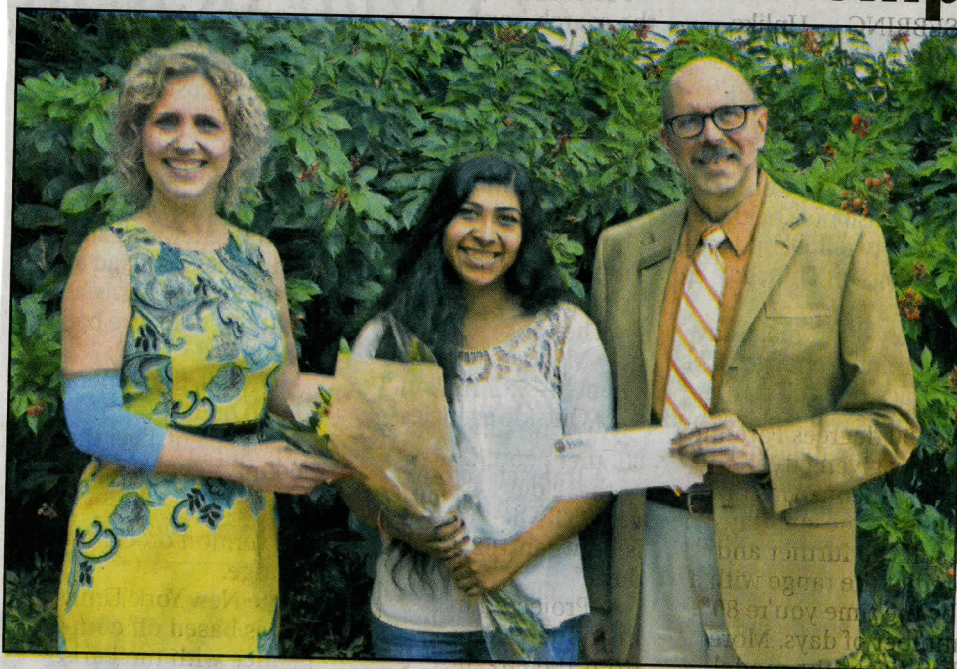


SFSC Foundation awards First Generation Scholarship



Veronica Molina (center) with Jamie Bateman, executive director of institutional advancement at South Florida State College, and Jerry Donna, director of financial aid at SFSC.

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS
NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — Veronica Molina, a Hardee Senior High School graduate and first-generation-in-college student at South Florida State College (SFSC), has been awarded a scholarship that will cover up to 60 credit hours of college tuition through the First Generation Scholarship Program.

The First Generation Scholarship Program supports the efforts of higher education through scholarship funding for first generation students who aspire to attend a Florida college or university. A student is considered "first generation" if neither of the student's parents earned a college degree at the baccalaureate level or higher.

This scholarship was made available through a partnership between the SFSC Foundation, Inc. and the Florida Prepaid College Foundation.

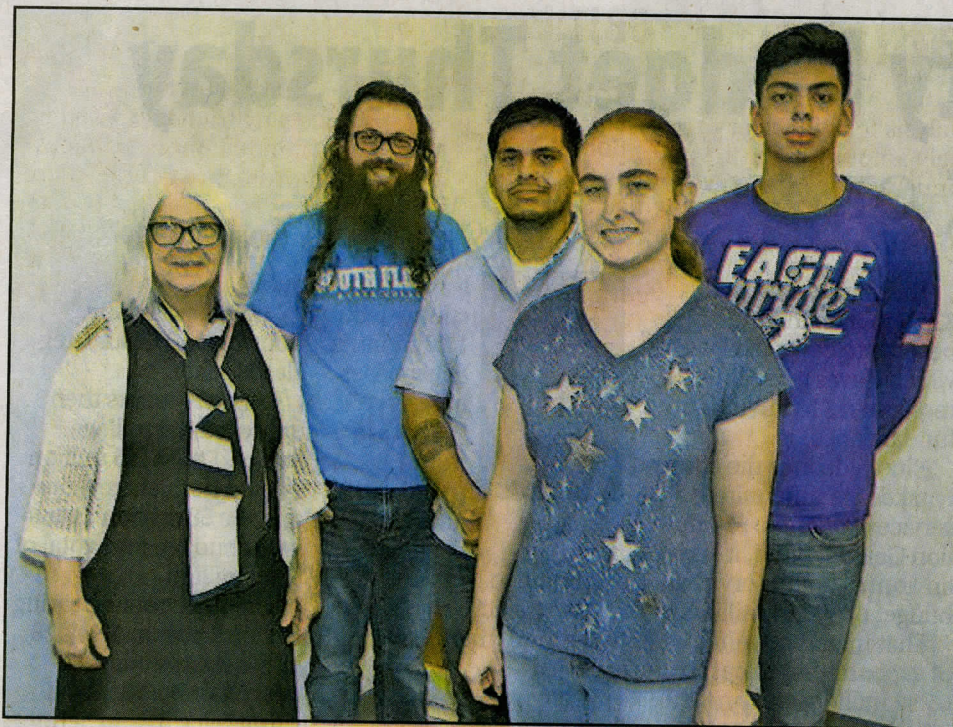
"It's with extreme excitement that we announce Veronica Molina as the recipient of our First Generation Scholarship," said Jamie Bateman, executive director of institutional advancement at SFSC. "This is the first time the SFSC Foundation was able to award a full two-year tuition scholarship for a deserving student. We are grateful to our donors who support our college. It's because of them we're able to match funds when they are offered by the state and grant students like Veronica the chance to make her dreams come true."

Molina's ultimate goal

is to become a physical therapist. She plans to attend SFSC to complete prerequisites and, eventually, transfer to Polk State College for the physical therapy program. The child of migrant workers, Molina began working in the fields after school and on weekends at a young age.

"Working in labor motivated me to continue my educational goals toward a better life," she said. "I choose to follow this career goal because I am a compassionate person, and I enjoy helping others. In fact, becoming a physical therapist will allow me to assist those who are injured and help them recover."

For more information about scholarship opportunities at SFSC, call 863-784-7134 or email finaid@southflorida.edu



COURTESY PHOTO

From left: Dr. Charlotte Pressler with Honors students Nicholas Fischer, Lisandro Hernandez, Cambrie Landress, and Antony Zepeda. Not pictured: Jami Mercer, Leticia Jauregui, Robert ("Bobby") Brown, and Peyton Roberts.

SFSC Honors students receive scholarships

SPECIAL TO HIGHLANDS
NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — South Florida State College (SFSC) awarded eight students in its Honors Program the Edward K. Roberts Book Scholarship, an award that helps students cover the cost of textbooks. The students include: Nicholas Fischer, Lisandro Hernandez, Cambrie Landress, Jami Mercer, Leticia Jauregui, Robert ("Bobby") Brown, Peyton Roberts, and Antony Zepeda.

Students awarded the merit-based scholarship receive \$250 in the form of a credit they can use toward the purchase of textbooks at SFSC's

Campus Store.

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

Students receiving the scholarship must enroll in one honors course during the academic term in which they receive the scholarship. Returning students must achieve a 3.3 cumulative college GPA and continue to make

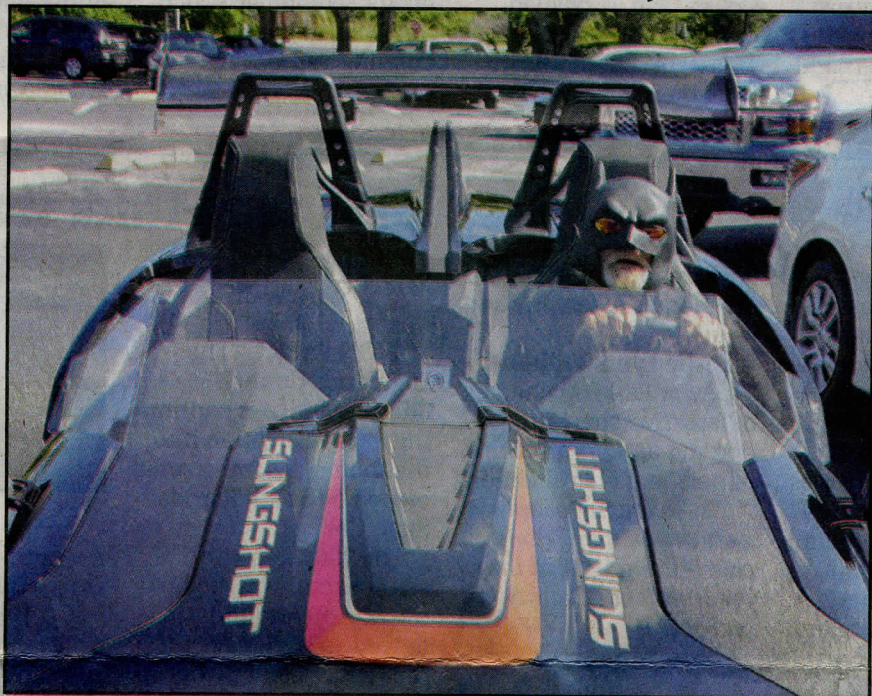
satisfactory progress toward the Honors Program Associate in Arts degree.

"I am very proud of these honors students, whose commitment to excellence has earned them this book scholarship," said Dr. Charlotte Pressler, SFSC Honors Program director and professor of English and philosophy. Dr. Pressler also expressed pride in the students' aspirations for the future. "In the Honors Program, I have two future pharmacists, three future engineers (mechanical, civil and unmanned aerial systems) and one future attorney."

For more information, contact Dr. Pressler at 863-784-7247.

The Caped Crusader takes over the SFSC Library

SFSC
observes
Batman Day
with games,
coloring
and a visit
from the
Batmobile



ROBERT MILLER/STAFF

Sebring resident Bill Dunsford brought his "Batmobile," a Polaris Slingshot, to the SFSC Library for Batman Day on Friday.

AVON PARK — “Holy helpful librarians, Batman!”

Catwoman is on the loose and only the Caped Crusader, armed with his detective skills and wonderful toys can stop her...or a group of teenagers pretending to be Batman. This was the scenario this past Friday, Sept. 14 at the SFSC Library in Avon Park.

Batman Day is celebrated each year as a way to pay homage to the beloved DC Comics character, as well as a means to have fun with other fans of the Bat. While officially Batman Day 2018 was the following day, Saturday, Sept. 15, librarian Claire A. Miller made the decision to observe the day early on a day the library was open.

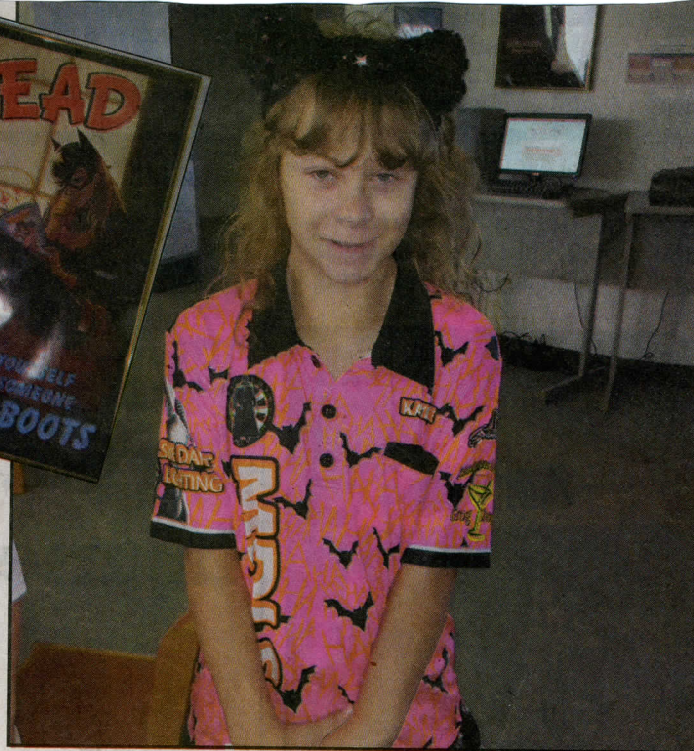
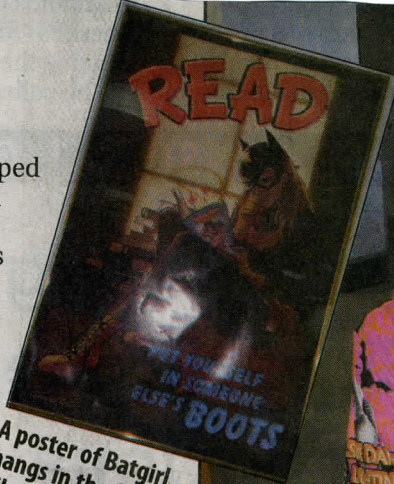
“It’s a fun event that brings people together, bridging the gap between a bunch of different mediums,” Miller said. “It also doesn’t

hurt that Batgirl, Barbara Gordon, was a librarian.”

The SFSC Library is normally closed on Saturdays. This is SFSC’s third year holding the event.

To celebrate the Caped Crusader, Miller and her staff set up a coloring station where participants could color their favorite savior of Gotham, a puzzle table complete with a Batman puzzle and there was even a post-card-making area to make

A poster of Batgirl hangs in the SFSC Library. Batgirl’s alter ego, Barbara Gordon, was a librarian in the comics.



Lake Placid resident Kaylee Zerby came to Batman Day wearing her family’s dart team shirt, which features Batman and Harley Quinn, with matching skirt and socks.

your very own Batman themed postcards.

The selfie crowd wasn’t left out. A backdrop of the Gotham City skyline hung on a wall for taking photos. There were even props. There were also white boards set up for participants to vote for their favorite Batman villains as well as who would win in a fight, Batman or Superman.

But the piece de resistance was “The Batman Game.” Stations were set up all over the library, representing different locations throughout Gotham. As you followed the clues from station to station, they told a story crafted by Miller, leading to the player(s) winning or losing. Winners received Batman stickers.

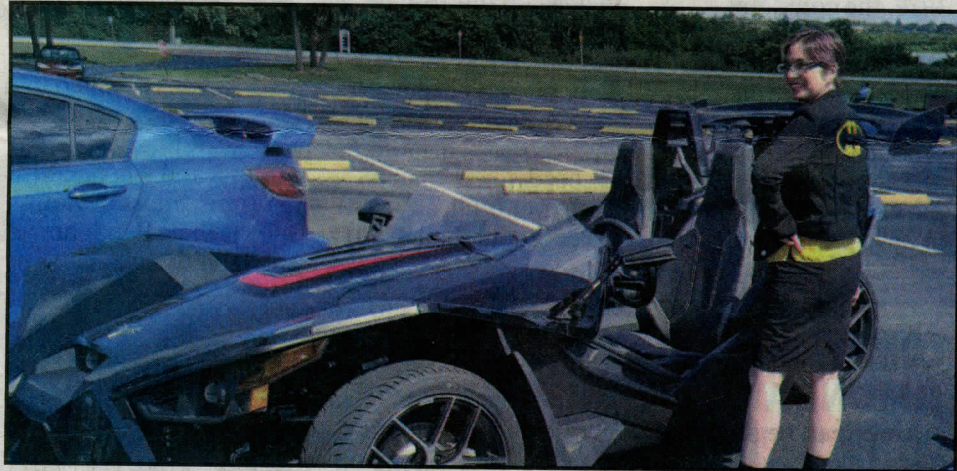
Students from the Highlands Career Institute were on hand to take part in the fun. Seniors Paola Marrero, Mackenzie McGann, D.J. Wilkes and Nicole Kulda worked as a team on “The Batman Game” and had a blast. The group raced from location to location, reading the clues and working out the solutions, usually out loud, and working it out as a team.

“I liked that it brought me back to my childhood,” said Marrero. “I got to act like a kid in a college setting.”

Shortly after 11 a.m. a surprise arrived in the form



Paola Marrero, a senior with Highlands Career Institute, strikes a superhero pose during SFSC’s Batman Day at the college’s library on Friday.



ROBERT MILLER/STAFF

SFSC Librarian Claire A. Miller stands beside Bill Dunsford's "Batmobile" on Friday. The college celebrated Batman Day with a game, puzzles and a coloring station.

BATMAN

FROM PAGE 1A

of Batman and his Batmobile. Sure, it was Sebring resident Bill Dunsford and his Polaris Slingshot, but that didn't make it any less cool or fascinating for those in attendance. Dunsford and his wife made the decision to drive up from Spring Lake after

members of their church told them about the event.

"I was a fan back when I was younger," said the 83-year-old Dunsford. The "Batmobile" drew a crowd and Dunsford, complete with Batman cowl, took photos with anyone interested. He even allowed Miller to sit in the driver's seat.

While the rest of the country is arguing about politics or guns, trying

to one up each other in rap songs or fighting over whether or not Henry Cavill will still be playing Superman; those attending Batman Day at SFSC were only interested in one thing, bonding over their mutual love of a fictional character. It didn't matter to any of them where they came from, what they looked like or what religion they were. All that mattered was having fun.

SFSC financial aid director recognized

SPECIAL TO
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN

AVON PARK — Jerry Donna, South Florida State College (SFSC) director of financial aid, was recognized recently by the Hardee County School Board for assisting high school guidance counselors increase the number of high school seniors who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Donna attended FAFSA Night at Hardee Senior High School and helped answer students' and parents' questions about information required on the FAFSA form.

In April 2018, the Florida College Access Network (FCAN) announced the winners of the 2018 Florida FAFSA Challenge. According to FCAN, the challenge is a statewide campaign to increase the proportion of high school seniors



COURTESY PHOTO

From left: Leigh Beumel, Kim Davis, and Teresa White, Hardee Senior High School guidance counselors; Jerry Donna, SFSC director of financial aid; Teresa Crawford, Hardee County School Board member and director of the SFSC Hardee campus; Dr. Michele Polk, Hardee Senior High School principal; and Bob Shayman, superintendent of the Hardee County School District.

completing the FAFSA. Of the small school districts in Florida, Hardee County was deemed "Most Improved," meaning that the Hardee County School District improved its FAFSA completion rate the most compared to the previous year.

"We have made a concerted effort in the last couple of years to encourage our senior students to complete

the FAFSA form, which is money that becomes available for their education after high school," said Dr. Michele Polk, Hardee Senior High School principal. "And these ladies from our guidance department have really been the ones to champion the effort. But they haven't done it alone.

We've had some help particularly from

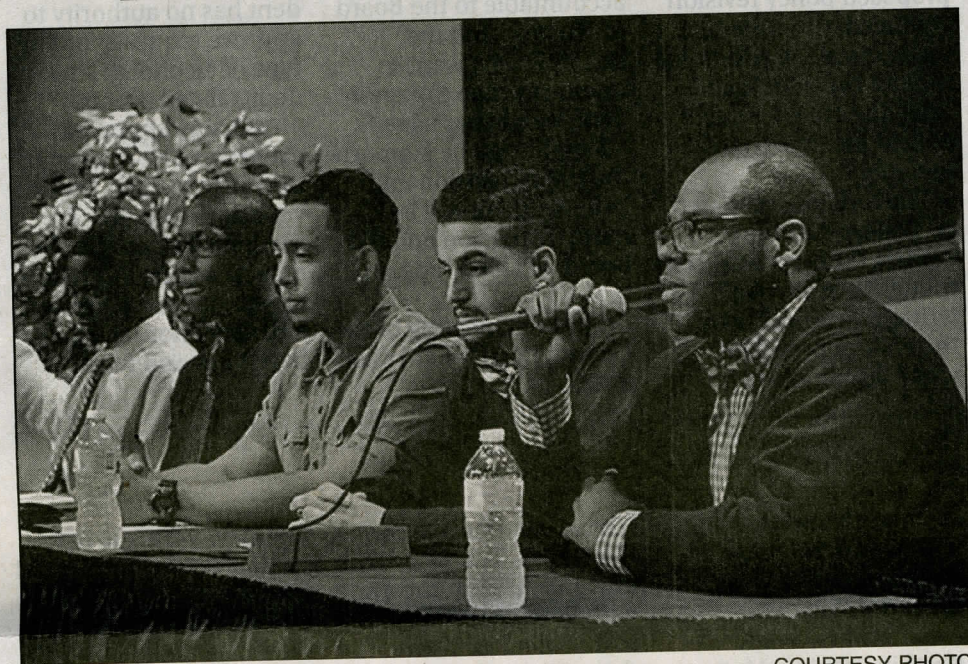
an individual at South Florida State College — Mr. Jerry Donna."

"We have a dream of having more kids go to college, and so we called you, Jerry," said Kim Davis, Hardee Senior High School guidance counselor. "You didn't know us, and we didn't know you, but you graciously came over [to Hardee Senior High School] and made our program great.

"Our kids and our parents love you. You answered all the complicated questions that we can't answer. You made it such an easy process. Our students walk out of the media center getting \$4,000 and \$5,000 in Pell Grant money. We just want to thank you, Jerry, for everything you do for our kids."

For more information about SFSC, including its campus in Hardee County, visit southflorida.edu or call 863-453-6661.

SFSC alumnus pursues happiness through film



COURTESY PHOTO

Ricky Sherrill, at right, is seen here participating on the South Florida State College Minority Male Initiative panel.

AVON PARK — In high school, South Florida State College (SFSC) alumnus Ricky Sherrill, got the film bug. Now, in his senior year at the University of Central Florida (UCF) in Orlando, he's contemplating his future as a film editor and, possibly, director. He anticipates earning his Bachelor of Arts in Cinema Studies in spring 2019.

"Leading up to graduation in the spring, I've been stressing about it," he said. "I'd like to work with a film company, to edit. Anything to do with editing, whether it's for commercials or corporate videos. Eventually, I'd like to be a filmmaker and become one of the best. Right now, I'm most comfortable with editing."

While a junior at Sebring High School, Sherrill took his first theater production class with teacher Jeff Cantwell. "At first, I thought it was going to be an easy A, just like a lot of other students. But I started taking it seriously when I discovered that I was good at editing film, directing, and being in front of the camera."

Over time, Sherrill's interest in making and editing films and videos soared and he put his enthusiasm to work. In 12th grade, he wrote a song for Sebring High School called "Blue and White." A teacher then asked Sherrill to create a video for the school, one that would depict the school's quality and the student's school spirit.

Every filmmaker has been influenced by those who've gone before them, and Sherrill has a few favorites of his own. "I like all types of movies," he said. "If I were to choose a favorite film director, I would say Quentin Tarantino. Recently, I watched 'BlackKkKlansman' by Spike Lee, which I really liked. I watched it by myself and absorbed it. But my favorite movie is 'The Pursuit of Happyness' with Will Smith. It had an

impact on my life."

"The Pursuit of Happyness" is about a single, homeless father who struggles to create a better life for himself and his son. Sherrill said that he lives by a quote from the film: "You got a dream. You gotta protect it. People can't do some-thin' themselves, they wanna tell you you can't do it. If you want some-thin', go get it."

"In my own life, as much as I might want to quit, I just keep moving forward," he said. "I try to see the bright side of things when things aren't going my way. I was impressed by how determined the Will Smith character was in his life and how he lived. He was sleeping in bathrooms."

"The quote from 'The Pursuit of Happyness' fits into my life right now," Sherrill said. "When I graduated from SFSC in May 2016, I knew I wanted to go off to get my bachelor's degree somewhere. My mom asked me how I was going to pay for it and where was I going to live. She wasn't trying to discourage me; she was, simply, being practical. I honestly had no idea how I would pay for things. I knew at the end of the day that I wanted to go away to college. I didn't let anything stop me from pursuing that dream."

But Sherrill worked through the challenges. His mother helped him find a place to live in Orlando, and a first generation scholarship to UCF covered tuition in his junior year. In Sebring, Sherrill had worked at Publix and continued to do so while in Orlando. "During the spring and fall, I work 20-25 hours a week. During the summer, it's 30-35 hours a week. I receive financial aid to pay for tuition, but I have to pay for rent as well. Every wall between me and going to college, I knocked it down. Don't ever let anyone tell you that you can't do something."

Sherrill has been able to share his experiences in life and college. At the urging of SFSC student advisor Rob Hampton,

Sherrill served as a panel member for SFSC's Minority Male Initiative for three years. Every spring, SFSC invites nearly 100 minority male students from high schools in Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto counties to its Highlands Campus. The intention of the half-day conference is to motivate young men to enroll in college credit and occupational certificate programs after completing high school and know that they will find a supportive and nurturing college experience that will prepare them for the future.

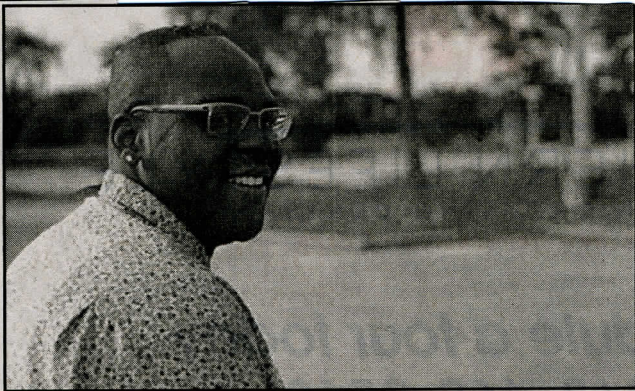
"I've been in their shoes," Sherrill said. "This past year, I felt like the students were interested to know why they should keep going. After I made a brief presentation, I found that one student in the audience was on the same path that I was on. He was interested in pursuing an education in film. He wanted to know how to pay for it, what classes I was taking."

"Being on the panel motivated me even more in continuing my education because I was picked to do something like that. I encouraged others and that inspired me to work even harder in pursuing my education. In other words, I have the power to have a voice in this, I get to hear others' stories, so it motivated me."

"Ricky has been a part of the Minority Male Initiative since its launch in 2016," Hampton said. "He has never hesitated to volunteer his time and life experiences, in hopes of inspiring young men in our community."

Although Sherrill has several months to go before earning his bachelor's degree, his future is at the forefront of his mind. "At first, I considered going to Los Angeles for work. But what changed my mind was the fact that a speaker who came to my film class stated there are other opportunities elsewhere. So, my goal is to work for Publix Corporate in Lakeland, then possibly go into the filmmaking world later on in life."

Sherrill offers advice to people contemplating college: "If you don't put the action in it, if you don't believe in yourself, you won't accomplish your dream. If you don't know how, how can you expect someone else to believe in you? I want everyone to succeed. If you've got something you want to do, the road may not be easy, but there's a light at the end of the tunnel. You've got to go through the darkness to get to the light."



COURTESY PHOTO

Ricky Sherrill is in his senior year at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, and he's contemplating his future as a film editor and, possibly, director.

Grant offers SFSC faculty and students a sense of home

Special to Highlands News-Sun

A visit to the Museum of Florida Art and Culture (MOFAC) on South Florida State College's (SFSC) Highlands Campus in Avon Park will reveal a display of artifacts from the Goodnow Mound. Unearthed from the mound, which is located south of Sebring, are artifacts that date back as far as the 16th century and are attributed to Native Americans of Southwest Florida.

Over 6,200 glass beads have been recovered from the site. These beads, in particular, sparked an intense curiosity in Megan Stepe, MOFAC curator.

But Stepe's interest is part of a larger effort put forth by SFSC faculty. The brain child of Dr. Charlotte Pressler, professor of English and philosophy and

director of SFSC's Honors Program, "A Sense of Home: From Cultural Conflict to Coexistence in Florida's Heartland" came into existence after she pursued a coveted National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant. It is a three-year project focused on developing and enhancing local scholarship in Central Florida's long history of cultural conflict and fusion. The \$99,619 grant was awarded to SFSC in March 2016.

"The intention was to bring scholars on campus in a mini internal graduate seminar series for faculty and local high school teachers," Dr. Pressler said. "Through this grant, we brought scholars to us, people who are recognized experts in their fields. After each of the seminars, we discussed the presentation material



COURTESY PHOTO

Megan Stepe, SFSC MOFAC curator, with Goudnow Beads.

among ourselves and are incorporating modules into our current curriculum. These modules give students a taste of what their courses will be like

at the university—analyzing, making connections, solving problems, applying concepts to new situations."

Some of those

scholars were Dr. Jerald T. Milanich, professor emeritus of the University of Florida, who made presentations on the European invasion of Florida in the 16th century and Florida's Spanish-Indian missions in the 16th through 18th centuries; Dr. Anna Lillios of the University of Central Florida who presented "Zora Neale Hurston and Eatonville"; and Dr. Mike Butler, professor of history at Flagler College, who presented "Confederate Imagery and Police Brutality: Racial Unrest and the Long Civil Rights Movement in One Florida Community."

Pressler indicated that the grant focuses on Florida's Heartland. "We live here; this is our home. Knowing that helps us understand how we got to where we are now

and can give us inspiration for the future," she said. "It can guide us and make us better citizens of Florida. We know that our students are coming to SFSC for job skills, we know that employers look to us for trained workers. Those economic and individual motivations are important in this world today. But there is a role for citizenship and community awareness as well. This is something the humanities can provide so that students going forward are better able to think about the meaning of what they're doing."

According to Dr. Pressler, Dr. Milanich is considered the world's greatest expert on Florida's indigenous people in the pre-contact and contact periods with

HOME

FROM PAGE 1B

Europeans. "Not many people realize that the Spanish had established a system of missions in Florida as they had in California," she said. "Other new knowledge about that time period was the role that the epidemics—such as small pox and influenza—played in destroying Native American cultures. When cattle, hogs, and chickens were brought to North America by the Europeans, some of them escaped along with the influenza virus. Then, there was human-to-human transmission. In fact, the viruses crossed North America before the Europeans did."

"At SFSC, we have many students in the health care fields who are now grappling with the second wave of pandemics. Studying the earlier wave is critical to learning about new pandemics, such as Zika and AIDS."

In Dr. Pressler's Honors and regular English I courses, students are required to write research papers. "The research paper is practice for college research papers in other fields," she said. "We're not teaching content, but teaching skills. I've chosen to have students pick topics about Florida."

In her presentation to the SFSC faculty as part of the NEH grant, Leslie Kemp Poole, a professor from Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla. and a former journalist, focused on the role that women and women's clubs played in forwarding early conservation and environmental movements in Florida.

"I was able to translate Dr. Poole's work into teaching English I students," Dr. Pressler said. "Dr. Poole brought a reading list. I now can offer her book and other sources to my students. The grant provided money to buy books for the library so students can check them out. The grant also provided money to create library guides, or libguides, so they can do research. With these resources, I guide students while they work on their research papers."

"It's easy for survey courses to become too general," said Dr. Theresa James, professor of English and humanities, who assisted in organizing the NEH lectures. "The textbook that we're using in Introduction to Humanities is quite good but it's a textbook that could easily be used in California or France or anywhere. Each of the NEH scholars brought some of their material home to our district. So, there's no reason why we can't offer that level of relevance to our students."

In some of her classes, Dr. James has encouraged students to read the translated letters of a Jesuit missionary, Father Juan Rogel, who came to Florida in the 16th century to convert the native populations to Catholicism. "I made copies of those letters for the students to read. As an instructor, I may have to provide the students with a level of context such as 'Read the magazine from the Florida Humanities Council. These particular issues of the magazine give you all the background you need to understand the context of the priest's letters.' So, a student who read that background and then looked at the priest's letters, might be able to answer questions for extra credit. This takes a step out of the survey

textbook and a look into specifics. Students can better see Father Rogel as that guy on the ground during the Age of Discovery."

Michelle Macbeth is a professor of foreign languages and humanities. As a member of faculty, she has incorporated material from the scholarly NEH lectures into her own humanities class.

The final NEH semina covered the civil rights movement and the continuation of the movement," Macbeth said. "In my Introduction to Humanities class, I sometimes have the students do conversation pieces, where we just talk about issues in class. Obviously, the stipulation is that 'we're going to be objective, we're going to respect each other, and we're going to be kind in the things we choose to say.' We'll have a conversation at the end of class about how things—such as the civil rights movement—affect our modern existence. If students don't tie the material to their everyday lives or something that has a connection to their everyday lives, they don't always see the buy-in for themselves. So through our humanities class, they can say 'This is how we got here, this is why this is important now, this is why we're talking about this, and this is why this is a part of our society.'"

In addition to her role as curator of MOFAC, Stepe teaches Art Appreciation. As a result of the NEH grant presentations, she saw the potential of introducing local history and culture into her class this fall.

"I have to admit that a lot of my education and training was focused on Europe," she said. "In my class, we cover the Paleolithic period up until

the present. We cover a lot of material, but it's not in-depth material. We talk about ancient cultures either in other countries or other states, so incorporating aspects of NEH seminar material brings it to a more local level."

"When Dr. Milanich discussed the early Spanish missions in Florida and ritual items that were used, such as rosaries, I connected that discussion with the beads in the Goudnow exhibit. I was looking at the Goudnow beads in terms of ritual but also in terms of trade goods and currency because the Native Americans working for the missions may have been paid in beads occasionally. They would either make things of beauty with them or something of a symbolic nature or trade them or give them as gifts."

Stepe mentioned a man who visited MOFAC last year and showed a particular interest in the Goudnow beads. "He said that 25 years ago, he and a friend were tilling a field in the area. The sun was setting and hit the field in just the right spot. The whole field glittered with all of these beads—thousands of them."

Stepe indicated that a special project for students associated with the NEH grant might be to bring in an archaeologist and have them do a talk about excavating various objects, such as beads and spearheads.

Karla Respress, art professor, plans to work with students in her pottery class on firing pottery in the ground instead of in a kiln. This method is sometimes called a pit fire. Instead of using the electric pottery kiln in the classroom, Respress and her class will take the pieces of pottery and slowly burn

them on the surface or just below the surface of the ground with wood to harden the clay. "I felt it was do-able—we have the resources and the materials and prior knowledge of this technique. And this method of pottery firing is a natural fit with the NEH grant material."

"If we're following the way the Native Floridians did it, you take broken pieces of pottery or rocks or even bricks and lift the places on the ground and put the pottery upside down on top of those just to create a kind of barrier between the pottery and the earth. Then you build a ring of pine cones or pine straw or grass or small sticks—fire starters—away from the pottery and then light it on fire. What that does is allow the pots to slowly get hot."

"You allow the fire to create the color of the pot. You can't control the temperature like you do in a kiln. Clay will change color depending on how hot it gets, so one side of the pot will be a different color than the other side of the pot. You've got to allow it to do what the fire does to form the decoration of the piece, so we're not sure what colors the pottery will be after the pit firing."

The results of the NEH seminars may affect more than SFSC faculty and students. The faculty's continuing exploration into Florida's history and culture can extend into SFSC's communities. When patrons visiting MOFAC learn that an artifact on display is from this region of Florida, they are often amazed. "People ask 'This was found here?'" Stepe said. "I tell them 'Yes, within a 30-mile radius of Avon Park.'"

"It's my main goal for students to be excited, not only about learning about other kinds of art, but to be excited about where you're at," Stepe said. "Because there's a treasure trove of things in this part of Florida, historically and archaeologically speaking, right here in our own backyard. I want members of our community to know about them."



COURTESY PHOTO

Art instructor Karla Repress places fire starters next to pottery in a test pit.



COURTESY PHOTO

{span}Dr. Theresa James (left), Dr. Jerald Milanich and Dr. Charlotte Pressler.