

Country songstress Kathy Mattea to perform at SFSC

By **MARC VALERO**
STAFF WRITER

AVON PARK — Grammy winning Country singer Kathy Mattea will be performing at 7 p.m. Saturday at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts, South Florida State College.

Mattea has enjoyed much success and acclaim during her 35-year career in country, bluegrass and folk music, with two Grammy wins, four Country Music Association awards, four country singles, and five gold albums (plus a platinum Greatest Hits collection).

Her hits include "Love at the Five and Dime," "Eighteen Wheels and a Dozen Roses," and "Where've You Been."

Highlands News-Sun spoke to Mattea recently by phone and asked her about getting started in the music business.

In the 1980s, "When we were all coming up, at that time people didn't have recording studios in their phone," she said. "It cost a lot of money to go into a studio and make a record."

"Your first big hope is that someone will say they believe in you and give you some money to make a record and then if you get that shot, you get to find out if the timing is right and everything lines up and you get a chance



COURTESY PHOTO

Kathy Mattea will be performing Saturday at the Alan Jay Wildstein Center for the Performing Arts at SFSC.

to find out what would of happened."

It happens for some people and it doesn't for others, she said.

Mattea said she spoke to a songwriter friend recently saying, "We got to take the big ride."

"It is the kind of stuff people dream of, to get to find out that people like what you want to put into the world," she said. "It is a privilege and a lucky break."

What is the trick to getting the right song for the right artist?

Mattea replied, "If I knew that I would be the richest person in show-business, but I was lucky when I was young, in my 20s, I started working with Allen Reynolds,

who is now a legendary guy, who is now best known for producing Garth Brooks for all those years."

When she met Reynolds, it was before he worked with Brooks, but he had produced Crystal Gayle, Don Williams and Emmy Lou Harris.

"I would spend hours talking to him about music. I wasn't on the road yet. I lived a few blocks from the studio on Music Row so I would just go over and listen to music and hang out and talk about writers and artists and record making," Mattea said.

It was like an extended master class in the business and he kept telling her it is the song.

Reynolds told her, "Don't let them get you distracted, it is the song. If you find a great song and sing it honestly and you frame it well, it will be timeless. It will not exist in time and it will live with you for the rest of your life."

Mattea said, "I feel like I am getting to reap the benefits of those lessons because a lot my songs live really, really well."

Tickets are available to see Mattea and her band. For information about the shows and to purchase tickets online go to www.sfscarts.org. The SFSC Box Office hours are Monday-Friday, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and one hour prior to performances.

Heartland Games for seniors 50 and over

Get fit & Stay Healthy

By **TOM MEISENHEIMER**
CORRESPONDENT

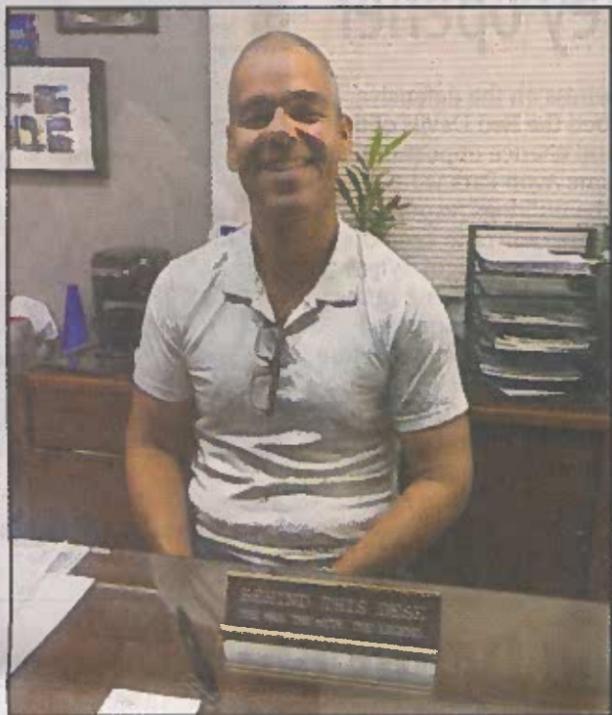
SEBRING — Dimitri Baussan, Director of Health and Wellness at the Highlands County Family YMCA manages the Heartland Games. He is joined by Tina Gottas and Deborah Gutierrez from South Florida State College. The three direct the Heartland Games for Seniors and strongly invite anyone 50 or older to find a sport they love and participate.

The Florida Senior qualifying games include Pickleball (already completed), a 5K walk and run (already completed), and Golf, cycling, swimming, and tennis. Non-Qualifying games include Euchre, Pinochle, Mah Jongg and Bridge. You can still sign for those games from February 10 to the 13th.

Baussan, says, "The older you get, the skinnier you should be." Being overweight can lead to early death. On top of that, if you are overweight you probably do not like what you see in the mirror.

Overeating and eating the wrong food accounts for 75% of weight gain. Lack of exercise accounts for 25%. So push yourself away from the table and get out and increase your exercise. You'll be healthier, meet new friends, have super fun and live longer.

If you currently play one of the sports listed, sign up for the 2023 competition. If you are out of shape, give one of the sports a try. And



TOM MEISENHEIMER/CORRESPONDENT

Dimitri Baussan, Health & Wellness Director of the YMCA said to call or text him at 863-382-9622 to register for the swimming, golf, tennis or table games as part of the Heartland Senior Games

perhaps by 2024 you will be excited to participate.

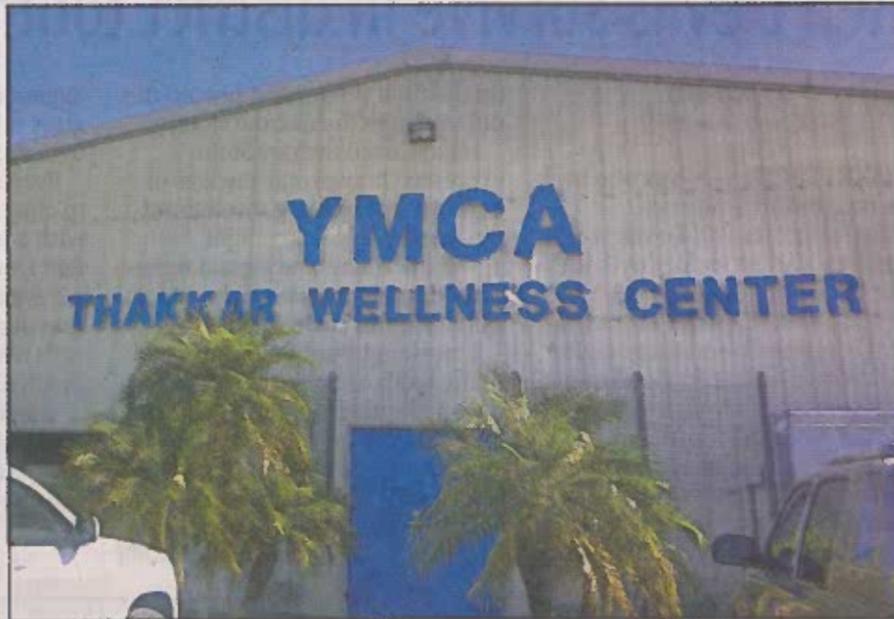
The Heartland Games are divided by age so anyone who enjoys one of the featured sports can either join for the fun or place, first through third, and perhaps qualify for the Florida Senior Games. Last year a number of local tennis players competed and actually went on to win the National Senior Championship. The eldest was 89 years of age.

The Heartland Games are open to residents of De Soto, Hardee, Highlands and surrounding counties. The Games promote physical fitness, good health and a competitive spirit among seniors who live an active

lifestyle and inspire those who may not.

Golf will be held February 11th at the Sebring Municipal Golf Course. Cyclists will meet at Lakeshore Mall, February 25th and 26th. Swimming competition begins Saturday March 4th at the YMCA. Tennis singles is Thursday March 9th, Mixed Doubles is Friday March 10th and Doubles is Saturday, March 11th on the clay courts at the Thakkar Tennis Center in the Country Club of Sebring.

Non-Qualifying games will be held at the Highlands County YMCA. Euchre is February 3rd; Pinochl, February 10th; Mah Jongg, February 17 and Bridge February 24.



TOM MEISENHEIMER/CORRESPONDENT

The Heartland Games swimming and table games will be held at the Highlands County Family YMCA Thakkar Wellness Center.

To register for any of the games and to find the exact time they begin visit <https://bit.ly/heartlandgames2023> or call 863-382-9522 or e-mail either theheartlandgames@yahoo.com or dimitribhighlandsymca@gmail.com You will receive a beautiful Heartland Games shirt to announce that fitness fits you well!

To organize such a yearly event requires hours of hard work as well as sponsors. The 2023 sponsors include: NUCOR Florida, THAKKAR Family Foundation,, Drs. Thakkar, Patel, Avalos & Ferretti, AdventHealth, NEWSOMEYE, IDENTITY, FIRST SOUTHERN BANK, BP Boutique, Bella Gusto, olive oil company, BACK ALLEY Bar & Grill, FLORIDA SPORTS Foundation, Sweet Spot, The Banquet Room at Dimitri's, Dimitri's PIZZA

Kitchen, Dimitri's Family Restaurant Bar & Grill and Genny Campbell of ReMAX Realty.

Get out there. Get fit and have fun! Then be proud as you look into t mirror!

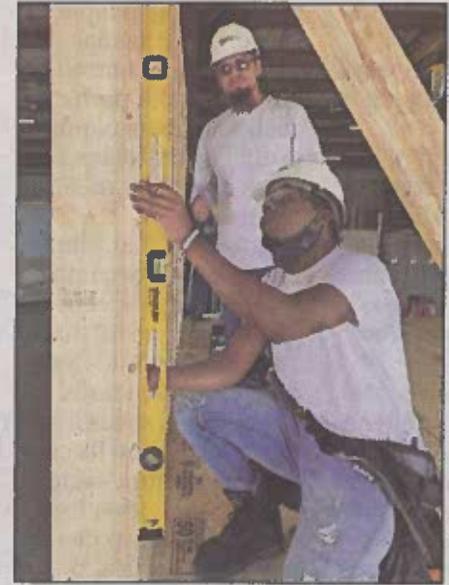
Business/ Real Estate

Sunday, February 12, 2023

AVON PARK • LAKE PLACID • SEBRING

SECTION D

SFSC Construction Trades program receives NCCER Accreditation



COURTESY/SFSC

South Florida State College students in the Construction Trades program work on a wall stud.

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Special to the Highlands News-Sun
AVON PARK — South Florida State College's (SFSC) Construction Trades program at the Crews Center in Avon Park, Fla. recently received National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) accreditation through 2027.

According to its website, NCCER is a not-for-profit organization that, with the support of

construction CEOs and association and academic leaders, created a standardized training and credentialing program to nurture a safe and productive workforce for the construction industry. NCCER is headquartered in Alachua, Fla. and affiliated with the University of Florida's M.E. Rinker Sr. School of Construction Management.

"We passed the NCCER audit with flying colors," said Fred Hayes,

coordinator, SFSC Construction Trades Programs. "There were no issues, no gray areas, nothing that needed to be corrected. We passed in July 2022 and we received the notification recently that we had achieved the accreditation to become an NCCER-certified training center and testing center. That means any outside entity

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that needs to get NCCER training or use an NCCER-certified testing center can come to us. We are now the only institution in this area that's certified and accredited to do that."

SFSC uses NCCER's curriculum for its Construction Trades programs. "I spoke with them about SFSC becoming an accredited training facility as well as testing facility some time ago," Hayes said. "For the first year, we were in a probationary period. I set up SFSC's account with them and I became a Certified Master Trainer for them. That way, I could train all the instructors that teach any of the NCCER programs, which includes our welding instructors and the different trades — electrical, plumbing, masonry, and carpentry instructors. So, everyone's well versed in the NCCER program and what they teach. After that first-year probationary period,

the audit was conducted through an independent auditing source. NCCER is strict on following their standards. They want a facility to have credibility."

NCCER credentials are accepted and recognized across the United States. "When our students take a module test, it's done online, it's recorded instantly within the NCCER system, and we get the instant feedback for it," Hayes said. "All the students' grades are registered in the NCCER system, so it's available anywhere they go in the country. For instance, if we had students who heard that Alaska pays phenomenal money in construction trades and wanted to work for a contractor up there, the contractor may ask, "What do you have to show me that lets me know that you are telling me the truth about what you know?" The student can go into the NCCER.org and punch in their credentials. Everything that the student has achieved in their programs at SFSC

will come up."

Not only are students who successfully complete SFSC's Construction Trades programs ready to go to work, but they're equipped with a good quality set of hand tools. The tools are included in the course tuition to use in SFSC's training facilities. When the students complete the program, they can take the tools with them.

SFSC's Construction



The senior class at Hardee Senior High School recently toured South Florida State College to learn about many of the college's programs.

COURTESY PHOTOS



Fred Hayes of SFSC discusses the college's construction programs with students.

Seniors Travel To SFSC To Learn About Programs

Special To The Herald-Advocate

Members of the Hardee Senior High School senior class recently participated in a field trip to South Florida State College.

The field trip was designed to familiarize students with many of the programs offered by the col-

lege.

Sessions included information on the college's construction trade programs, auto repair program, robotics programs, fire and EMS academy, and health sciences programs.

Kerry Fitzgerald and Jennifer Gough chaperoned for the event.



The college's auto repair program was featured on the tour.



Kaitlyn Duquetter, Emmie Alexy and Chaperone Kerry Fitzgerald on the field trip.



Students Cody Knight, Tedrick Ray, Alexis Lopez, Draven Lindsay, and Kami Kelley participated in the field trip to SFSC.



One of the programs featured in the tour was the college's robotics program.



Jose Tapia-Gutierrez, Joshua Santiago , and Caleb Ybarra participated in the field trip.

Panther baseball takes two out of three over the weekend

By **JAKE HITT**
CORRESPONDENT

AVON PARK — South Florida State College baseball (5-12) earned a 17-3 victory over Inspiration Academy Friday evening and split a doubleheader with Indian River State College Saturday. A great start from left-hander Brandon Chorzelewski and an eight-run sixth inning helped the Panthers snap their five-game losing streak in their first weekend contest.

Pitching's been an issue for the Panthers through the first few weeks of the season. They entered Friday with four straight games allowing double digit runs. But Chorzelewski helped break that skid with his best start of 2023 thus far.

He pitched six innings, allowed three hits and three runs (one earned). He struck out a career-high 10 batters, walking one and hitting another. That was good enough to earn his first collegiate win. The Seton Hall transfer hadn't gone more than four innings in a game nor struck out more than four hitters this season prior to Friday.



JAKE HITT/CORRESPONDENT

Brandon Chorzelewski posted his best outing of the season for South Florida on Friday.

Chorzelewski did a good job of keeping one run in an

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inning from becoming a crooked number.

When the Lions picked up a run on a dropped third strike in the second with two outs, he came right back with a four-pitch strikeout to end the half inning. When a one-out double made it 3-2 in the fourth, the lefty came back with a grounder and a strikeout to strand the tying run.

And after an error gave the Lions runners on second and third in the sixth, Chorzelewski recorded three straight outs with only one resulting in a run.

Meanwhile, the Panthers didn't have much trouble putting up runs.

Every batter in the South Florida lineup recorded at least one hit with multi-hit games from Brylan West,

Dawson Bryant, Nick Garagozzo and Mike Cuello. Those four combined for eight of their team's 14 hits on Friday. West led the team with four runs batted in while Bryant and Cuello scored three runs apiece.

After going scoreless through the first two innings, South Florida scored in each of the last five frames including three runs in the third, fourth and fifth followed by an eight-run sixth.

The first four batters reached to start that inning with Cuello reaching on a two-run RBI single to score Reid Lisle and Garagozzo. After Jake Turnbull flew out, Marlon Bowen brought home two more runs with a triple into center field.

A single from West scored Bowen then Bryant reached on a walk. Moreno made it to first on a fielder's choice that eliminated West as a baserunner. Then Lisle

slammed a 0-1 pitch over the right field fence for a three-run shot and a 17-3 advantage.

Vazquez then came on in relief for the seventh, struck out two of the four batters he faced and secured the mercy rule win.

The next day South Florida opened up its doubleheader against the Pioneers with a close victory. The Panthers grabbed the lead with a four-run first despite recording only one hit all game. They then survived a three-run third by Indian River to earn the win.

Logan Adams picked up the W with three runs against him (two earned) in six innings. Baker Tygart relieved him in the seventh to grab the save.

However, the Panthers couldn't complete the sweep as a three-run blast off reliever Brandon White with the game tied at 2-2 put the Pioneers

ahead in the sixth. South Florida responded in the bottom of the inning with two runs on a sacrifice fly and single to pull within one. But they went down in order in the seventh.

However, this weekend could be a sign that the Panthers could turn it around after their woes to start the season. Inspiration clobbered South Florida on opening day while Indian River has the Division I Southern Conference's best winning percentage at .692. They had good performances against both.

South Florida's next matchup will be against Warner University B on Wednesday in Lake Wales. Then the Panthers will start their conference schedule with a three-game series against Pasco-Hernando State College. They'll be on the road Friday then back home on Saturday for a doubleheader.



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