-level position.

"I saw others inch up the career ladder," Cullipher said. "They had degrees, and I didn't."

A temporary assignment to work on the Universal CityWalk theme park in Orlando brought Cullipher to the Sunshine State.

He took a liking to central Florida, convincing his employer to let him set up a branch office in the area. But with two children making their way through elementary and middle school and no chance of making his

way into management, Cullipher and his wife elected to move to a more tranquil setting where they could concentrate on raising their children.

In 2014, the Culliphers moved to Highlands County, which meant giving up lighting work, but freeing him to pick up where he left off years ago. "Going back to college was always at the top of my bucket list," Cullipher said. "I went immediately to SFSC to enroll in classes with an initial goal of earning my associate degree, then a bachelor's in business."

Cullipher described his first semester as something of a "whirlwind." "I was taking a full load of courses and playing the full-time dad role, which proved to be challenging," Cullipher said. "But it was manageable and without a doubt

worthwhile."

After wrapping up his associate degree, Cullipher segued right into the BAS-SM program.

SFSC launched its BAS-SM program in 2012, giving associate-degree holders an opportunity to earn a bachelor's degree without traveling to Lakeland, Tampa or Orlando.

"The BAS-SM program has been an incredible experience for me, one that has led to some measure of self-discovery," Cullipher said. "I learned a lot about things I hadn't done well in my professional work and a lot about things I had excelled at — experience gives context to what you learn in the classroom."

Cullipher sees some benefit to having started his college studies with years of work behind him. "In the BAS-SM

program, the instructors bring actual business experience into the classroom, and that made a big difference for me," Cullipher observed. "Real-world experience was something I could relate to."

Cullipher credits his professor, Tina Cardenas, with nudging him to go after the student commencement speaker role. "Some of my classmates tried to egg me on but I was hesitant. It was Dr. Cardenas who gave me a look that said 'you should do this,'" he said.

"I'm going to talk about my story because I think a lot of folks will relate to being in a position where you've reached an impasse and have nowhere to go in your career," Cullipher said. "Folks can come up with so many reasons not to go back to college, but they're almost always wrong."



CULLIPHER



# SFSC athlete develops unique friendship

By **CINDY MARSHALL**

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

**AVON PARK** — What could a 64-year-old lady standing 4-foot-5 and a volleyball player from South Florida State College standing 5-foot-10 have in common? A unique friendship.

As the South Florida State College volleyball team finished up their last practice of the season on Thursday and said goodbye to the graduating sophomores, Mary Beth Boudrias was unaware of the surprise lurking around the corner for her. Volleyball Coach Kim Crawford called Boudrias into her office to work on some paperwork before she departed to her home in Fort Pierce.

Throughout the past two years, Boudrias developed a close bond with Frances Goff, 64, of Avon Park, who is a consumer at Ridge Area Arc and a Special STARS athlete. They met while the volleyball team was providing training to the consumers at the agency last year and continued keeping in touch at various events at the college when the Special STARS athletes would attend.

It would be nothing to see this outside hitter for the SFSC volleyball team sitting next to Goff at an SFSC baseball game or hold her hand during a volleyball practice with the Special STARS. On Good Friday this year, Boudrias

was heartbroken when she came to the Arc campus to play volleyball with Goff and her friends but Goff was nowhere to be found. She had gone home with a friend for the Easter weekend.

"Where's Frannie?" Boudrias raced through the Arc workcenter in a panic searching for her. She could not wait to see her friend again. It was truly heartbreaking to see the tears swell in her eyes after she realized Goff was not there that day. But, nonetheless, she was reassured she would be at the next volleyball practice on April 21.

That's when the SFSC Lady Panthers pulled a fast one on Boudrias and hid Goff behind them as Boudrias approached the outdoor volleyball court at Arc. As they parted in the middle and unveiled their surprise, Boudrias smiled from ear to ear and screamed "Frannie, you're here." She ran toward her and gave her a big hug. They were inseparable for the entire hour while the players played volleyball with the Arc consumers. It was a hot day, so Boudrias took Goff by the hand and they went inside the workcenter where they played indoor chair volleyball so they could sit and talk.

Goff continued to honor Boudrias and her volleyball friends on April 21 by presenting each of them a rose to show appreciation for all their time volunteering to play volleyball at Arc.



COURTESY PHOTO

**Frances Goff (front) surprises her friend Mary Beth Boudrias (left) during her last day on the campus at South Florida State College with the help of volleyball coach Kim Crawford (right).**

Boudrias and the other sophomores on the team got a chance to say goodbye to all the consumers and share where they were heading next. Boudrias will be playing volleyball and continuing her education at Florida College in



# UNIQUE

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Temple Terrace.

"I am sad that Mary is leaving," Goff said after the Arc recognition. "I want to see her again."

The wheels were then put into motion to work with Coach Crawford to make one last memory for the two unique friends. Goff sneaked around the corner of Crawford's office on April 27 to surprise Boudrias one last time. The two hugged one more time and sat and talked about their day. Goff presented Boudrias a picture collage featuring several photos of them together throughout the past two years. It made Boudrias cry.

"Why you crying Mary?" Goff asked as Boudrias wiped away her tears.

"You made me really happy Frances. I will always cherish this gift," Boudrias told Goff as she hugged the pictures.

Boudrias and Goff posed for more pictures. She introduced Goff to her boyfriend Evan Shaffner, who plays on the SFSC baseball team. Boudrias and Goff walked hand in hand to the SFSC gym to see the volleyball team one last time. The team stopped practice and came over to say hello to Goff as the gentle giants stood around her in a circle.

"I just love her. She is so special to me," Boudrias said before the two parted.

Their friendship will not end because Boudrias informed Goff that her college will be playing SFSC next season and invited Goff to come to the game.

"I'll be there," Goff said.



Mary Beth Bourdias admires the picture collage of her and Frances Goff.



Mary Beth Bourdias (left) receives a rose from Frances Goff as a token of appreciation during their volleyball training at Ridge Area Arc on April 21.

COURTESY PHOTOS



# Panthers win 3rd in a row



CHARLES A. BAKER III/CORRESPONDENT

South Florida State College second baseman Evan Schaffner tries for a double play Monday night against St. Petersburg.

## SFSC baseball team 2 games out of 4th place

By **CHARLES A. BAKER III**  
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK — Freshman Riley Degnan pitched a great game in his debut start for the South Florida State College Panthers Monday night.

"He just got put in the rotation two weeks ago," said SFSC head coach Rick Hitt.

Degnan had no wins and four losses in the 27 innings he pitched before Monday. Degnan left the game with a 5-1 lead versus the St. Petersburg College Titans after pitching eight full innings.

"It was a gritty performance at the end," Hitt said.

After St. Petersburg College scored two runs in the top of the ninth and got a runner on first, Hitt summoned 6-foot-7 freshman pitcher Kyle Coleman of St. Cloud.

Coleman initially threw out of control heat with a hard thrown four-pitch walk upon entering the game. With runners on first and second. The Titans attempted a double steal and Venezuelan freshman Pedro Castellano picked off the Titan running for third to get the first out. The Titans hit a loop to center to put runners on first and

third with one out.

Coleman on the mound, Castellano at third and Evan Schaffner at second all celebrated with gusto when Coleman ended the game with a foul out and a strike out with no further scoring.

"We put runs up early and they held up," Hitt said.

Haines City sophomore Equon Smith, playing outfield, ran down a sweet diving catch, setting the tone with the first out of the game.

In the bottom of the first, Brett





CHARLES A. BAKER III/CORRESPONDENT

South Florida State College players Franco Commacho (with beard) and Adam Mitchell at sunset on Panther Field Monday.

## PANTHERS

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Norwood got a lead off single and then Blaise Maris came to the plate and smacked a two-run homer to get the lead right away at 2-0.

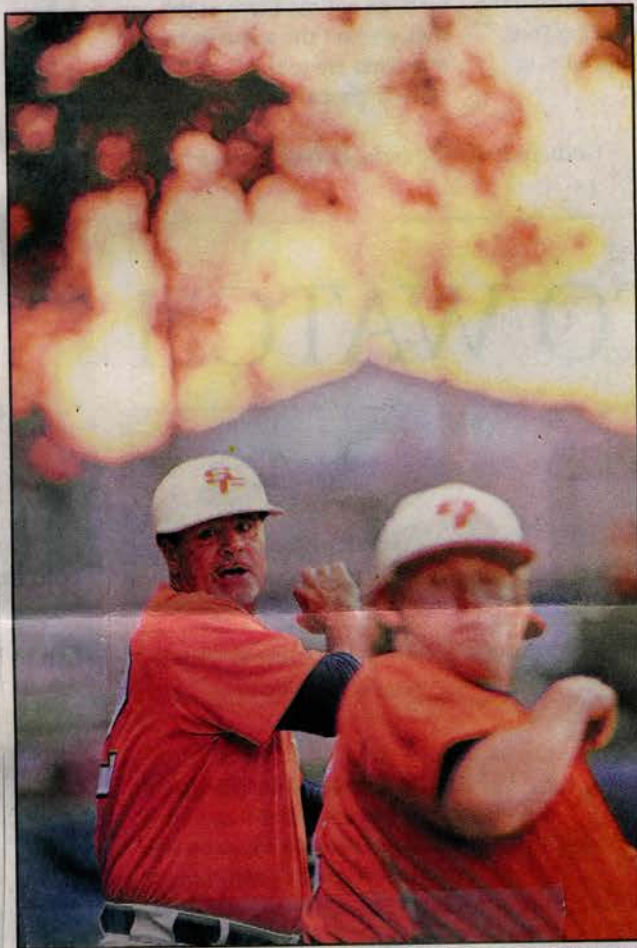
Castellano, Schaffner and Quentin Davis loaded the bases in the bottom of the second inning. Smith came to the plate and hit a foul ball that hurt the Titan first baseman chasing to get it. There was 10 minutes or so of medical treatment before play restarted. Smith came back to the plate without losing any mojo during the down time and drove home his three teammates with a well timed stand-up double to make the score 5-1.

Degnan allowed six hits and one run in eight innings to get his first victory.

Five separate Panthers scored in the win, their third in a row. The Titans, who have lost six in a row, were also scheduled to play the Panthers on Tuesday.

The Panthers (7-13) are tied for fifth place in the Suncoast Conference with nine games left to play.

Six of those games are



CHARLES A. BAKER III/CORRESPONDENT

**With the sun setting over Panther Field Monday night, SFSC Head Coach Rick Hitt and pitcher Adam Mitchell react to a foul ball. The Panthers beat the St. Petersburg CollegeTitans 5-3.**

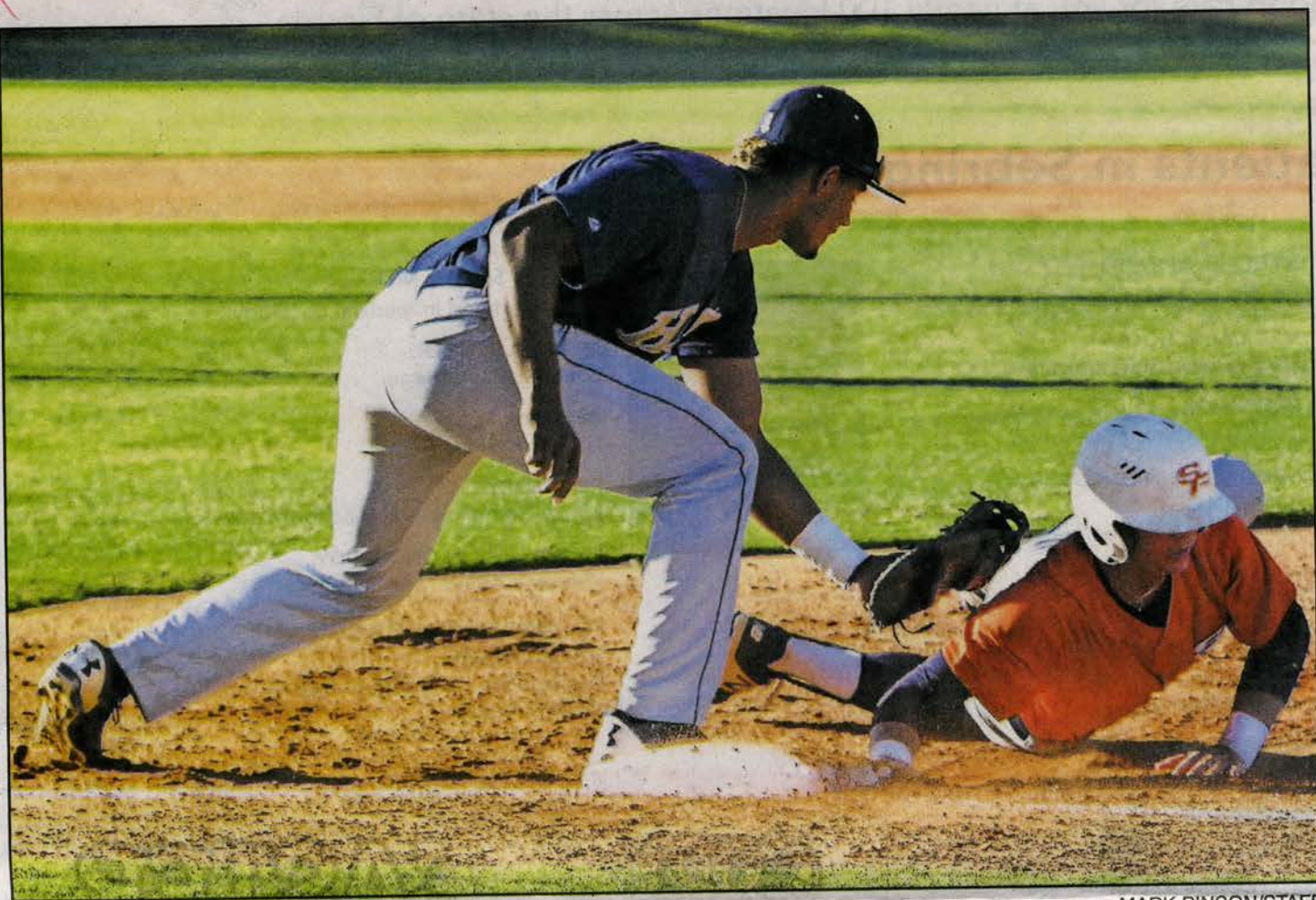
against region leading Polk State College (15-5) and Hillsborough Community College (11-9).

Friday the Panthers play Hillsborough at 6 p.m. and Saturday they

travel to Tampa to play on New York Yankees Community Field 1 near Raymond James Stadium at 1 p.m. The team plays on Yankees property again Monday at 3 p.m.



# Hawks soar past Panthers



MARK PINSON/STAFF

South Florida's Brett Norwood dives back to first base on a pick-off attempt as Hillsborough's Keith Stevens applies a late tag during Friday's game

## Hillsborough takes first 2 games in series with SFSC

By **MARK PINSON**  
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — Hillsborough Community College used a complete-game gem by Orsen Josephina and a pair of home runs to beat South Florida State College by a score of 5-2 on Friday night at Panther Field.

"Their pitcher threw a lot of strikes, stayed in the bottom of the zone and competed on every pitch," said Panther assistant coach Mark Ward. "We have eight games left in the season and we need to win those games, get a little bit

of luck and some magic to go with that luck."

South Florida pitcher Josh Brobowski had a solid outing and kept the potent Hillsborough offense at bay until the top of the fourth inning.

Juan Nunez stroked a leadoff double and scored on an infield throwing error to give the Hawks a 1-0 lead.

Hillsborough extended its lead in the top of the fifth inning as Bryan Lavastida drilled a laser over the left-field fence for a solo home run.

Brobowski retired the next two batters, but Alexandro Martinez launched

a solo homer to left field to make it 3-0.

South Florida finally broke through against Josephina in the bottom of the frame as Matt Portis lined a leadoff double to left field and scored on a sacrifice fly by Franco Comacho to pull the Panthers within 3-1.

South Florida struck again in the bottom of the seventh inning as Pedro Castellano ripped a leadoff double and scored on a two-out single by catcher Blaise Maris to make it 3-2.

Brobowski, who scattered eight hits, retired Hillsborough in the top of the



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eighth inning to give the Panthers a chance to tie or take the lead.

"Josh pitched well," Ward said. "He's a guy that came in kind of raw in the fall, but he's worked hard since day one and is throwing the ball well for us."

South Florida's Brett Norwood smacked a two-out single in the bottom of the inning, but Josephina bore down to get the next batter on a fly ball to right field to end the threat.

Hillsborough tacked on a pair of insurance runs in the top of the ninth inning against Panther relievers Gerig Blackman and Kyle Coleman to increase the Hawks lead to 5-2.

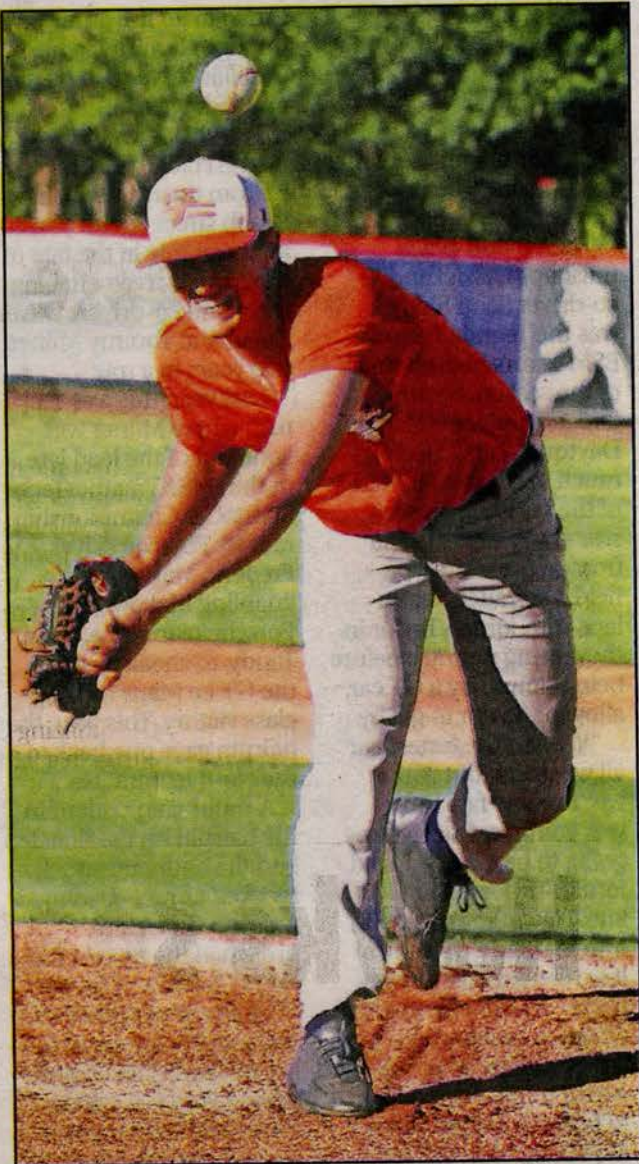
Portis slapped a two-out single in the bottom of the inning, but Josephina, who gave up six hits and struck out seven, induced a ground ball to third base to end the threat and the game.

Hillsborough edged the Panthers 3-2 on Saturday, as South Florida's Cody Spencer threw nine solid innings.

The Hawks led 1-0 until the top of the eighth when Brett Norwood and Quentin Davis both knocked in runs to give the Panthers a 2-1 lead, but the Hawks scored one in the bottom of the ninth and one in the 10th to take the victory.

The Suncoast Conference losses hurt South Florida's playoff chances with only seven games left in the regular season.

South Florida is back in Tampa tonight to wrap up its series with Hillsborough Community College.



MARK PINSON/STAFF

**South Florida's Josh Bobrowski scattered eight hits in his eight innings of work against Hillsborough Community College on Friday.**



# Panthers fall at Polk State



CHARLES A. BAKER III/CORRESPONDENT

According to the public address announcer, the throw to South Florida State College second baseman Evan Schaffner was just a bit high.

## SFSC baseball team begins final series of season tonight

By **CHARLES A. BAKER III**  
CORRESPONDENT

WINTER HAVEN — Since beating St. Petersburg 5-3 on April 3, the South Florida State College Panther baseball team has lost seven games in a row. The Panthers lost to the Suncoast Conference-leading Polk State College Eagles 5-2 Saturday afternoon at Bing Tyus Yard.

Two weeks ago, mathematically the Panthers still had a long shot at making the playoffs, but the team faced six games against the first and third-best teams in the conference with nine left

to play in the regular season.

The slide started on the road against St. Petersburg in an April 4 loss 6-5. The Panthers lost a home game against Hillsborough Community College on April 7 and then lost a heartbreaker in extra-innings against HCC at New York Yankees Community Field 1 near Raymond James Stadium in Tampa on April 8.

HCC shut out SFSC 8-0 on the road last Monday and then the Panthers had to face Polk State College (22-5 conference) for a three-game series starting Wednesday, when the

Panthers traveled to Winter Haven and lost 5-1. The following day the Panthers got shut out 10-0. In the loss Saturday afternoon, the Panthers were down most of the game but had a chance at a comeback in the top of the ninth.

In the bottom of the fifth the Panthers faced runners on first and third with two outs and got out of the inning on a ground out.

In the top of the sixth, freshman infielder Brett Norwood (.277) beat a throw from third on a lead off bunt for



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a single. Catcher Blaise Maris (.289) grounded out and then freshman third baseman Pedro Castellano (.306) hit a stand up double to deep center field to score Norwood and make it 5-2. The Eagles changed pitchers and left Castellano stranded.

Freshman pitcher Adam Mitchell took the mound in the bottom of the sixth with his extreme sidearm pitching. Mitchell led off with a walk and a bunt single to put runners on first and second with no outs. He got out of the inning with two strikeouts and a ground out, stranding two Eagles.

Right before the seventh inning stretch, the Panthers went three up, three down. They did the same in the top of the eighth.

In the bottom of the eighth, the Eagles got a lead off blooper and then Mitchell beamed an Eagle to put runners on first and second with one out. Sebring's own Gerig Blackman got called in

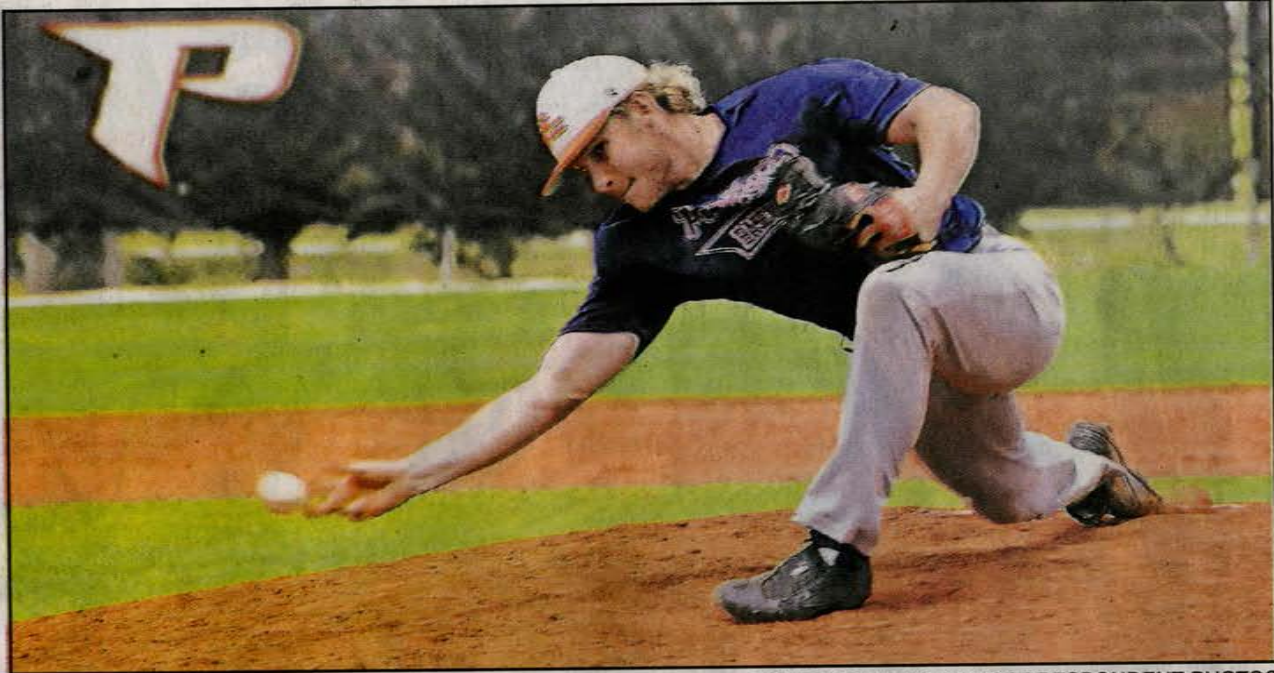
to pitch against Raudy Martinez, an Eagle who hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the fourth. Martinez blasted a shot to the warning track at center and after the runners tagged, they ended up at second and third with two outs. Blackman pitched a ground out to end the eighth.

The Panthers came to life during their last at bat.

Castellano lead off with a single to get the ball rolling. Quentin Davis (.280) grounded out, advancing Castellano to second. Sophomore center fielder Equon Smith (.298) of Haines City got a shot out of the infield to put runners on the corners with one out. Sebring's Matthew Portis (.280) flew out and then sophomore second baseman Evan Schaffner (.225) got beamed with a pitch, loading the bases, but the Panthers couldn't take advantage.

Polk State College is on an eight-game winning streak. The Panthers have lost seven in a row.

"Twenty two wins in this conference is unbelievable," coach Hitt said of the Polk State College NICA Region 8



CHARLES A. BAKER III/CORRESPONDENT PHOTOS

**Freshman pitcher Adam Mitchell delivers a pitch during Saturday's game at Polk State College.**

record. "We were eliminated from the playoffs unfortunately but the team fought hard all year. We came up short a few times, but I'll give some credit to Polk State College."

The final three games will determine who avoids the cellar in the Suncoast Conference. The Panthers and Florida Southwestern are both 7-20 and play each other in the remaining three games of the regular

season.

The final two home games are at Panther Field Monday April 17 and Wednesday April 19 at 6 p.m. The final game of the Panther season is April 21 in Ft. Myers.

"We will play hard for the final three," Hitt said.

Six sophomores graduate after this season. But three of the top four hitters on the team are returning freshmen. Drenis Ozuna leads the team with a .389 average.



**Freshman Brett Norwood of Virginia beat out the throw on a bunt to third in the top of the sixth inning.**



# Panthers, Bucs play for 'low' stakes

## Loser of today's game finishes in last place in conference

HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN SPORTS STAFF

It's not quite the race the South Florida State College Panthers wanted to be in, but today's final game of the season at Florida Southwestern does have some significance for both teams. With the two teams tied for fifth-place in the six-team Suncoast Conference standings, the winner of the game will finish in sole possession of fifth place. The loser will finish sixth, which is just a polite way of saying last.

The Panthers and Bucs began their three-game series on Monday, and Florida Southwestern snapped an eight-game losing streak with a 3-2 victory.

Riley Degnan pitched a solid game for the Panthers, allowing the three runs in 8 2/3 innings, with Matt Portis coming in to get the final out in the ninth. Degnan allowed eight hits and walked one, while striking out seven.

The Panthers managed just six base hits in the game, with Equon Smith having three of those hits and picking up South Florida's lone RBI in the game. The Panthers stole four bases in the game, but were also caught stealing



MARK PINSON/STAFF

**South Florida State College's Equon Smith steals third base as Daytona State College's Alan Burnsed (21) looks to make a tag during a game this season.**

four times.

The teams met again on Wednesday and Evan Lumbert turned in a dominating performance on the mound, throwing a shutout while allowing five hits and striking out 10. The Panthers' offense was held in check once again,

but Lumbert made sure any runs they put on the scoreboard were going to be enough.

Smith and Quentin Davis were both 2 for 4 and scored a run.

Today's game in Fort Myers begins at 3 p.m.