

SFSC Foundation's Million-Dollar Golf Shootout Raises More Than \$10,000

Four winners emerged from a pack of 12 qualifiers during South Florida State College Foundation's inaugural Million-Dollar Hole-in-One Golf Shootout on Saturday, Jan. 20.

Although no one snagged the \$1 million prize, four top golfers hit balls closest to the hole. They were Scott Hitt in first place, whose golfball came within 15' 4-1/2" of the hole; Jose Jimenez in second place, 23' 9"; John Vicker Jr. in third place, 27' 6"; and Michael Kelly in fourth place, 34' 6-1/2".

The three-day golf shootout began on Thursday, Jan. 18, and was held at Sun 'N Lake Golf & Country Club in Sebring. In spite of the frosty weather on Thursday and Friday, more than 70 golfers turned out to vie for \$1 million.

Each of the final 12 qualifiers had one chance to win the \$1 million on Saturday by shooting a hole-in-one at the par 3 18th hole.

"We are pleased with the results of the Million-Dollar Hole-in-One Golf Shootout," said Jamie Bateman, executive director, SFSC Institutional Advancement, who oversees the SFSC Foundation. "With the support of our event sponsor, MidFlorida Credit Union,

award sponsor Heacock Insurance, and many other sponsors and those who braved the cold by participating in the event, we were able to raise more than \$10,000.

"Plans are in place for next year in hopes that someone will win the \$1 million prize," she added.

Proceeds will be used to benefit the SFSC Athletic Department. SFSC fields four athletic teams: women's volleyball, women's cross country, men's baseball, and women's softball. SFSC's student athletes assisted golfers at the shootout.

"What an enjoyable event," said Rick Hitt, SFSC athletic director. "Our participants were outstanding in posting competitive qualifying scores, and we had a great shootout for our 12 qualifiers. Even though we didn't have a hole-in-one winner this year, our consolation prizes were well represented with quality shots into the challenging 18th green on Deer Run at Sun 'N Lake."

The first-place winner was awarded a \$500 gift card, second place a \$250 gift card, third place a \$100 gift card, and fourth place a \$50 gift card.



COURTESY PHOTO

Michael Kelly of Wauchula (second from left) collects his prize in the Million-Dollar Golf Shootout.

MOFAC receives gift of Native American Art

Special to Highlands Sun

The South Florida State College Museum of Florida Art and Culture (SFSC MOFAC) recently received a gift of artwork from Charles Reynolds, honoring his late wife Anne Reynolds. The donation included three paintings and three sculptures valued at approximately \$9,000.

"Anne Reynolds had not only been a major supporter of archaeological efforts in Highlands County, she played a significant role in the development of MOFAC," said Megan Stepe, MOFAC curator.

Stepe went on to commend Reynolds for inspiring the curators, SFSC students, volunteers, and patrons at MOFAC. "Her time, energy, and wisdom helped shape the artistic and archaeological character of the museum. These works are esteemed additions to MOFAC's permanent collection and will be a cherished reminder of her influence."

Plans are to display the paintings and sculptures in the historical/archaeological section of MOFAC in the near future. The six pieces of art Charles Reynolds gifted to MOFAC are:

- High Counselor, oil painting, by Theodore Morris

- Sacred Owl, oil painting, by Theodore Morris

- Timucuan War Leader, oil painting, by Theodore Morris

- The Archer, bronze sculpture, by Bradley Cooley

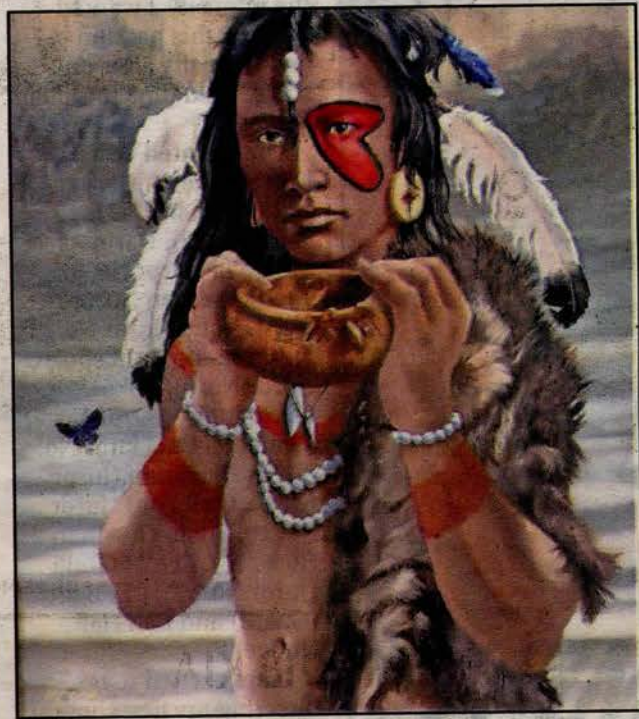
- Fragment Series, wood sculpture, by Rick Crawford

- 10,000 BC, bronze sculpture, by Bradley Cooley

"Anne's art collection reflected her love of Florida, Florida history, and Florida artists," said Mollie Doctrow, former MOFAC curator, who had worked closely with Reynolds over the years. "Anne felt a special connection and affinity for Native Americans and Native Americans in Florida. Her collection includes art depicting early Florida by top Florida artists. As an artist herself, Anne had a discerning eye. She

bought beautiful pieces with which she also enjoyed living."

According to Doctrow, Anne Reynolds respected and appreciated artists. "Through her collection, she supported artists and believed in the importance of their contribution to the community," she said. "The recent donations to MOFAC from the Reynolds art collection add depth to the museum collection in the area of early Florida. The Morris paintings and Cooley sculptures will offer the public a richer interpretative and



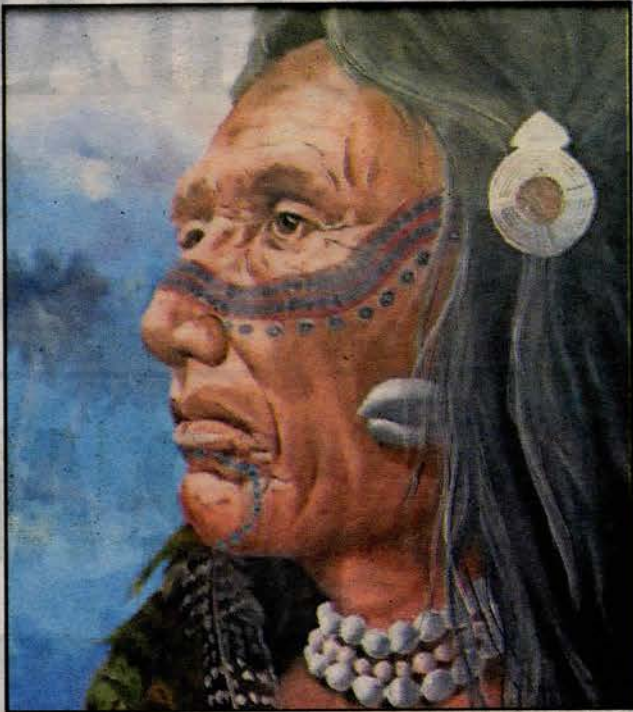
COURTESY PHOTO

'Sacred Owl' by Theodore Morris.

visual experience of early Florida.”

MOFAC is located in the east wing of the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at SFSC, 600 W. College Dr., Avon Park. The museum is open to the public on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 12:30 – 4:30 p.m., or by appointment for group tours. Patrons of the Wildstein Center may visit the museum one hour prior to matinee and evening performances.

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



COURTESY PHOTO

'War Leader' by Theodore Morris.

Gov. Scott reappoints 3 to SFSC Board of Trustees



BACKER



BRYAN



KIRSCHNER

Wright also reappointed by Scott

By MARC VALERO
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — Gov. Rick Scott reappointed Tim Backer, Derren Bryan, and Louis Kirschner to the South Florida State College District Board of Trustees and the Florida Senate approved Patrick “Joe” Wright’s reappointment to the Board.

Backer, of Arcadia, is a real estate appraiser in Arcadia.

Backer is appointed for a term beginning Feb. 2, 2018, and ending May 31, 2021.

He began his Board position on Aug. 14, 2009.

Bryan, of Bowling Green, is the general manager and information technology director



WRIGHT

Louis Kirschner, of Arcadia, is a chiropractic physician at the Arcadia Chiropractic Clinic Inc. Kirschner is reappointed for a term beginning Feb. 2, 2018, and ending May 31, 2021.

He began his Board position in 1999. The exact date is unknown, according to South Florida State

College. for Albritton Insurance Services LLC. Bryan is reappointed for a term beginning Feb. 2, 2018, and ending May 31, 2019.

He began his Board position on Nov. 8, 2011.

College.

These individuals were recommended to the Senate from the Governor’s office. The Senate has not taken action on their appointments yet.

Also, last week, the Senate approved Wright’s appointment to the District Board of Trustees.

Scott announced the reappointment of Wright to the South Florida State College District Board of Trustees on Nov. 9, 2017.

Wright, of Avon Park, is the president of V. W. Farms Inc.

He is reappointed for a term beginning Nov. 9, 2017, and ending May 31, 2019.

He began his Board service on Nov. 8, 2011.

SFSC hosts a successful visit by the ACEN

SPECIAL TO
HIGHLANDS NEWS-SUN



AVON PARK — The Associate in Science Degree in Nursing Program at South Florida State College (SFSC) hosted a successful site visit by three Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) nursing program evaluators, Jan. 30-Feb. 1, serving as the second step of its four-step accreditation process.

ACEN is the leading authority in nursing accreditation, and its goal is to strengthen the quality of nursing education, in all types of nursing programs. ACEN accredits certificate-, diploma- or degree-granting programs in secondary, postsecondary and hospital-based organizations.

"Accreditation is a comprehensive process that encompasses every aspect of an educational program," said Dr. Michele Heston, dean of health sciences at SFSC. "From the curriculum, to program outcomes, to graduate and employer satisfaction, the process engages the entire program, college and community in its review. A debt of gratitude is extended to our students, faculty, SFSC colleagues, community partners, and alumni for their collaborative spirit and unparalleled support. The ACEN program evaluators commented that it was 'refreshing to know that there are programs like yours out there, that are caring not only for your students but for your

entire community.'"

The SFSC program is seeking to continue its accreditation, having earned initial accreditation of the Associate in Science program in 2013. On Feb. 1, the program evaluators' exit interview with the nursing education department and senior administrative team was positive. The evaluators cited full compliance with all Standards and Criteria. Several highlights of the exit interview included the following comments by the evaluators:

- "Your community values and appreciates the work that you do. It was evident from all the meetings conducted throughout our visit that your caring influence reaches far beyond the classroom and is felt by this college and the community."

- "It is refreshing to know that there is a two-year RN program in this community that is not only doing excellent work, but is doing stellar work."

- "Your graduates articulate The Seven C's of Caring upon which your curriculum is based. They feel it has allowed them to flourish in caring for the community."

"Our department has a deep appreciation of the accreditation process and its role in the facilitation of continuous quality improvement," said Mary VonMerveldt, director of nursing education at

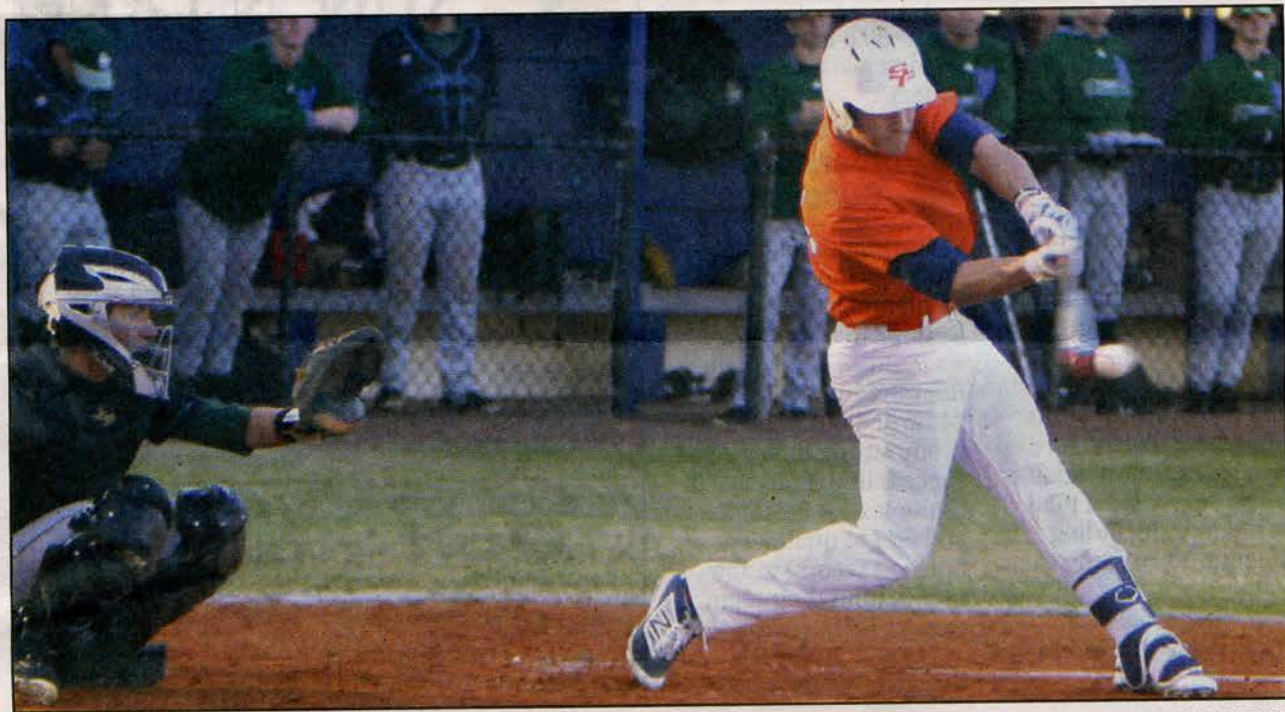
SFSC. "We are pleased with the conclusion of a productive ACEN peer evaluator visit and would like to offer our sincerest gratitude to all who assisted in the evaluation process. It is with great pride and humility that we serve as members of the South Florida State College family and local community."

An accreditation decision by the Board of Commissioners is expected in July following the June Evaluation Review Committee meeting.

For more information about the accreditation process or the nursing programs at SFSC, contact the Nursing Department at 863-784-7118.

ACEN supports the interests of nursing education, nursing practice, and the public by the functions of accreditation. Accreditation is a voluntary, peer-review, self-regulatory process by which non-governmental associations recognize educational institutions or programs that have been found to meet or exceed standards and criteria for educational quality. Accreditation also assists in the further improvement of the institutions or programs as related to resources invested, processes followed, and results achieved. The monitoring of certificate, diploma, and degree offerings is tied closely to state examination and licensing rules and to the oversight of preparation for work in the profession.

Panthers edge Lakehawks



MARK PINSON/STAFF

South Florida State College sophomore Adam Mitchell puts the ball in play during Wednesday's game against Lake Sumter State College at Panther Field. The Panthers rallied to beat the Lakehawks by a score of 4-3 in their home opener.

South Florida rallies past Lake Sumter for victory in baseball home opener

By **MARK PINSON**
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK - South Florida State College's Adam Mitchell came through with a two-out, two-run base hit in the bottom of the eighth inning to rally the Panthers to a thrilling 4-3 win over Lake Sumter State College in Wednesday's home opener.

The victory improved South Florida to 3-1 on the season.

"That's a good win for us," said veteran Panther head baseball coach Rick Hitt. "We got a big hit from Adam in the eighth and then our pitching and defense closed things out. It's always good to win at home because we have a great fan base and we really appreciate them coming out and supporting us on a chilly night."

The early innings were a pitchers duel as South Florida sophomore Riley

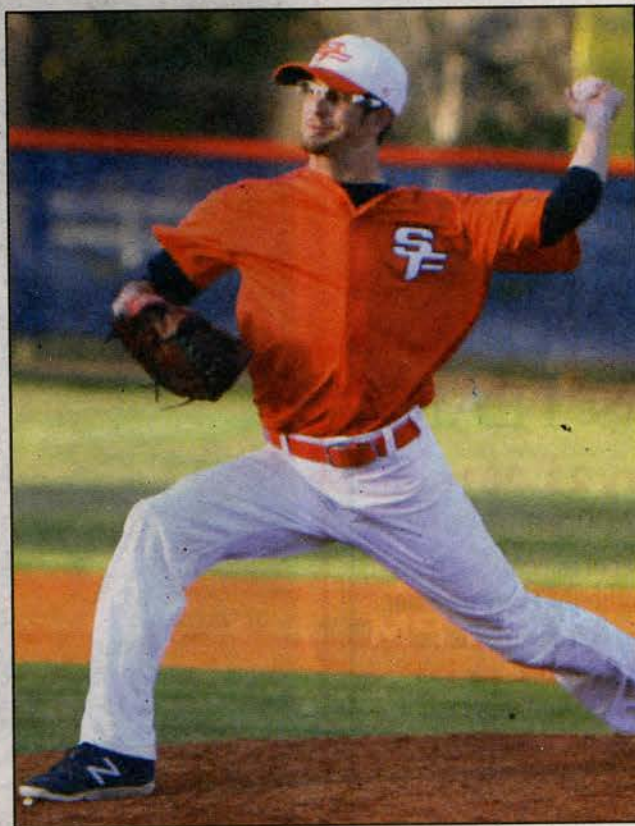
Degnan limited Lake Sumter to three hits in five scoreless innings. The left-hander struck out five batters using a variety of pitches.

"Riley had a quality start," said Hitt. "He mixed his pitches well and kept Lake Sumter off-balance. He did a good job and we went and got him in the sixth inning because of his pitch count."

Lake Sumter State College right-hander Xavier Rodriguez was just as tough as Degnan, as the Lakehawk freshman cruised through the first three innings before running into trouble in the bottom of the fourth.

South Florida's Pedro Castellano worked a one-out walk off of Rodriguez and Mitchell was hit by a pitch.

A perfectly executed double-steal put runners



South Florida left-hander Riley Degnan tossed five scoreless innings in Wednesday's win over Lake Sumter State College.

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at second and third base with only one out. Bobby Aseere grounded out to shortstop to plate Castellano and Franco Camacho lined a two-out single to center field to put the Panthers on top by a score of 2-0.

South Florida went to its bullpen in the sixth inning with excellent results, but Lake Sumter broke through with three runs in the top of the seventh inning to take a 3-2 lead.

The Lakehawks, with the lead, went to their relief pitchers who managed to retire the Panthers in the bottom of the inning.

South Florida left-hander Pierson Lewis set Lake Sumter down in order in the top of the eighth inning and the Panthers went to work in the bottom of the frame.

South Florida put runners at second and third base with two outs to bring Mitchell to the

plate. The right-hander came through in the clutch with a base hit to score both runners to give the Panthers a 4-3 lead.

South Florida brought in freshman Edwin Serrano in the top of the ninth inning and the hard-throwing right-hander was able to record the last three outs to seal the come-from-behind win for the Panthers.

"Pierson really solidified the game for us and got us to the ninth," said Hitt. "Edwin came in and did a good job of closing things out."

South Florida will be on the road for the next few games. The Panthers are at the College of Central Florida today, they play a doubleheader at Santa Fe on Saturday and wrap up a three-day road trip with a game at Lake Sumter on Sunday.

"We're going to play four games in three days and we're looking forward to the road trip," Hitt said. "It's early in the season and every game is a chance for us to get better."



MARK PINSON/STAFF

South Florida State College's Pedro Castellano dives back safely to first base on a pickoff attempt during Wednesday's game against Lake Sumter State College.



Panthers defeat Miami-Dade College



JIM TAYLOR/CORRESPONDENT

SFSC second baseman Luis Martinez makes the pivot at second and throw to first to end Miami-Dade scoring threat in the top of the eighth.

SFSC returns home after dropping heart-breaker on Saturday

BY JIM TAYLOR
CORRESPONDENT

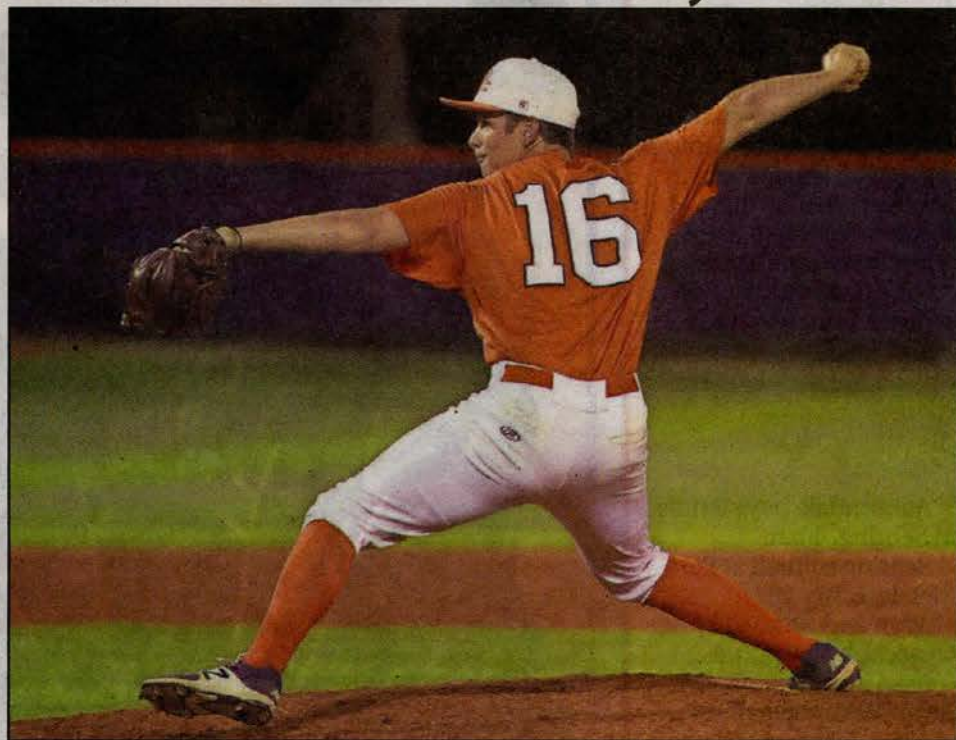
AVON PARK — Solid pitching and hits in key spots proved vital on Friday, as the South Florida State College Panthers baseball team came away with a 6-3 win over the Miami-Dade Sharks, who were looking to break a three-game skid after starting the season winning their first 10 games.

"It is how you hope to play, mistake free," said SFSC coach Rick Hitt, "We got a good start out of Kyle Coleman, he did a lot of good things and our bullpen did a good job and with that came some timely hits."

The first timely hit came in the bottom of the third inning as Franco Camacho led off the inning with an infield single and later reached second on a stolen base.

Camacho later scored on double by Brett Norwood to tie the game at 1 after three innings.

The Panthers added two more runs in the



SFSC's Gerig Blackman (16) pitched a scoreless 2 1/3 innings to earn the win over Miami-Dade.

fourth inning to take a 3-1 lead.

A one-out single into centerfield by Adam Mitchell was quickly followed by Mitchell reaching second on a stolen base.

Mitchell then scored

on a double into deep right-centerfield by Blaise Maris. Maris consequently scored on a bloop single by Jakobe Smith that was just out of the reach of the Miami-Dade first baseman to give the Panthers a 3-1

lead after four innings.

SFSC starting pitcher, Kyle Coleman, held the Sharks to just one run after five innings.

Coleman would give up a solo home run in

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the sixth inning to Jose Rojas over the right-field fence that cut the Panther lead to 3-2 after six innings.

Coleman started the seventh inning, but gave up a leadoff home run to Gabriel Rodriguez-Santiago that tied the game at 3. That was followed by a shallow fly ball by Joshua Rivera that found a hole between the right fielder, second baseman and first baseman that resulted in a double.

Hitt made a couple of pitching changes, first bringing in Kyle Choate, who got the next two batters out and then Gerig Blackman, who closed out the seventh for the Panthers with the game still knotted at 3.

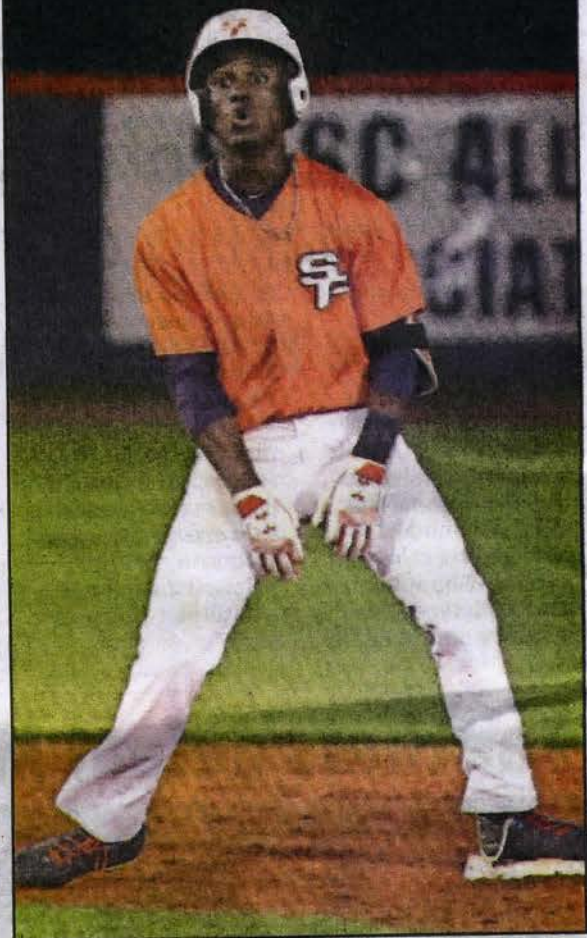
The Panther responded in the bottom of the seventh, scoring three runs on two hits.

Smith started off the inning with a single into left field and later reached second on a balk. Smith was pushed to third on a sacrifice bunt by Camacho.

Brandyn followed by reaching base on a walk then took advantage of the Sharks not paying attention by stealing second, putting runners on second and third with one out for the Panthers.

The stolen base became key as Miami-Dade decided to intentionally walk Norwood to load the bases.

The next batter struck out for the second out of the inning and



SFSC's Damani Thomas reacts excitedly back to the Panther bench from second base after driving in three runs on a bases-loaded double.

bringing up Damani Thomas. Thomas facing a 2-2 count, launched a hit into deep left center field that cleared the bases to give the Panthers a 6-3 lead after seven innings.

Blackman shutdown the Sharks in the final two innings to get the 6-3 win for the Panthers.

"We knew Miami-Dade is a good club" said Hitt. "We always play a tough schedule, the guys were excited about the challenge, I tip my hat

to our guys tonight, they played really well."

The Panthers fell to 9-7 for the season on Saturday, losing a tough 7-6 decision to Indian River State College after IRSC scored four runs in the bottom of the ninth inning.

Camacho had two hits and drove in two runs to lead the Panthers offensively.

The Panthers host Indian River State College today with a 5 p.m. start time.

'How Sweet the Sound'

'Amazing Grace' playing at SFSC's Wildstein Center

BY JIM ERVIN

CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK — Something truly amazing this way comes Thursday, Feb. 8, to the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts, on the campus of South Florida State College. The Broadway musical "Amazing Grace" will open for one night only. This stop is but one in the 27-state, first-ever, national tour of this wonderful tale of individual and national transformation. Showtime is 7 p.m.

"Amazing Grace" is the story of the trials and tribulations in the life of the beloved hymns' author, John Newton. Newton was a young Englishman working in the family business as a slave trader in the 1700s. It also tells the tale of a nation struggling with it's own collective consciousness.

While the play itself tells



JOHN BAROUH PHOTO

The cast of 'Amazing Grace.'

an amazing story, there is also an amazing story to be told about the play.

Christopher Smith, the playwright who wrote this

epic adventure, spoke of it via telephone. He said, "I actually discovered AG when I was working in the church, I found it in a library. I wasn't

looking for it at all, I just pulled a book off the shelf at random and it was this

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paraphrase of Newton's autobiography. I didn't know who he was, I'd never heard of him and I didn't know the origin of AG. I read the story and immediately it popped into my head that this was a musical.

"I thought, 'this is a way to convey this deep story of transformation by focusing on this gentleman.' Not just him, it's John Newton's story, but it's also the story of the birth of the abolitionist movement in Britain. It's really the awakening of a country. It took me almost 18 years to get that (the play) to Broadway."

One of the many incredible caveats in the AG story is that Smith had no previous experience in Broadway or with musicals in general. During the nearly two-decade process of writing AG he worked as a police officer in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, in Lower Moreland and also in a town called Bryn Athyn. Before that he was also a Pennsylvania State Constable. During his time as a police officer, Smith also worked as a youth minister.

"Amazing Grace" was Smith's first ever offering as a playwright. The fact that his first manuscript made it onto

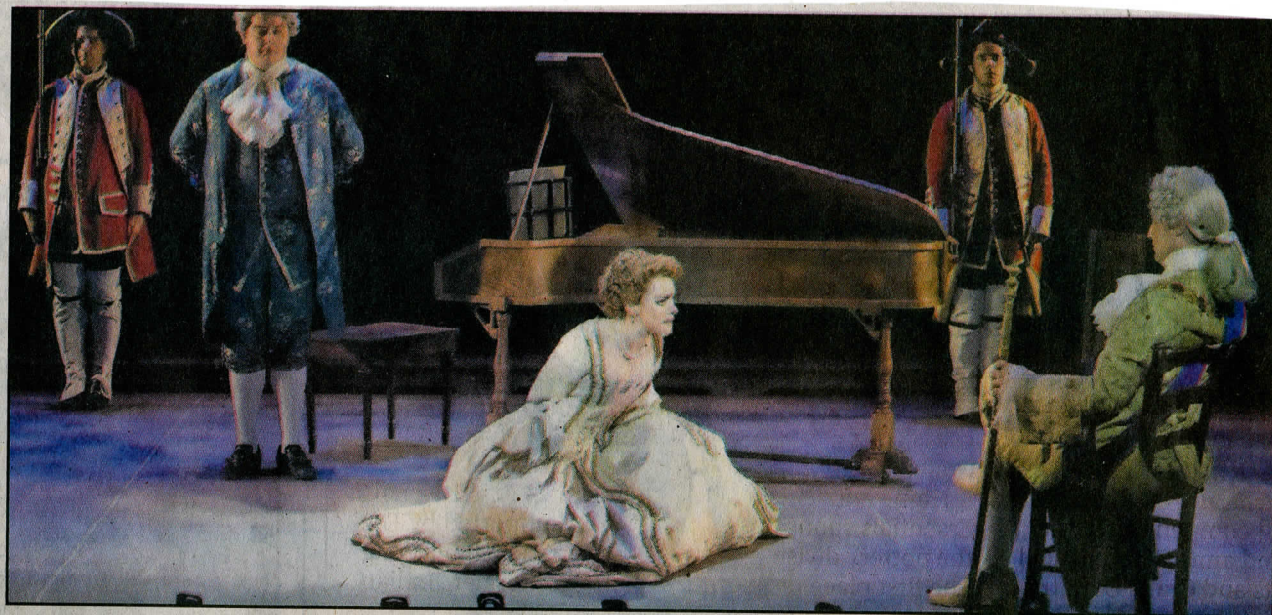
to Broadway is both astonishing and unheard of.

"The odds of any playwright ever getting their work to Broadway are astronomical," he said. "So the fact that I found it the way I did, the fact that I raised the money for it even though I had no professional experience, I had no education in the theater and I had no friends in the industry. But people actually got behind it and they supported it. The people that supported AG financially, 90 percent of them live within a half-hour of my house.

"Then the other 'miraculous/serendipitous' thing is that so many people from the Broadway industry would stake their reputations working on this. I mean, our set designer is Eugene Lee. He won the Tony Award for the set design for 'Wicked.' He won two other Tony's, one was for 'Sweeney Todd' and the other was ('Candide'). This is a person who is at the absolute top of his industry. To have someone like that say 'I'm gonna take two years and work with you,' that's just incredible. He transformed the look and feel of the show."

Visually, the show is stunning.

"The dresses are huge," says Smith. "They are period dress. They are exactly the same as they



Mary Catlett (Eleanor Todd) kneels before Prince Frederick (Joshua Simon).

would have worn and they weigh exactly what they would have weighed in the 1700's. The guys are climbing the masts, they're getting blown up and shot through the air, shooting at one another and falling. There is a scene where there is an underwater rescue. Many people have said that is the most stunning scene they have seen on Broadway and that is really high praise. It's an action, adventure, romance musical."

Another mountain that had to be scaled was the issue of financing the show.

"I went to one potential investor and sang him some of the songs, and then I asked him for \$100,000," Smith related. "I did this a lot. One of the guys looked across the table and said

to me, 'Chris, do you understand what you're asking us to believe?' He said, 'more people have walked on the moon in your lifetime than have done what you're saying you going to do.'

"And I said, 'yep, that's right.' It's a God thing. It's just a God thing.

"It's really when you take it all together, the idea of my self-taught nature, lack of professional experience, and making it to Broadway on the first try, we don't think anybody's ever done it."

With *Amazing Grace*, the surprises seem to continue all the way up to the shows closing performance.

"At the end of the show the cast sings *AG* — and this has happened at every single performance — the audience will stand up without anyone asking them to, and sing *AG* with the cast," Smith said. "We don't know of any other show where this kind of thing has happened, ever, and Broadway has been around for 120 years.

"One of the things you'll see at the end of

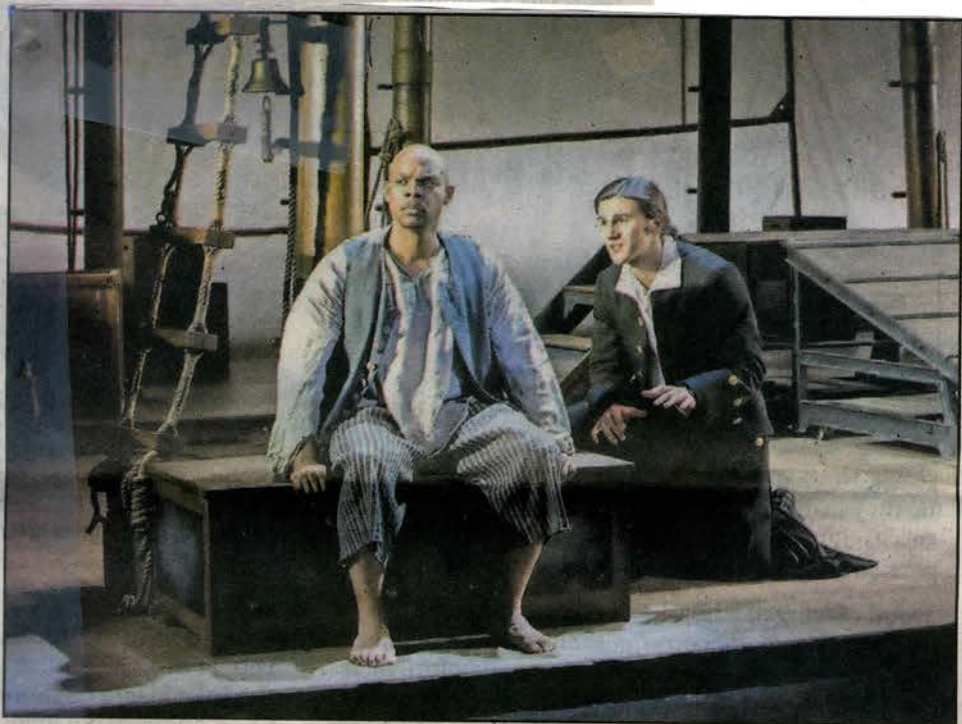
AG, it's always interesting to watch the audience. The reaction is something you just don't see at other shows. People get up, they cross the aisle, they hug total strangers, grown men are sorta crying into their shirt sleeves. There's no white and black, there's no age difference. It sort of just draws everybody's soul out at the end of the show. I'm just thrilled

with it and it's a God thing. I'd love to take credit for it but there's no amount of writing that can do that.

"It's that kind of story."

For more information contact culturalperformances@southflorida.edu or call 863-784-7178.

Sponsors for "*Amazing Grace*" include Heartland Pathology Associates and Kris and Mike Rider.



STAN BAROUH PHOTO

Don Seward as Thomas and Jacob Shipley as John Newton.