Melbourne Art Festival returns to Wickham Park; economic boost for county

By Ken Dotzman

After one solid year of cancellations, community events are cautiously starting to come back as organizers work closely with local health officials to take measures to ensure the safety of attendees.

Last year the long-running Melbourne Art Festival, considered by many in the region as the granddaddy of such outdoor events, was originally scheduled for Wickham Park. The nationally ranked and juried fine-art show is hosted every spring and draws artists from around the nation.

But with the coronavirus spreading in April 2020, Brevard County announced the closure of parks for public events. The nonprofit Melbourne Art Festival committee scaled back its program and shifted to a virtual format.

“It was quite successful for the artists,” said Johana Gant, president of the Melbourne Art Festival Inc. “We highlighted the work of more than 40 artists and had over 10,000 visits on our Facebook page and on other sites.”

She added, “In general, 2020 was a tough year for artists because they faced one show cancellation after another, which greatly impacted their opportunity to sell their art to the public. And many of the 2021 shows have been canceled as well.”

Through the decades, the Melbourne Art Festival has become a cultural tradition on the Space Coast, attracting hundreds of artists and thousands of visitors on an annual basis.

“Cultural art festivals not only generate a sense of pride for the participating artists, but also for the communities that host them. And these types of events boost the local economy. A recent study revealed that 20 percent of attendees at Brevard’s art and cultural events were from outside the county. Cultural tourists tend to spend more and stay longer than other visitors, according to the Brevard Cultural Alliance.”

The Melbourne Art Festival has enjoyed a continuous on-site run up until last year. Now the 36th annual show will be returning to Wickham Park, where it has been held since 2017. The event will be showcased on Saturday, April 24, and Sunday, April 25. The hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., both days. It will be held along the picturesque shores of one of the lakes at the park.

A symbol of the Melbourne Art Festival is the pink flamingo. Pink flamingos are on posters, art, everywhere. “That’s been our mascot since the inception of the Melbourne Art Festival,” said Gant. “In the last five years I believe we have brought it to the forefront. When people see the pink flamingos, they think of this event.”

She added, “And now we’re back on the grounds of Wickham Park. We’re hoping for a record crowd over the two days.”

There will be live entertainment from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., both days. Two bands a day will be performing. The Melbourne Art Festival is a free community event with free parking. There will be a full food court and concession sales around the park.

“We are excited to be back at Wickham Park,” said Doug Taylor, a longtime committee member who sits on the board of directors of the Melbourne Art Festival.

Please see Melbourne Art Festival, page 23
Travis Proctor elected chairman of Florida Tech Board of Trustees, four new members — Dreggors, Kilborne, Moore and Weldon

By Adam Lowenstein
adom@fit.edu
Florida Tech News Bureau
Florida Institute of Technology

(March 5, 2021) — Travis Proctor, a Florida Tech alumnus and accomplished business leader, has been elected chairman of the Florida Tech Board of Trustees.

Proctor was named to the board in 2012. He was most recently serving as vice-chairman.

Proctor earned a bachelor’s degree in computer science information systems from Florida Tech in 1998, graduating first in his class. As a sophomore in 1995, he founded Artemis IT, an information technology company that has since grown to more than 50 employees and prominence among the Space Coast’s technology sector.

Artemis IT was named 2019 Business of the Year by the Melbourne Regional Chamber, and it was among the top 50 second-stage companies in Florida selected as a 2020 GrowFL Florida Companies to Watch Honoree in November.

Proctor succeeds outgoing chairman Robert Phebus (1974), a board member since 2011 who was elected chairman in 2017.

Board member Kenneth Revay (1982), currently secretary, will succeed Proctor as vice-chairman. Revay has served on the board since 2003. Brian Crane (1991), a Trustee since 2017, will succeed Revay as secretary.

The new leadership will welcome four new board members: Kirsten Dreggors, Dana S. Kilborne, Kendall T. Moore and Dave Weldon.

Dreggors is vice president of engineering and leader for the Manned Aircraft Design (MAD) Center of Excellence (CoE) at Northrop Grumman Aeronautics Systems, a premier provider of military aircraft, autonomous systems, aerospace structures and next-generation solutions critical to our nation’s security. In this role, she leads more than 2,600 engineers on E–2D Advanced Hawkeye, Joint STARS, Airborne Laser Mine Detection System and restricted programs. She also leads the MAD CoE of nearly 5,000 employees at the Melbourne site, overseeing the continuing growth of staff and facilities. She has been with Northrop Grumman since 1997, when she was hired as a systems engineer supporting the Joint STARS program. Dreggors earned a bachelor’s degree in aerospace engineering and a master’s degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Central Florida.

Kilborne is president and CEO of Cypress Trust Co. and, since 2018, a member of the company’s Board of Directors. Her distinguished, 30-year career in banking includes her role as founder, president and CEO of Prime Bank and her service as a former director of the Federal Reserve Bank Board of Atlanta–Jacksonville Branch. Kilborne has served on the board of many community organizations including as immediate past chair, Space Coast Economic Development Commission, past chair, Holy Trinity Episcopal Academy, and at the Florida Bankers’ Association and Florida School of Banking. She has a bachelor’s degree in finance and a master’s degree in banking.

Moore, a Brevard County native, is the managing partner of The Moore Law Group, PLLC and the principal of Space Coast Strategy, Inc., a lobbying, governmental relations and political consulting firm. He previously served in several capacities for Lockheed Martin in Washington, D.C., and Miami. A former member of the Rockledge City Council, Moore’s service to the community includes serving as board chairman, My Community Cares, Inc., and board member, The Children’s Hunger Project, and as past chairman of LEAD Brevard, the African American Chamber of Commerce Central Florida and the Brevard County Tourist Development Council. He is a past recipient of Florida Tech’s Dr. Harvey L. Riley Bridge Builder Award. Moore received a bachelor’s degree in urban studies from Morehouse College and a law degree from the University of Florida.

Weldon is a physician, U.S. Army veteran and former member of the U.S. House of Representatives, where from 1995 to 2008 he represented Brevard, Indian River, Osceola and portions of Polk counties. After three years in the Army Medical Corps, Weldon went into private practice from 1987 to 1994 with Melbourne Internal Medicine Associates. Following Congress, he resumed medical practice part–time and served on multiple boards, including the Space Foundation and the Astronaut Memorial Foundation. He also taught physiology and pathophysiology in the Biomedical Engineering Department at Florida Tech. Weldon received his bachelor’s degree in biochemistry from SUNY Stony Brook and his medical degree from the accelerated three–year medical program at University of Buffalo, graduating Alpha Omega Alpha.

“As our guiding voices and most valued advisors, Florida Tech’s trustees help our university remain the unique and respected institution it is while ensuring we are relentless in our drive for excellence and new achievements,” said Florida Tech President Dwayne McCay. “We are deeply thankful to Mr. Phebus for his peerless leadership and look forward to building on that success with Mr. Proctor and our new officers and incoming trustees.”

Valley National in Vero Beach announces the hiring of industry veteran Cathy Martin

VERO BEACH (March 4, 2021) — Valley National Bancorp has announced the hiring of Cathy Martin as vice president–business banker for the Brevard County and Vero Beach markets.

Martin has more than 20 years of banking experience. Before joining Valley National, she served as a business banker for a prominent financial institution in Melbourne. In her new role at Valley National, she will be responsible for enhancing the bank’s brand and reaching new relationships that drive commercial loan and deposit growth.

Martin received a bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary studies from Radford University and currently serves on the West Melbourne Business Association and Serene Harbor Board of Directors. She can be reached at (321) 693–3866 and cmartin@valley.com.

About Valley National

As the principal subsidiary of Valley National Bancorp, Valley National Bank is a regional bank with roughly $42 billion in assets. It is a public company. Valley National operates many branch locations across New Jersey, New York, Florida and Alabama.

To learn more about Valley National, go to www.valley.com or call (800) 522–4100.
Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville MSA
ranks 2nd in nation for best-performing large cities

For the second year in a row, the Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville Metropolitan Statistical Area (PB-M-T MSA) has landed in the nation's top-10 best-performing large cities, according to rankings supplied by the Milken Institute.

A nonpartisan think-tank, the Milken Institute assigns the rankings by examining and evaluating a number of criteria, such as available jobs, wages, and high-tech growth, while also incorporating measures of housing affordability and household broadband access.

Top-performing metros have developed strategies that allow them to weather economic storms and leverage assets more effectively and efficiently.

- 2019: The PB-M-TSA was ranked #57
- 2020: The region soared 47 points to land at #10
- 2021: Milken's rankings revealed that the area not only cracked the top five, but powered into the #2 spot in the entire U.S. for the best-performing large cities
Second-generation Americans need to embrace their history, not ignore it

By Narvin Chhay
UCF Forum columnist
University of Central Florida

(Feb. 17, 2021) — My parents were both born in Cambodia; my father in 1965 and my mother in 1968. They spent their younger years there, but when a communist regime called the Khmer Rouge violently attempted to take control of the country between 1975 and 1979, my parents made their way out of Cambodia, escaping what went on to be known as “The Killing Fields.” Eventually, they immigrated to the United States.

In elementary school, I never liked the idea of being different from my classmates. I was the only person of color in my school, but I did my best just to fit in. I almost resented my ethnic background, I didn’t care to learn about it and I really just wanted to be like the other kids in school. I specifically remember having a tough time understanding why my parents always hated when I would complain about what was for dinner, although when they were younger they went days without food, literally dodging bullets just to live to see another day. They looked death straight in the eyes regularly as kids — making it out alive really was nothing short of a miracle.

In my teenage years, however, I learned the most about the cultural differences of an Asian country such as Cambodia and the United States. My mother, who now works in the health field, would often push me to also join the field and become a doctor. I didn’t completely fancy the idea, but I went with it for a while. I thought about the background my parents had, and their idea of the American dream: Get a stable job, make good money, have beautiful children, and someday send them to a nice college so they can do the same.

I wanted to live a life that was comfortable, but deep down I had a hunger for an extravagant life with an impact lasting for generations. For a while, that sounded good enough for me. I just wanted to make my parents’ hard work pay off.

As time went on, though, my experiences in American society led my heart down a different path. I wanted more; more than just a stable job and a family. Reaching for the stars wasn’t the most common philosophy in a traditional Asian household, but I couldn’t help it. My American dream was different than my parents’, or so I thought.

A few months ago, I had a conversation with my father, who is an architect, about this. I asked “Why aren’t there any famous Cambodian actors? Or athletes? Or business owners?”

He told me, “It’s because for the past few decades, our people have been focused on surviving. What happens next is up to you.”

My jaw dropped. He was right. It wasn’t that my parents didn’t want me to dream. They just wanted to make sure I didn’t have to worry about the stuff they didn’t when they started off in this country. I think after what they’ve gone through, they have the right to think this way. We both want to gain massive success in this country, they just had a different definition of success than me.

Ever since, I began to realize that our American dream wasn’t so different after all, we just had different beginnings. I think a lot of second-generation Americans like myself have needed to hear that, but there hasn’t always been a voice to tell us. It is up to us to become that voice, to make sure that immigrants and their children understand that they are not alone in the journey to success in America.

As second-generation Americans, we need to embrace our history rather than try to ignore it in an attempt to become “more American.” To me, being American isn’t about where you’re from or what you look like, but to always have the desire to grow and live better lives every single day. Those of us whose families are just getting settled in this country may not have the most representation in pop culture or in the daily media, however I see this as another reason to work even harder to change that.

A lot of us aren’t told very often that we can be whatever we want to be. The lack of unserved support can add up over time, eventually becoming your reality. Let this be your message to never let that happen. Our parents may have different dreams than us, but the one thing we will always share with them is the desire for a better life. Like my father said, where our people end up in the future is now in our hands.

And those whose families have lived in America for much longer than I have, please be aware of my story and the stories of millions of other immigrant families. Help them grow and help them realize their own dreams.

Narvin Chhay is a UCF junior majoring in sport and exercise science. He can be reached at narvinc@knights.ucf.edu.

Brevard Federated Republican Women to meet April 7

The Brevard Federated Republican Women will meet at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, April 7, at the Space Coast Convention Center, 103 Tucker Lane, in Cocoa. The meeting fee of $25 includes lunch. Cathi Chamberlain, author of “Rules for Deplorables: A Primer for Fighting Radical Socialism,” will be the speaker. This is an opportunity for a refresher course in pop culture or in the daily media, however I see this as another reason to work even harder to change that.

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From the Public Record of Brevard County Sheriff Wayne Ivey

Hey, how’s things? Some recent developments have come together about possibly turning the Heroes Behind The Badge documentaries into a TV series. Without getting into too many details, there is interest in setting up the series with a montage of real and dramatic police body camera, dash cam, helicopter, etc captured video. I’m reaching out to you to see if you happen to have any, or are aware of some highly dramatic, heroic, exemplary types of these videos? The more current the videos the better, but amazing footage is always still amazing.

Hope all’s well. Any help would be great!

Thanks, Bill

Bill Erfurth | President
MODERN CITY
305-670-4861 | Bill@moderntcityentertainment.com

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Based upon my investigation as a criminal investigator with the Craven County Sheriff's Department there is probable cause to arrest Timothy Michaud for sexual assault on R(XXXX) Michaud.

John Whitfield
May 7, 2010

‘Loyalty is everything to me!!!’
Sheriff Robert Wayne Ivey to Dana Delaney Loyd at 5:19 p.m., April 29, 2015

‘I need to report suspected abuse.’
Dana Delaney Loyd aka Theresa Smith to Florida Abuse Hotline at 11:12 a.m., April 29, 2015

‘Based upon my investigation as a criminal investigator with the Craven County Sheriff’s Department there is probable cause to arrest Timothy Michaud for sexual assault on R(XXXX) Michaud.’

John Whitfield
May 7, 2010

FROM: Bill Erfurth [mailto:bill@moderncityentertainment.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2018 9:52 AM
To: Goodyear, Tod <tod.goodyear@bcso.us>
Cc: Bill Erfurth <bill@moderncityentertainment.com>
Subject: BAM Show / Nick Dates

Hi Tod, thanks for all your help the other day. I mentioned that Nick will be coming to the States for a TV Conference in Washington DC and then will be flying into Orlando on Wednesday January 31st. I’ll meet him at the airport and we will stay in Cocoa Beach that night. We hope to meet with everyone and tour the facilities on Thursday February 1st. I will leave the next day about noon and I believe Nick leaves in the afternoon to catch his flight back to London. Hopefully this works out for everyone. Just a follow up of what we discussed and hoping to get done on that Thursday.

1. Meet with the Sheriff and Brass.
2. Opportunity to have some face time with Corrections Officers, BAM Administrators, Farm Coordinator, etc that you all feel would be good to feature in the show. (You mentioned perhaps having everyone meet in the conference room? Whatever works best on your end.)
3. Tour all the facilities
4. Discuss ideas and possibilities to fill the six days to expand the BAM Program
5. Suggestions and recommendations for your staff / questions etc

Nick thought it might be beneficial for me to sit in on the next BAM class, is that possible and do you know the future dates?

Thanks Tod!
Bill

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MODERN CITY
305-979-1696 | BILLE@moderncityentertainment.com

From: tod.goodyear@bcso.us
Sent: Thursday, January 11, 2018 9:56 AM
To: bill@moderncityentertainment.com
Subject: RE: BAM Show / Nick Dates

I will check on that and let you know.

From: Bill Erfurth [mailto:bill@moderncityentertainment.com]
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Michele Goodwin named president, COO of Ron Jon Surf Shop

COCOA BEACH — (March 1, 2021) — Ron Jon Surf Shop has announced that Michele Goodwin, currently vice president of retail operations and human resources, has been selected as Ron Jon Surf Shop’s next company president and chief operating officer.

Goodwin will assume her new role on May 1, 2021. Debbie Harvey, president and COO of Ron Jon Surf Shop since 2008, plans to retire but will continue as a member on the Ron Jon Board of Directors.

“Michele has played an integral role in the daily operations and the growth of the Ron Jon brand,” Harvey said. “She has over three decades at Ron Jon Surf Shop with extensive experience in operations, human resources, new store development and management oversight.”

She added, “This is a much-deserved promotion and I, the founders Ron and Lynne DiMenna, the Ron Jon Board of Directors and the rest of the Ron Jon team look forward to the future growth of the company under her leadership.”

As president of Ron Jon Surf Shop, Goodwin will oversee operations of the Ron Jon stores, facilities and licensees, as well as planning for future store and brand expansion.

“I am truly honored to be named president and COO of Ron Jon Surf Shop,” Goodwin said. “Debbie has done an amazing job growing the Ron Jon brand over the years. I look forward to working with the Ron Jon team in my new capacity and in honoring our history while solidly looking to the future.”

Navy Blue Angels set to headline The Great Florida Air Show at the Orlando Melbourne Airport; Florida Tech Jet Racing Team display

By Jim Havey
jhavey@jimhaveypr.com
Jim Havey Public Relations

(March 9, 2021) — The Great Florida Air Show, presented by Northrop Grumman, has announced its 2021 lineup of world-class performers that will appear on Saturday, May 15, and Sunday, May 16, at Orlando Melbourne International Airport (MLB).

In their first Melbourne appearance since 2015, the U.S. Navy Blue Angels will headline the Air Show flying the Team’s new aircraft, the F-18 Super Hornet.

This year marks the Blue Angels’ 75th anniversary since its inception in 1946, and it is the first time in 35 years that the Team has upgraded its aircraft.

Scheduled premier performers include: U.S. Special Operations Command Parachute Team; Official U.S. Air Force F-16 Viper Demonstration Team; U.S. National Aerobatic champions Mike Wiskus of Lucas Oil Air Shows, nine-time consecutive winner Rob Holland and Mike Goulian (Red Bull Air Races Champion); Larry Labriola, piloting the Aero L-39 Albatros; Gregory “Wired” Colyer piloting the Aero L-39 Albatros; Gregory “Wired” Colyer flying warbird Ace Maker F-33; and Scott “Scrooter” Yoak in his World War II-era P-51.

“MLB couldn’t be more excited to once again host the U.S. Navy Blue Angels along with these other great performers,” said Greg Donovan, executive director of the Orlando Melbourne International Airport. “We are looking forward to a high-flying, fun, and safe event for our community.”

This air show is an exciting opportunity to enjoy the best of aviation, while bringing our community together around the technology we at Northrop Grumman are advancing every day. Given the challenges of last year, we’re pleased to work with the Air Show Network and MLB to ensure this outdoor event is safe and accessible to the community,” said Kirsten Dreggors, vice president of engineering and site leader for Northrop Grumman’s Manned Aircraft Design Center of Excellence.

This year’s first-of-its-kind boutique event, produced by The Air Show Network, will be reduced capacity to ensure a high-quality guest experience and social distancing. A limited number of general admission tickets are available.

“At the heart of it, we want to create a safe space for air show fans while giving them the best guest experience,” said Jim Breen, president of The Air Show Network. “To ensure that we produce a quality, socially distanced show, we limited the capacity to half of what it would normally be. With the great lineup and a smaller-scaled audience, we’re working to make the show a very special event.”

Tables seating four each will be available in the Flight Line Club. Premium Boxes and additional Air Show seating will be sold in sets of two and four. Locations can be chosen upon purchase online, based on availability. Each seat grouping will be socially distanced in accordance with CDC protocol. Merchandise and food and beverage transactions will be cashless.

A static display will include the new Generation 6 Florida Tech Jet Dragster featuring two-time IHRA World Champion Jet Dragster driver Elaine Larsen and the Florida Tech Jet Racing Team.

Table and seating tickets are available at www.greatfloridaairshow.com. Tickets will not be sold on-site during show days. Parking for the event is free and upgraded VIP parking is available for purchase.

About Northrop Grumman
Northrop Grumman solves the toughest problems in space, aeronautics, defense and cyberspace to meet the ever-evolving needs of its customers worldwide. The company has 90,000 employees. Website: www.northropgrumman.com.

About the U.S. Navy Blue Angels
Since 1946, the U.S. Navy Blue Angels’ mission is to showcase the pride and professionalism of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps and to inspire a culture of excellence and service to the country by conducting flight demonstrations and community outreach. Visit www.blueangels.navy.mil for more information. Follow the Team on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram.

About Orlando Melbourne International Airport
Orlando Melbourne International Airport (MLB) is Central Florida’s coastal gateway with daily service on American Airlines and Delta Air Lines. MLB continues to gain international recognition as the No. 1 “Most Scenic Airport in North America” and with the announcement of TUI UK’s decision to make MLB its gateway to Florida in 2022. Also known as an epicenter of aerospace, defense, and aircraft manufacturing activity, MLB is home to Northrop Grumman, L3Harris, Embraer, Collins Aerospace, and most recently Aerion Supersonic. To learn more, visit www.MLBair.com or follow @FlyMLB on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

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LOSS OF BALANCE, HEADACHE OR DIZZINESS  BLURRED VISION  ONE SIDE OF THE FACE IS DROOPING  ARM OR LEG WEAKNESS  SPEECH DIFFICULTY  TIME TO CALL FOR AMBULANCE IMMEDIATELY

WHEN TO CALL 911?

If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 911 and get them to the hospital immediately. DO NOT DRIVE YOURSELF to the emergency room if you suspect you are having a stroke.

BEYOND BE FAST—OTHER SYMPTOMS YOU SHOULD KNOW
- Sudden numbness or weakness of the leg
- Sudden confusion or trouble understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

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parrishhealthcare.com

Parrish Medical Center has received a gold seal from the Joint Commission for stroke.

Healing Families—Healing Communities®
Building fulfilling future working for drone manufacturer, beyond a paycheck; Aquiline ignites passion

By Alisa Picerno
apicerno@aquilinedrones.com
Aquiline Drones

HARTFORD, Conn. (March 10, 2021) — Joseph Gates, 42, of Vernon, Conn., had built a bright career as a lighting and video-system technician in the entertainment industry. Then the pandemic struck and his career prospects turned dark.

“On March 13, 2020, I was halfway through loading the HSO show at the Belding Theater at the Bushnell in Hartford when COVID shut things down completely,” said Gates. “I was really worried about not having enough money to pay my bills. I had to borrow money from family and friends with unemployment benefits set to run out the third week of December.”

Gates had been unable to find work, even though his impressive resume includes openings of venues like Animal Kingdom at Disney World, the Basketball Hall of Fame and the Casino of the Sky at Mohegan Sun. Then on Dec. 14, he landed a job at Aquiline Drones, the first drone manufacturing and assembly plant in Connecticut as a drone technician. After only two weeks, he was promoted to Production Supervisor managing a team of 23 employees.

“I was terrified that my skills would not be a fit for a manufacturing tech position,” said Gates. “But I soon realized that all of my skills like soldering wires, computer programming, rewiring things, troubleshooting and leadership are applicable to this job.”

Similarly, Stephanie Hernandez, 34, of East Hartford, Conn., never envisioned a career in high tech manufacturing, but she wasn’t simply looking for a paycheck.

“I had a job, but I always had an entrepreneurial spirit,” said Hernandez, whose quest for career fulfillment had led her from retail management to criminal justice to government. Then, while leveraging a National Dislocated Worker Grant and American Job Centers, has screened and recruited more than 60 candidates, filling 23 maintenance tech roles, matching qualified talent. Additionally, CWP helps adults develop skills necessary to thrive in the state’s job market and directs them to employers seeking those talents.

“In September 2020, Aquiline Drones partnered with CWP to promote career opportunities, source candidates, and to connect with workforce development initiatives,” said Alex Johnson, president and CEO of Capital Workforce Partners.

“Since then, CWP, along with its partners at the region’s American Job Centers, has screened and recruited more than 60 candidates, filling 23 maintenance tech roles, while leveraging a National Dislocated Worker Grant and federal CARES Act funding to help Aquiline Drones offset employee training costs,” added Johnson.

For job inquiries, contact info@aquilinedrones.com. Hernandez agrees that her job satisfaction goes well beyond earning a living. “My proudest moment at Aquiline Drones was software testing the drone that I assembled — to see it fly was a real sense of fulfillment. I tell myself to do something that scares you each day because every day is a dream and working here is certainly a dream come true.”

For Gates, his greatest accomplishment at AD thus far has been “seeing the professional and personal advancement of my team.”

About Aquiline Drones

Aquiline Drones is a cloud-solutions company located in the financial district of Hartford. Aquiline’s ecosystem includes a hybrid aviation cloud with edge capabilities for commercial drones, U.S.-based drone manufacturing, “maintenance-repair-overhaul” services, and unmanned aerial systems solutions for large enterprises and governments.

Visit www.aquilinedrones.com for more information.

Rudloff to address ABWA Oceanside dinner meeting at Eau Gallie Yacht Club

The American Business Women’s Association Oceanside Charter Chapter will meet at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, March 23, at the Eau Gallie Yacht Club in Indian Harbour Beach.

The guest speaker will be Kathryn Rudloff, executive director of weVENTURE Women’s Business Center at Florida Tech. She will present “Women’s History Month Special: Women in the Workplace.”

The cost is $33 for members and $40 for guests. For more information and to register, visit www.abwa62oceanside.com or email abwa62oceanside@gmail.com.

Oceanside Charter Chapter is part of a national network of businesswomen. Founded in 1949, ABWA is a 14,000-member strong association with chapters and Express Networks nationwide, providing business skills training and networking opportunities for women of diverse occupations to enhance career advancement and personal development.

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Currently Grossing over $100,000
By Adam Lowenstein
adam@fit.edu
Florida Tech News Bureau
Florida Institute of Technology

(March 8, 2021) — Florida Tech alumnus Julian Field, founding chairman of a start-up company preparing for the commercial launch of a solar-powered car boasting a 50–mile range, will be the featured speaker at the F. Alan Smith Distinguished Lecture Series on March 30.

The virtual event, “Making A Car Powered By The Sun,” runs from 12–1 p.m. and is co-sponsored by the Melbourne Regional Chamber and the Brevard Sustainability Working Group. The event is free, but registration is required at www.floridatech.edu/lectureseries.

In 2013, Field and his son James, both based in Yorkshire, England, began to design a solar-powered vehicle that they insisted be practical, affordable and road legal. The result was SPV1, which had a battery capable of recharging in three hours under normal daylight conditions.

Encouraged by their success and recognizing the commercial potential for solar vehicles, the Fields founded Solar Transport Systems and began work on a production vehicle. Six years later, they introduced the INTI, a two-seater named after the Incan sun god. Energy from the sun is stored in the INTI’s battery, which powers an electric motor up to a 50–mile range. The vehicle can also be plugged into a household outlet for additional range. The first INTIs are expected to be delivered in 2022.

Julian Field brings years of successful experience across multiple business sectors to his disruptive solar start-up. He was born in Argentina and raised in Venezuela and later attended Florida Tech, where he graduated in 1984 with a bachelor’s degree in electrical and computer engineering.

He began his diverse career as a senior field engineer with Schlumberger, a leader in oil and gas, with international assignments in Algeria, Nigeria and Gabon from 1985 through 1988. He later served as managing director at Tomlinson Furniture Ltd., a manufacturer and wholesaler of furniture, supplying an international network of retailers and distributors. He was also European marketing director at Courtaulds from 1989 to 1995. He was responsible for marketing and export sales in Europe, the Middle East and Africa for the company’s $230 million aerospace paints and sealants business.

In 1999, he founded and led Furniture123.co.uk, the UK’s first online furniture retailer and eventually its largest. He sold it to Buy It Direct Ltd. in 2012.

In addition to his role at Solar Transport Systems, Field is also currently director of an education services business. He is a member of Florida Tech’s International Advisory Board, helping to mentor and tutor future alumni around the world.

The lecture series’ founder and benefactor is F. Alan Smith, who like Field brought innovation and passion to the business of automobiles. Smith spent more than three decades in leadership positions at General Motors in the U.S. and Canada, including serving as executive vice president of finance of General Motors and president and general manager of General Motors of Canada, Ltd.

Smith has served on Florida Tech’s Board of Trustees since 1996.

Find out more about the series at www.fit.edu/distin-

guished-lecture-series.
Chris Maslow named Hotel Melby artist–in–residence, downtown Melbourne facility set to open on March 31

Christopher Maslow. After receiving numerous entries from local artists, Hotel Melby took to social media to announce the winner of their mural competition. The winner will create three murals in high–profile areas of the hotel and its expansive rooftop terrace lounge. So impressed was the leadership of Hotel Melby with Maslow’s work, it appointed him artist–in–residence, indicating the start of future ongoing collaborations. While Maslow won the overall competition, Ian Soden, Nicholas Martinez and Christian Martinez earned honorable mentions for the extraordinary concepts they submitted.

“I am beyond thrilled to be joining Hotel Melby as their artist–in–residence,” Maslow said. “As a Melbourne native, I have dreamed about the possibilities of collaborating with Melby since its groundbreaking, and now that dream has come true.” He added, “I can’t wait for the public to see the creative direction I’m taking with this project. I’ve created something truly unique and special. Something original all its own.”

“Adding Chris’ exceptional creative mark to Hotel Melby will be an exciting complement to the hotel’s experiential design; it will provide our guests more memorable moments of beauty in unexpected places,” said Carlos Cerda, general manager of Hotel Melby.

Among Maslow’s previous notable business collaborations, he has worked with Starbucks, the Florida Institute of Technology, and Salesforce.

Most recognized for his multi-story public works and fine art paintings, Maslow expresses art through a deep artistic narrative amongst today’s modern art movement. He blends various mediums and styles into his work, including abstract, realism, graffiti, and ethereal surrealism.

Hotel Melby welcomes residents and visitors to enjoy Maslow’s creations at its opening, slated for late March/early April 2021. The hotel launch includes an 11th–floor dining and lounging destination, The Landing Rooftop. It provides catering, will host company events, and offers a stunning view of the river and city around it.

Phil Rotondo in Palm Bay recognized as No. 1 Coldwell Banker agent nationally

By Gabriela Ruiz gabriela.ruiz@coldwellbanker.com
Public Relations Specialist Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC

PALM BAY — (March 5, 2021) — Coldwell Banker Realty in Florida has announced that for the second consecutive year, Phil Rotondo has earned the ranking of the No. 1 individual sales associate for total units, out of more than 96,000 Coldwell Banker network sales professionals.

Rotondo also ranks as the No. 1 affiliated sales associate for total units in Florida.

He surpassed his total units for 2019, with a total of 409 total units sold in 2020.

In addition, Rotondo is being recognized with the Coldwell Banker International Society of Excellence award.

“Phil continues to raise the bar for success with his continuous achievements in real estate. He has long been in the top ranks, which he has accomplished through hard work, dedication and expertise,” said Duff Rubin, president of Coldwell Banker Realty in Florida. “I am extremely proud of all his success and honored to have him as part of our Coldwell Banker network.”

With more than 16 years’ experience in real estate, Rotondo’s specialties include vacant land listings and sales throughout Florida, and residential properties in Brevard County. Rotondo has earned professional designations including Senior Real Estate Specialist, e–PRO Internet Professional, and Accredited Buyer Representative.

He has previously been recognized with the prestigious International President’s Premier award and is also a member of the National Association of Realtors and the Florida Association of Realtors.
Parrish, Orlando Health bring specialized pediatric care to Brevard; specialists will care for newborns, children

By Natalie Sellers
communications@parrishmed.com
Sr. Vice President, Communications
Community & Corporate Services
Parrish Healthcare

TITUSVILLE (March 8, 2021) — Parrish Healthcare and Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children have formed a collaborative agreement to bring Orlando Health-employed pediatric specialists to Parrish Healthcare. The agreement includes a pediatric hospitalist program as well as an outpatient children’s multispecialty center.

Orlando Health Arnold Palmer physicians will provide in–hospital care to babies born at Parrish Medical Center (PMC) as well as all other hospitalized pediatric patients. The pediatric hospitalists stay in close communication with the families’ primary pediatrician and once released to go home, the pediatric specialists will continue to follow up with the families’ primary pediatrician to assure a safe transition to home.

“We believe in bringing together the best and brightest for a common purpose and in this case it is to provide the families we serve with convenient access to highly–specialized pediatric care close to home,” said George Mikitarian, Parrish Healthcare president and CEO.

“We are thrilled to partner with Parrish Medical Center to bring our pediatric services to Brevard County,” said Cary D’Ortona, president of Orlando Health Arnold Palmer. “Our team is eager to help expand the great care already being provided in this community.”

Additionally, Orlando Health Arnold Palmer will establish a pediatric multispecialty care center at The Children’s Center, a service of Parrish Healthcare, located at 5660 S. Washington Ave. (U.S. Highway I) in Titusville. The center will specialize in child cardiology, endocrinology, gastroenterology, urology, neurology, and pulmonology conditions.

The Children’s Center is a one–stop childhood development resource center, providing an array of health, education and human services through many nonprofit community agencies for children of all ages and abilities and their families.

Pediatric patients throughout the county with serious heart, lung and other conditions can see Orlando Health pediatric specialists and subspecialists and other healthcare professionals at the center in Titusville.

“Through this arrangement, Orlando Health is a member of the Parrish Healthcare nationally certified integrated care system,” said Mikitarian. “Parrish Healthcare is a collaborative system whereby all members work together for the patients in our care in a proven way parents can trust.”

“Our primary care pediatricians saw this as a twofold advantage: first, they could spend more time at their offices serving patients and not have to be continually traveling to and from the hospital,” Mikitarian added. “They also are able to collaborate with Orlando Health specialists, and vice–versa.”

“Parents shouldn’t have to sacrifice quality for convenience,” said D’Ortona. “Thanks to this partnership with Parrish, families in Brevard County can receive the highest level of care close to home.” The relationship also gives Parrish Healthcare access to Orlando Health Arnold Palmer pediatric–focused patient education and professional continuing education.

“The Children’s Center is the only place a family can seek comprehensive care exclusively for pediatric patients throughout the county with serious heart, lung and other conditions,” said D’Ortona. “We are excited to offer them access to Orlando Health in–hospital care for newborns and children.”

“PMC’s vision is ‘healing families, healing communities.’ Working with Orlando Health further fulfills that vision, and we’re excited about what the future holds,” said Mikitarian.

● About Parrish Healthcare
Parrish Healthcare is a community–based, collaborative health system located on Florida’s Space Coast. Parrish Healthcare includes Parrish Medical Center, a Mayo Clinic Care Network member and one of the America’s most recognized hospitals for clinical quality, patient safety and healing environments; Parrish Medical Group, NCQA certified patient–centered medical homes; and Parrish Health Network, a network of health–care providers, insurers and others working together to improve quality and safety and lower health–care costs on behalf of individuals, families and businesses.

For more information on Parrish Healthcare, visit www.parrishhealthcare.com.

● About Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children
Orlando Health Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children is a 156–bed facility dedicated exclusively to the needs of children. Orlando Health Arnold Palmer provides expertise in pediatric specialties such as cardiac care, craniofacial surgery, gastroenterology, nephrology, neurology, oncology, orthopedics, pulmonology and sports medicine. The Bert Martin’s Champions for Children Emergency Department & Trauma Center at Orlando Health Arnold Palmer is part of the only Level One Trauma Center in the area, and is the first facility in Central Florida to provide emergency care exclusively for pediatric patients.

Visit www.arndolph Palmerhospital.com to learn more.
Cocoa Beach Jr./Sr. High raising funds for track and field upgrades, looks to the business community; ‘Get on Track’ initiative needs to raise $70,000

By Ken Datzman

The last time Cocoa Beach Jr./Sr. High School’s track had maintenance was 17 years ago. The facility is in need of track and field upgrades. A community coalition, including the Kiwanis Club of Cocoa Beach, is working to raise money to install an eight–lane rubberized track. The cost is roughly $450,000, which includes field improvements. From left: Leslie Tibbetts, mother of Tommy Tibbetts and member of the Cocoa Beach Cross Country Booster Club; Charley Priddy, member of the Kiwanis Club of Cocoa Beach and a 1967 graduate of CBHS; Tommy Tibbetts, member of the cross country and track teams; and Marlene White, founder of the Cocoa Beach Cross Country Booster Club and member of the Kiwanis Club of Cocoa Beach.

BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

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BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

Two years ago, a senior at the school who was a cross country and track athlete, “approached the Booster Club about starting a fundraising project to rebuild the track,” said Marlene White, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Cocoa Beach and founder of the Cocoa Beach Cross Country Booster Club Inc. The Booster Club went to the Kiwanis Club of Cocoa Beach, presented it to them, and asked for their assistance, she said. “They came aboard to handle the financial infrastructure and administrative aspects of the fundraiser.”

The Kiwanis Club of Cocoa Beach has a long history of raising funds to benefit the community. Its president is Mary Watkins of Sunrise Bank in Cocoa Beach. The club has 39 members.

“We are an upbeat group,” said Charley Priddy, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Cocoa Beach and a 1967 graduate of Cocoa Beach Jr./Sr. High. “We have helped the school on other fundraising projects, such as a new scoreboard for the field complex (roughly $40,000).”

His club has also helped Roosevelt Elementary School in Cocoa Beach with their new playground (about $85,000).”

“This is all fundraising on the club’s behalf. We have other projects in the works. One is for Freedom 7 Elementary School in Cocoa Beach. The club is raising money to purchase the school a digital piano,” said Priddy.

He said the key to raising large amounts of money for projects such as the Get On Track undertaking “is to gain support from the business community. It takes a long time to raise significant sums of money from community events. The events really help build a foundation, but business support is crucial.”

The giving options include having your donation etched in stone. A four–inch by eight–inch engraved brick with art and text of your choice starts at $60. There are also larger brick options.

The Get On Track committee, made up of volunteers, and the Booster Club have been putting on small fundraising events in the community. It also undertook a...
Longtime insurance agency owner and operator Rey Campbell all set to transition GreatFlorida Insurance of Palm Bay to daughter Sara LaManna

By Ken Dotzman

PALM BAY — Businessman Rey Campbell, a golfer, is getting closer to his official tee time.

Campbell is winding down a successful 32-year career as an insurance agency owner and operator in Brevard County, and will finally have more free time to fine-tune his game.

Later this year, he plans to transition his GreatFlorida Insurance Agency to his daughter, Sara LaManna. She is currently handling the firm’s marketing and has worked for global companies such as ADP Inc., a payroll processor, benefits administrator, and more.

LaManna has worked closely with business owners in Brevard County for years, including as the district manager for BenefitMall, a national provider of integrated payroll and employee benefit products and services. That company was acquired last year by ADP.

“She continued, “I have built a lot of business relationships around the county working in the benefits industry and have been calling on those business contacts. Both industries — benefits and insurance — are service driven. Maintaining a high service level is vital to being able to grow a business.”

Independent agents continue to hold a large portion of the commercial insurance market at 84.5 percent, according to the 2020 Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America.

“The 2020 report reflects analysis of data for select property-casualty premiums by line for the years 2017–2019, including personal auto, commercial auto, homeowners, commercial group, and workers’ compensation.”

In general, if a business uses a car or truck for any work-related tasks other than commuting, a commercial policy is necessary.

GreatFlorida Insurance provides coverage for commercial vehicles, commercial buildings, and offers a full range of business insurance products. “We can also write liability-only policies for businesses,” said Campbell.

Campbell has been mentoring his daughter at GreatFlorida Insurance. “My father has one foot out the door,” she said. “He’s been wanting to spend more time on the golf course and he will be involved in other things during his retirement.”

There are roughly 400,000 insurance professionals in America at or nearing retirement age, according to the Strategic Insurance Agency Alliance.

As the baby-boom generation moves to a new phase in their lifecycle, the industry is looking for successors and is recruiting millennials, like LaManna. “This is an interesting industry. While some people may think you’re doing the same thing every day, that is not the case. There is always something new that comes across your desk almost on a daily basis.”

LaManna is a graduate of Melbourne Central Catholic High School. She earned her bachelor’s degree in international business from Rollins College in Winter Park. LaManna was involved in Rollins College’s Study Abroad program, which took her to Spain.

Her husband Dan is also an MCC graduate. He’s an engineer with Lockheed Martin at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center. He earned mechanical engineering degrees from UCF and Cornell University.

“We started our careers in Sunnyvale, Calif., in the Silicon Valley,” she said. “I worked for ADP. We both graduated from college in 2014. At the time, it was hard to find an engineering job in the local market. Dan had interned with Lockheed Martin in Orlando for a year. They offered him a position in Sunnyvale, a really nice area with expensive real estate. We lived in a 600-square-foot apartment in the San Francisco Bay Area. Later, we both had the opportunity to come back to Brevard, and we did. I transferred with ADP. This is our home.”

Now she’s preparing to carry on her family’s tradition of operating an insurance agency.

Insurers are among the nation’s largest employers, investors, and taxpayers, according to the Insurance Information Institute.

That organization’s newly released “A Firm Foundation: How Insurance Supports
March 9, 2021) The Florida State Parks Foundation recently announced that Derek Bruce has been elected to the board of directors.

“I am delighted to welcome Derek to the board,” said Gil Ziffer, president of the Florida State Parks Foundation. “He brings a wealth of experience and expertise and will be a tremendous asset to the Foundation as we further our mission of supporting Florida’s fabulous state parks, the best in the nation.”

“I am a native Floridian and have such fond memories of visiting a number of our state parks like Ichetucknee Springs and Wekiwa Springs,” said Bruce.

“This opportunity to work with the dedicated team of Foundation employees and volunteers gives me a way to help ensure future generations can enjoy these treasures that were so important for me.”

Bruce is the managing shareholder of the Orlando office of the Gunster law firm.

With more than 20 years’ experience in the practice of law, Bruce primarily represents clients before state and local governments throughout Florida on land use, procurement and administrative or regulatory issues. He previously served on the Orange County Board of Zoning Adjustment; Orange County Planning and Zoning Commission; chairman of the Orange County Redistricting Advisory Committee; and as a member of Gov. Rick Scott’s Task Force on Citizen Safety and Protection.

He has also served on the boards of numerous statewide and local community organizations, including Leadership Florida; Central Florida Foundation; African–American Chamber of Commerce of Central Florida; and the Randy Roberts Foundation.

Bruce also had the privilege of serving as president of the Tiger Bay Club of Central Florida and chairman of Business Force, an independent, nonpartisan organization composed of business and community leaders across Central Florida.

He is a graduate of the University of Florida and currently sits on the University of Florida’s Law Center Association.

*About the Florida State Parks Foundation*

The Florida State Parks Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Its mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award–winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and more than 20,000 park volunteers.

*About the The Florida State Parks Foundation*

Brevard County Parks and Recreation seeks food trucks for Movies in the Park Program

Brevard County Parks and Recreation’s Central Area Operations is seeking “food truck” vendors to cater to customers who attend its “Movies in the Park” program.

The growing program takes place once a month between Rockledge and Merritt Island. “We are creating a sign-up list to have interested food trucks at the event. There is a fee associated,” said Rhonda McConnell, recreation program coordinator.

“This is a great opportunity and we look forward to working with those interested. It not only supports small businesses, but it also shows the community the amazing food that food trucks provide,” she added.

If interested, send the following:

- Contact information, including your name, your business name, phone, email, and social media sites for your business.
- A written introduction about yourself and your business with all details of your operation. Include photos of your operation, equipment, vehicles and products.
- A copy of your menu with pricing.
- Food Manager Certificate
- Copy of mobile vehicle insurance and Florida driver’s license.
- Florida Department of Revenue forms DR–11 and DR–13
- Copy of current occupational state and county business licenses, current Brevard County Business Tax Receipt, health department permits, and insurance certificate naming Brevard County as additional insured. Your insurance must include sexual abuse and molestation coverage.

For more information on this program, contact McConnell at (321) 633–1874 or email Rhonda.McConnell@BrevardFL.gov.

4th Annual Space Coast STEM Sandbagger Invitational

**FRIDAY, May 7, 2021, 8:00am**

Baytree National, Melbourne, FL

$75.00 per Player if registered before 23 April/
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Includes: Greens fees, cart, driving range, and lunch

Help us make our fourth golf tournament a success! All proceeds from event will support STEM activities in our Space Coast FL Community.

**Interested Sponsors and Golfers!**

- email: programs@scwid.org or sponsorships@scwid.org
- PO Box 144, Cocoa, FL 32923
- Register (button coming soon)

**RAFFLE DRAWINGS—EXCITING EVENTS!!!**

- STEM Demo
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- Longest Drive (Male & Female)
- Hole-In-One Opportunities
- Putting Contest

Proceeds from previous Tournaments have helped raise over $40,000 for scholarships and STEM related programs

The Space Coast Women In Defense is a volunteer, 501c3, not-for-profit, organization. All proceeds raised through this event will be used to promote/support STEM activities in our Space Coast FL community.

https://events.20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ehvlg23882sd52bcboseq=&c=&ch=
Nominations open for The Parker Thomson Awards, Susan Spencer–Wendel Lifetime Achievement Award

By Leslie H. Smith
lhsmith@floridabar.org

Communications
The Florida Bar


The first-place award recipient for The Parker Thomson Awards for Outstanding Legal Journalism in Florida will receive a cash prize of $500, a plaque and travel reimbursement to attend the awards ceremony. A reporter who chooses not to accept the monetary prize may opt to donate to the First Amendment Foundation.

The Florida Bar’s Media & Communications Law Committee has presented awards for stellar legal journalism for more than 60 years. This honor is named for the late Miami lawyer Parker Davidson Thomson, for his countless contributions to media law. His expertise included helping newspapers obtain public records.

Qualified entries highlight the system of law and justice as it affects Floridians. Any journalists who write for a radio station, blog, television station, wire service or online–only publication located in Florida are eligible to enter.

Entries must have been published or produced between Jan. 1, 2020, and Dec. 31, 2020. Content of entries may be online–only.

The first–place award recipient for The Parker Thomson Awards for Outstanding Legal Journalism in Florida will receive a cash prize of $500, a plaque and travel reimbursement to attend the awards ceremony. A reporter who chooses not to accept the monetary prize may opt to donate to the First Amendment Foundation.

The Parker Thomson and Susan Spencer–Wendel media awards will be presented at the Florida Media Conference in July, in Sarasota. Winners will be notified in advance.

• About The Florida Bar

Founded in 1949, The Florida Bar serves the legal profession for the protection and benefit of both the public and all Florida lawyers. As one of the nation’s largest mandatory bars, The Florida Bar fosters and upholds a high standard of integrity and competence within Florida’s legal profession as an official arm of the Florida Supreme Court. To learn more, visit FloridaBar.org.
ORLANDO (March 9, 2020) — WUCF TV, Central Florida’s PBS station, in collaboration with the Nicholson School of Communication and Media at University of Central Florida, has announced the launch of The Road to Freedom Avenue — The Legacy of Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore, a student–produced multimedia journalism project spotlighting the story of the Moores, a Black married couple from Brevard County who became the first martyrs of the modern civil rights movement in 1951.

The Moores were educators and activists in Mims, with Harry Moore establishing the first NAACP chapter in the county. Their anti–racist efforts challenged the status quo that discriminated against them, and on Christmas night 1951, their house was bombed by white supremacists while they slept, causing their untimely deaths. A replica of their home was built on their street, Freedom Avenue; several markers, a cultural complex museum, and many voices still carry their message today.

The story of their murders, while eventful, is not widely known among locals, something WUCF executive director Dr. Phil Hoffman said could be improved through storytelling projects like this one, that platform the voices of righteous justice.

“WUCF would not be fulfilling its role as Central Florida’s Storytellers without partnering with community producers to tell even the most difficult stories,” Hoffman said. “During this time of racial reckoning in our country, it is important to tell these stories of people who worked for justice to help educate and engage our audience in this meaningful conversation.”

Instructor of journalism at the UCF Nicholson School, Rick Brunson said it all started with a Facebook post. Moved to tears after reading about the horrific racism and domestic terrorism under the color of law that gripped Central Florida in the 1940s and 1950s, Brunson visited the Moore Cultural Complex in Mims to learn more and pay his respects. When he shared his experience on social media, Hoffman reached out and suggested this student project, and the rest, he said, is history.

“We are so grateful to Phil and WUCF for suggesting and fully supporting this partnership,” Brunson said. “It was so gratifying for the students and such a privilege to honor the Moores’ legacy and the impact their lives continue to have on Central Florida and beyond.”

To learn more about the Moore project, visit wucf.org/themooreproject.

About WUCF TV
WUCF TV is the sole–service PBS member station for the nearly 4 million Central Floridians across nine counties. WUCF is Central Florida’s storyteller, encouraging curiosity and learning through compelling content and community engagement. The station is community–supported public broadcasting from the University of Central Florida. Learn more at http://wucf.org.
Diocese names two new principals for Brevard; Ascension Catholic School and at St. Joseph Catholic School

By Dawn Melcher
dmelcher@orlandodiocese.org
Director of Marketing, Eastern Region
Diocese of Orlando
Office of Catholic Schools

(March 10, 2021) Henry Fortier, Secretary of Education and Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Orlando, has announced the appointments of Claudia Stokes as principal of Ascension Catholic School in Melbourne and Edward Henry as principal of St. Joseph Catholic School in Palm Bay.

The new principals will begin their roles at the end of March, where they will continue to uphold Brevard County Catholic Schools’ commitment to academic excellence and a rich faith tradition.

Stokes, who currently serves as principal of St. Joseph Catholic School, is transitioning to Ascension after the school experienced the tragic losses of its principal, Anita Brady, and pastor, Father Tobin, late last year.

Stokes brings a rich background of service within the church. She previously worked as a middle school teacher for St. Joseph’s and became the school’s principal in 2011. Her experience also includes acting as director of Lifelong Faith Formation at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Viera, teaching in Broward County and Dade County Public Schools, and holding the position of director of Religious Education at St. Martha Catholic Church, where she taught in the Religious Education program for several years.

She has been active in the Bishop’s Harmonizing Ministries Committee, NCEA Liturgy Committee and Mission Effectiveness Committee. Presently, she is completing her doctor of education degree in educational leadership at Florida Southern College.

With Stokes moving to Ascension, Edward Henry will take over as St. Joseph’s principal. Henry is also a member of the Brevard County Catholic Schools community who has worked to provide excellent outcomes for students, both in the classroom and on the field.

Henry currently serves as athletic director at Melbourne Central Catholic High School and has been the school’s chairman of the social science department. He began his teaching career in the Diocese of Orlando at Ascension Catholic School after teaching at the Florida Air Academy High School. In addition to his extensive experience, Henry brings educational expertise to his role at St. Joseph’s, with a master’s degree in educational leadership from St. Leo University.

“We are blessed to already have the exceptional talent needed to lead Ascension and St. Joseph’s within our Catholic school community in Brevard County,” said Fortier.

“As the legacy of Mrs. Brady will continue to live on in our hearts, we move forward in prayer for our new leaders. We are confident Mrs. Stokes and Mr. Henry will uphold our schools’ high standards and foster a welcoming, enriching environment for all students.”

Brevard Catholic Schools, together with the Diocese of Orlando, proclaim the Gospel message within an academic environment of excellence that challenges students to be creative and critical thinkers who integrate faith, moral leadership and compassionate service in order to create a more just and humane world.

The county’s nine Catholic schools serve students in Pre–K3 through 12th grade. For more information on the schools, visit https://brevardcatholicschools.org.
UF researchers to use artificial intelligence to predict how hurricanes spread invasive plants; season may start May 15

By Brad Buck
braduck@ufl.edu
IFAS Communications
University of Florida

(March 10, 2021) Scientists project hurricane intensity and frequency will increase with climate change. That leads researchers to want to better predict how storms will disperse and establish non-native plant invaders.

Knowing where invasive plants spread will always be useful. But it may become especially handy soon as the National Hurricane Center is considering moving the official start of the Atlantic hurricane season two weeks earlier, starting it May 15, instead of June 1. Tropical Storm Arthur formed May 16 last year, marking six straight years a named storm formed before June 1.

This new information on invasive plants will come from a University of Florida research team gathering data by using artificial intelligence (AI).

UF researchers led by Luke Flory are using a combination of on-the-ground plant research and hyperspectral sensing to evaluate the effects of hurricanes on Brazilian peppertree and Old World climbing fern. These are two of the most widespread and problematic invaders in South Florida, including such large areas as the Big Cypress National Preserve and Everglades National parks, and hurricanes may disperse seeds and spores to new habitats.

Flory and his team want to examine the post–hurricane conditions with remotely sensed data that can be used to map the distribution of invasive plants.

“If we also can predict how hurricanes might alter the distribution or spread of invasive plants, then we can plan for when, where and how much more of the invader might be after a storm,” said Flory, a UF/IFAS associate professor of ecology, in the agronomy department. “If resources can be allocated ahead of time, or at least very soon after a storm, then we can more effectively and efficiently manage invasions.”

Hyperspectral sensing will come from a University of Florida research team gathering data by using artificial intelligence (AI).

To gather their data, which will come from the hyperspectral sensor, Flory and his team will combine remotely sensed data with information on the ground.

He and his team will use a combination of what he calls “leaf–level” measurements obtained with a backpack unit and a handheld sensor and a “near–surface” instrument that they plan to fly over the plots on a rigged cable system.

“The idea is that if we know the scale of the problem — including the current distribution of invasive plants — then management efforts can be better targeted to the most problematic areas — or areas that contribute most to spread,” Flory said.

Those would include new, outlying groups of invasive plants that may be the next big population. “We also can target invasions in the most critical habitats — where there are threatened and endangered species.”

Other researchers on the team include Alina Zare and Paul Gader, both professors, and Dylan Stewart, a doctoral student — all with the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering. Also on the team is Susan Meerdink, an assistant professor of geographical and sustainability sciences at the University of Iowa.

Garden Club teams up with the Marine Resources Council

The Indian Harbour Beach Garden Club has joined forces with the Marine Resources Council to assist in getting the word out pertaining to projects to help bring the Banana River back to life.

The projects can be easy, attractive and help reduce the time and cost of yard maintenance. Using Florida native plants that do not require fertilizer or irrigation and rain barrels are just a few DIY things that the community can do.

“We all need to join forces to reduce the pollution and muck causing sediment entering our Lagoon,” said Linda Kuhl, publicity chairwoman for the Indian Harbour Beach Garden Club. Visit savetheIRL.org for further details on how to achieve these tasks.
Local firms became major sponsors. These ways, including cash and in-kind gifts. Individuals have contributed in various ways and individuals. "We are trying hard to make it. We have put our money to the area hotels, restaurants, and shops. So having a state-of-the-art business to the area hotels, restaurants, and shops. So having a state-of-the-art facility is an economic development tool."

The community is rallying around our raising the rest of the money by this spring. Then construction of the new track would begin this summer. If we don’t raise the funds by the end of May, or around that timeframe, the money will be earmarked for the track, but we will get pushed back possibly a couple of years. The money will go to more immediate programs.

Leslie Tibbetts, a member of the Cocoa Beach Cross Country Booster Club and mother of Tommy Tibbetts, says her family “takes great pride along with other families and people in the community in keeping the Get On Track project moving forward."

"The Minutemen Muster will start and finish on this track,” said White. The participants will run in the residential and country club area of Cocoa Beach. We have other fundraisers coming up. The events and dates are posted at www.CBHSGetOnTrack.com.

There is a long list of businesses and individuals at that site who are supporting Get On Track.


"We are thankful for every dollar we have received for Get On Track,” said White. “The community is rallying around this project. We just need a big push now as we near our goal. We're all excited to see this project come to fruition."
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Apply now for Agricultural–Environmental Leadership Award, says Commissioner Nikki Fried; deadline is set for April 15

By Franco E. Ripple
franco.ripple@freshfromflorida.com
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

TALLAHASSEE (March 2, 2021) — Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) are accepting nominations for the Agricultural–Environmental Leadership Award.

The award nominating period was announced in a video on Facebook and Twitter featuring John Hobbick, president of the Florida Farm Bureau Federation.

The award recognizes agricultural producers who demonstrate leadership in developing and implementing innovative techniques to safeguard the environment and conserve natural resources.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has projected a “dual climate–change impact on U.S. crops,” and Florida faces some of the nation’s greatest risks of extreme heat, inland and coastal flooding, drought, wildfires, and stronger hurricanes.

Nominations must be submitted to FDACS by Thursday, April 15.

“Florida’s farm land is home to some of the best stewards of our lands, our crystal waters, and our abundant natural treasures. We have nearly ten million acres of farmland, and every acre is an opportunity for land conservation and improved water quality,” said Fried. “That’s why we’re asking all producers to consider applying for our Agricultural–Environmental Leadership Award before April 15. Florida’s environment is changing, so we’re recognizing our farmers and ranchers who are exceptionally committed to environmentally improved agricultural practices.”

“Florida’s farmers and ranchers are some of the best stewards of our lands, waters, and environment that you’ll find anywhere. Ask any farmer — growing their commodities, raising their cattle, making a living, and supporting their family is all tied to the land, water, and environment,” said Hobbick. “Now more than ever, it’s up to us farmers to preserve these treasured resources. Together through agriculture, we can protect Florida’s environment for generations to come.”

Awarded Practices: The following environmental practices will be considered in judging nominations for the 2021 Agricultural–Environmental Leadership Award:

- Wildlife Protection and Habitat Conservation: Provide a safe, vibrant habitat for wildlife within an agricultural operation.
- Soil and Water Conservation: Reduce soil erosion, nutrient depletion and water consumption, and enhance water recharge.
- Waste Management/Recycling: Reduce waste by recycling agricultural by-products and waste products on site.
- Pesticide/Nutrient Management: Use pesticides/nutrients responsibly, maximizing benefits and minimizing potential adverse environmental effects.
- Water Quality: Preserve or improve water quality within or adjacent to an agricultural operation.

Nominations for the award are evaluated by a committee composed of representatives from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, The Nature Conservancy, the state’s Water Management Districts, the Florida Farm Bureau, the Florida Cattlemen’s Association, the Florida Dairy Association, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida’s Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Florida Citrus Mutual, the Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association, and the Florida Forestry Association.

In 2019, Fried established an Agricultural Innovation Workgroup with a mission of examining cutting-edge sustainable, innovative agricultural technologies and practices that can benefit Florida’s environment.

Brevard Zoo honors Linda Chadwick as its Volunteer of the Year

(March 3, 2021) — During its virtual volunteer appreciation event on Feb. 13, Brevard Zoo announced Linda Chadwick as its 2020 Volunteer of the Year. Chadwick has donated 3,776 hours of her time to the Brevard Zoo since 2017, with more than 1,000 of those hours contributed last year alone. Her roles include caring for animals in the Paws On Petting Zone, assisting with the Perdido Key beach mouse conservation breeding program, interacting with guests in the aviaries and kangaroo habitat, helping to facilitate education programs, tending to gardens, sewing masks for Zoo employees and volunteers, and supervising other volunteers as a “day captain.”

“Linda’s fingerprints are all over the Zoo, and she goes above and beyond for us in every way possible,” said Kathleen Nichols, the Brevard Zoo’s director of volunteer programs. “We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated volunteer and recognize her in this way.”

Born in San Francisco, Chadwick has lived in Brevard County for 13 years. Since her retirement from the Department of Defense in 2010, she and her husband have visited 66 countries.

In 2020, 789 volunteers donated a total of 64,053 hours to the Brevard Zoo saving the not-for-profit organization $751,350 in salary expenses.
GreatFlorida Insurance Agency

Continued from page 13

the Economy” contains charts and tables which highlight the vital roles played by insurers, whether it is helping communities recover financially from major catastrophes or investing in municipal bond markets.

In addition, the report delivers a snapshot of the industry’s economic impact in every state. In Florida, the industry employed 283,586 people in 2019. Local agencies are the heartbeat of the insurance business. Agency ownership provides people the opportunity to become entrepreneurs in the insurance industry, and Campbell did so early in his career.

A graduate of the Rochester Institute of Technology, Campbell ran his own Allstate Insurance Agency in Melbourne for 26 years before selling the business and going independent agency route with GreatFlorida Insurance, his second venture.

“GreatFlorida Insurance (PalmBay1.GreatFlorida.com) is part of a growing franchise system of independent insurance agents throughout the state. There are about 125 agencies under the GreatFlorida Insurance banner. We provide soup-to-nuts types of coverage,” he said.

“We have been growing with the county. Our agency has grown every year,” added Campbell, who has been part of the GreatFlorida Insurance network for about eight years.

Stuart–based GreatFlorida Insurance was founded in 1991 by businessman Ike Justin Peerbhai, whose commitment was to provide affordable insurance in the Sunshine State. He created a network of independent, franchised insurance agents and the network has blossomed.

GreatFlorida Insurance has established relationships with local and national “A”–rated insurance carriers in Florida. “This allows them to sell a variety of products from a vast group of insurance companies,” said Campbell.

“We have a broad portfolio of coverage brands. These include more than 20 homeowner insurance carriers, more than 20 auto insurance carriers, and a range of commercial property insurance carriers, as well as other areas of coverage. The portfolio is deep. We don’t miss a beat,” he added.

Campbell said that GreatFlorida Insurance agents are independent rather than “captive agents.” This means they are not bound to offer insurance policies from only one insurance company.

“We can customize a policy to suit a client’s specific needs and then shop for the best options,” he said. “Our job is to educate our clients so they can make informed decisions about their insurance coverage.”

One of GreatFlorida Insurance’s niches is writing policies for high–risk drivers and for other types of “hard–to–place” insurance risks.

Individuals and businesses need coverage, and GreatFlorida Insurance is providing it. “We write a lot of SR 22 policies and FR 44 policies. This is one of our specialties,” said Campbell.

An SR 22 is a form that is filled out with the state to show that you are meeting Florida’s minimum automobile liability insurance requirements. An SR 22 may also be referred to as a “certificate of financial responsibility.”

If you are cited for a DUI in Florida and your license is suspended or revoked, your insurance company must file an FR 44 with the Department of Motor Vehicles to process reinstatement of your license.

The purpose of an FR 44 is to ensure the state that you carry the minimum automobile insurance requirements.

Another area of coverage GreatFlorida Insurance is known for is for manufactured homes. The Florida market presents unique challenges to home insurers, including severe weather.

“We have four or five different companies that write mobile home coverage,” said Campbell. “We are very active in that market. These companies provide coverage for both primary mobile homes and secondary mobile homes, with the latter being coverage generally for winter residents. GreatFlorida Insurance also offers coverage for investment mobile homes.”

Independent agencies can set themselves apart in the market in a number of ways, according to a Nov. 16, 2020, article in the “Insurance Journal.”

Cost–effective marketing is one way an agency can reach potential customers. “Marketing your agency within a budget is important to keeping your business steadfast into the future. Research shows that, on average, a potential customer needs to see an advertisement seven times or more before they buy. Execute consistent marketing campaigns to reach people of all target ages within a specific radius of your business,” the article says.

GreatFlorida Insurance of Palm Bay uses a mix of marketing strategies to continue to develop its business and build brand visibility.

“We are looking to partner with real–estate companies, from small to large,” said LaManna. “If they have just two agents, we’re more than happy to work with them. If they have 200 agents, we are ready to partner with them. The main thing is we want to continue to build business relationships around the county.”

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Melbourne Art Festival

Continued from page 1

“Other recent events that have been taking place in the community have exceeded their attendance expectations. So we’re really upbeat about the 36th Melbourne Art Festival. We did scale back some of our events that couldn’t be socially distanced.”

The Melbourne Art Festival will follow guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for community events held during the pandemic, said Gant.

“People who attend the event will be required to wear masks and social distance. We encourage people who are not feeling well or who are COVID–positive to not attend the Melbourne Art Festival. We are taking all the precautions we can. There will be hand–sanitizer stations set up around the park for the public to use. We want the community to enjoy the show in a safe manner.”

“We will be promoting our artists online through our Facebook page and social–media platforms. So those who can’t attend because of health concerns will still be able to view the works of the artists and purchase art from them,” she added.

Gant said this year’s Melbourne Art Festival will feature more than 200 artists with their booths set up around one of the lakes at Wickham Park.

“We have a great layout for the event. There will be plenty of room between the booths of artists displaying their work. We saw a strong demand from artists wanting to participate in this year’s Melbourne Art Festival, with expectations to sell their art and be among their peers,” she said.

The program will include a KidsWorld area. Dedicated to families with children from ages 3 to 12, KidsWorld will feature hands–on demonstration arts and crafts, experiments, and performances.

The Presenting Sponsor of the 2021 Melbourne Art Festival is LEXUS, said Taylor.

“They have graciously signed on again this year to be our Presenting Sponsor. They love the art in our community. They will be displaying some of their cars at Wickham Park as part of a joint–marketing effort we have. LEXUS will be able to get in front of the anticipated tens of thousands of attendees over the two days of the event.”

He added, “The Melbourne Art Festival presents our business partners with unique marketing and branding opportunities. We will have a designated sponsorship area at the entrance to Wickham Park. Event sponsorships start at $2,500. To learn more about being a sponsor for the Melbourne Art Festival, visit MelbourneArts.org.

Every year, his organization publishes a glossy “Festival Directory” where attendees and the community can learn more about the businesses that stand behind the Melbourne Art Festival.

“The Festival Directory is one way to thank the sponsors as well as thank the patrons and thank the artists. And it’s a great resource for businesses,” said Taylor, adding, “The cover of the 2021 Festival Directory will feature Michel Bullock’s beautiful painting.”

A painting by Bullock, a member of the Fifth Avenue Art Gallery in the Eau Arts District of Melbourne, was selected to be the commemorative directory cover, poster, and T–shirt art for this year’s event. His painting is titled “Sunset at Wickham Park.”

Taylor said Bullock will be available to sign the directories, posters, and T–shirts for people attending the festival.

Bullock was born in Kinston, N.C., and has lived in Virginia and West Virginia. He’s a longtime Florida resident. “I started painting with oils and, occasionally, acrylics in 1967,” he said. “As a self–taught artist, I focus almost entirely on traditional representational landscapes and seascapes, with a strong leaning toward realism, done exclusively in oil.”

His paintings have been exhibited at art shows throughout Florida. Bullock is a member of the Oil Painters of America.

The Melbourne Art Festival has been an economic stimulator for the county. It attracts people to enjoy a family friendly event that promotes and encourages artistic endeavors, education, and overall appreciation of the arts.

“Our statistics show that the Melbourne Art Festival typically attracts between 35,000 and 40,000 people over the two–day event. These are pre–pandemic numbers,” said Gant.

Arts and culture play a significant role in the economic activity of the nation. In Florida, that sector represents 3.7 percent of the state’s gross domestic product. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and culture segment contributes $36.9 billion to Florida’s economy.

In the Sunshine State, arts–related businesses employ more than 227,000 people.

Nationally, the arts and culture sector are an $878 billion industry, representing 4.5 percent of America’s GDP — a larger share of the economy than construction or education services.

Artists are 3.6 times more likely than other workers to be self–employed, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Roughly 35 percent of self–employed are arts–related. This compares with 9 percent of all workers.

The Melbourne Art Festival will feature everything from handmade jewelry to photography, sculpture, pottery, mixed media, digital art, pen, and pencil art and paintings in acrylics and oils, and more.

“We will have it all. The artistic talent is deep. The event will showcase a plethora of fine art. All the jewelry at the Melbourne Art Festival will be handmade. Some of the artists weave their own wire. Peggy Miller is one of my favorites. Her designs are amazing.”

Miller’s work is handmade to order. “My approach to design remains simple by idea, keeping my work fresh and unique,” she says. “I continue to use traditional hand tools; my favorite being a jeweler’s saw.”

Miller said she has been designing and creating individual pieces using silver and gold metals for more than 40 years. “All my work is hand–fabricated. No casting needed.”

Her current techniques are weaving, creating hollow forms and bead designs. “No one has ever said a bead has to be round. I continue to explore new techniques and share my vision with others.”

Brenda Cline of Metal Souls Jewelry in Satellite beach is another award–winning artist who designs handcrafted metal wearable art.

“Brenda uses metal and melts enamel over it. She does some incredible work with different types of jewelry, bracelets, necklaces, and earrings,” said Gant.

One of the main features of the Melbourne Art Festival is the Student Art Competition. The competition is open to Brevard County students in grades seven through 12. Students are judged in various categories, including painting, graphic art, clay, digital art, and photography.

“We are a big proponent of arts education. We have an annual Student Art Competition as part of the Melbourne Art Festival. We will have our Student Art Competition online through our Facebook page this year,” she said.

Proceeds raised during the weekend of the Melbourne Art Festival will be used with those raised at a benefit auction, “are used to encourage and support the arts and arts education in Brevard,” said Taylor.

The Melbourne Arts Festival offers student scholarships to junior high and high school students for art classes and camps, as well as funding for other educational arts efforts and local art organizations.

The scholarship funds are raised by the Melbourne Art Festival Scholarship Art Auction, which is supported by Melbourne Art Festival participating artists’ donations and the community.

“The Melbourne Art Festival has donated more than $100,000 in scholarships through the years,” said Taylor. “Our organization is proud of that.”

Arts and culture help drive student achievement. According to the Department of Education, students with “high levels” of arts participation outperform “arts–poor” students on virtually every measure.

Young people who participate in the arts for at least three hours on three days each week for at least one full year are:

• Four times more likely to be recognized for achievement
• Three times more likely to be elected to class office within their schools
• Four times more likely to participate in a math and science fair
• Three times more likely to win an award for school attendance
• Four times more likely to win an award for writing

“The mission of the Melbourne Art Festival is to support the arts, education and cultural entertainment in our community,” said Gant.

The Melbourne Art Festival Board of Directors includes: Rhonda Huckabee, Greg Bell, Martha Case, Mark Vansrum, Sal D’Amato, Taylor, Patricia LeClaire, Gant, Elise Vaughn, and Linda Castelli.

The event would not exist if not for the many dedicated volunteers, said Taylor.

“It takes a lot of planning to put on an event like this. It’s a huge undertaking. The Melbourne Art Festival is a 100 percent volunteer–run organization. With the pandemic, we are learning new processes for producing the show. This year’s experience may change some things we do in future years for the Melbourne Art Festival.”

“We may be more successful with some of the changes we’ve made for 2021 and stick with them,” said Gant.

The Melbourne Art Festival is seeking volunteers, including students who are seeking community–service credits or just want to help out anyway. “We need volunteers to help in the KidWorld area. And we need adults to help set up booths for the artists. There are all types of volunteer opportunities.”

To learn more about volunteering for the event, visit MelbourneArts.org.

The late attorney Jack Vaughn Jr. was the original organizer of the Melbourne Art Festival, which is now a major Space Coast event.

He was a graduate of Melbourne High School, the University of Florida, and Mercer Law School. Vaughn had family roots in Melbourne going back to the 1880s.

Originally held in downtown Melbourne for the first 32 years, the event relocated to Wickham Park in 2017.

The new venue provides the Melbourne Art Festival with plenty of parking and more spaces for artists, sponsors, and food vendors.

“We thank the public for their support over all these years,” said Gant. “We thank the artists. We thank the volunteers. It takes the whole community to make this event a success every year.”

She added, “We are proud to put on this event. It gives us the opportunity to bring the community together — children and families — to enjoy art, music, kids’ activities, and much more. This year it is especially gratifying. Everyone has worked extremely hard to make this happen.”
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