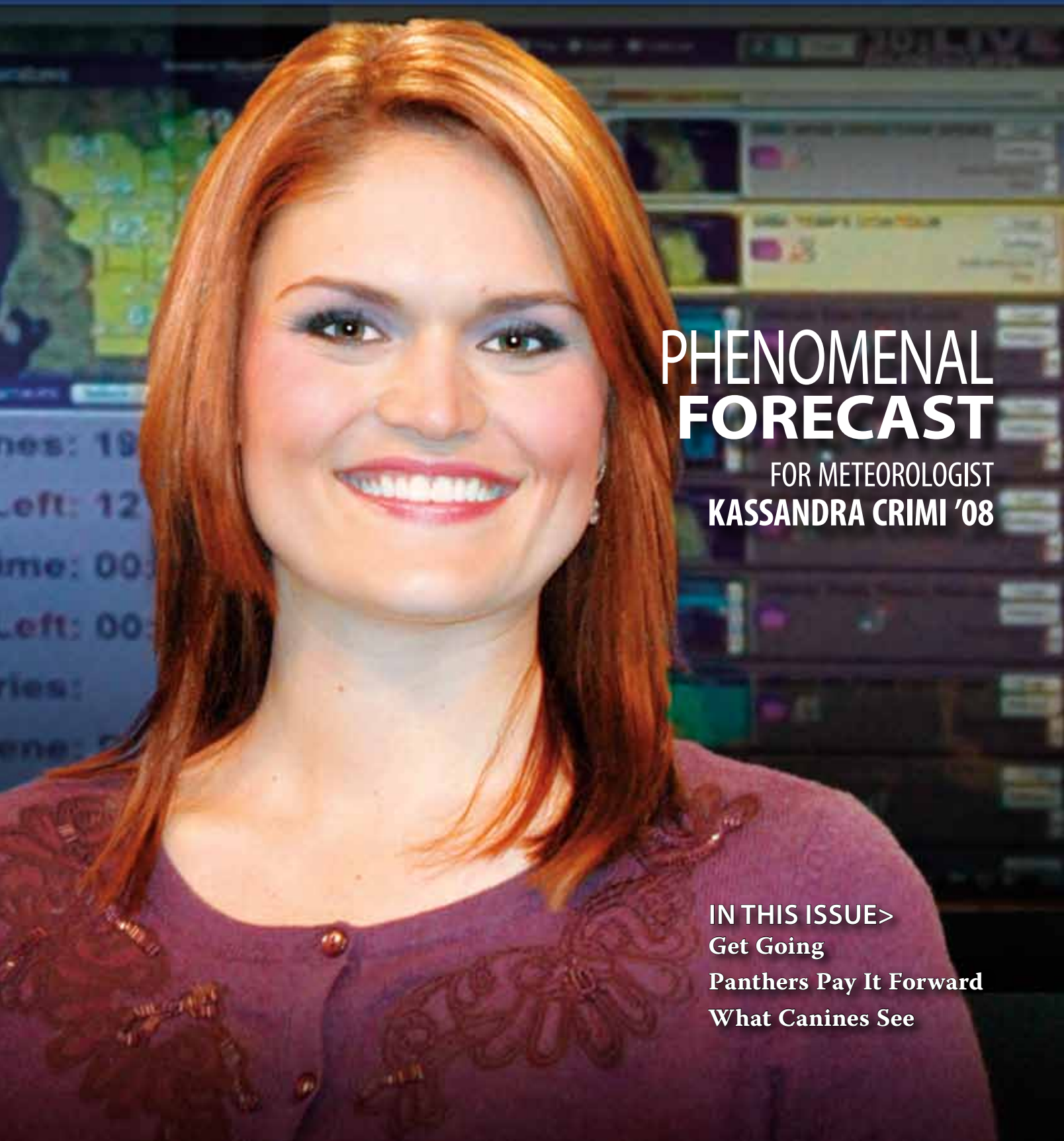


# *Florida Tech* TODAY

A magazine for Alumni and Friends of Florida Institute of Technology

SPRING 2011



## PHENOMENAL FORECAST

FOR METEOROLOGIST  
**KASSANDRA CRIMI '08**

### IN THIS ISSUE>

Get Going

Panthers Pay It Forward

What Canines See

# President's Perspective

Dear Florida Tech Alumni and Friends,

Your university is on the move ... building new relationships around the world while continuing to grow in prestige. One of our most recent accolades reflects the heart of our mission—preparing students for rewarding careers in challenging fields.



This spring, *U.S. News & World Report* published "10 Universities Producing the Most Interns," and ranked Florida Tech among the top 10 in the nation. The report identified the schools that produced the highest percentage of interns among their undergraduate students.

Florida Tech offers diverse internship opportunities across the nation. Our students intern at Microsoft, the National Security Agency, Google, NASA, Lockheed Martin and Boeing. Area employers such as Harris, Northrop Grumman, Rockwell Collins, Piper Aircraft and many more appreciate the caliber of our students. Biology majors go to SeaWorld, Walt Disney World and NOAA. Some students enjoy international internship opportunities as well.

Florida Tech was the smallest school named to the list in terms of bachelor's degrees awarded—but resides in the lofty top 10 alongside institutions like the University of Pennsylvania, American University, Seton Hall University, Duke University, George Washington University and Johns Hopkins University.

I think we're in good company—but I know the other schools can say the same!

Have a wonderful spring and summer.

Sincerely yours,

A.J. Catanese, Ph.D., FAICP  
President

## Florida Tech TODAY

<http://today.fit.edu>

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# etc. ....



## Break Away

Florida Tech initiated its first Alternative Spring Break this spring. Instead of taking to the beach during the annual break, six Florida Tech students volunteered their time helping families in Tacoma, Wash., through Habitat for Humanity's national Collegiate Challenge program.



## WFIT's 'Coolest' New Member

WFIT goes global via its online streaming, but the station recently discovered just how far that signal really travels after receiving an arctic donation. Dave White, a Cocoa Beach resident, is part of the winter-over crew at McMurdo Station, the prime U.S. polar research base, near the Antarctic coast.

White says, "I listen to WFIT at work via Internet most mornings. I'm still amazed I can listen to local programming all the way down here!"



## Snappy Student Group

The newest addition to Florida Tech's diverse student clubs and organizations is the Photography Club, which held its first public exhibition in Panther Plaza this spring.



## Hands On ... The Wheel

A Florida Tech education is always hands on ... for this spring's marketing principles students, all hands were on the wheel of a Chevrolet—gaining real-world marketing experience as one of a select group of schools participating in the Chevrolet Campus Promotions program.

## Campus Community Goes to Extremes for Extreme Makeover

Faculty, staff and students went to extremes for *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. The ABC-TV show that builds a family a new home in one week flat built one for the Hurston family of Canaveral Groves; the TV show aired in February.

An event sponsor, the university not only contributed sweat equity but donated three university scholarships for the Hurston family's children. The four-year scholarships include tuition, room and board.

**Ralph Locurcio**, engineering professor and construction management program director, brought with him about 25 students, organized into three teams. Locurcio estimates that he and the students put in more than 350 combined hours over the seven days of the project.

**Sam Durrance**, professor of physics and space science, joined a group from Kennedy Space Center, another sponsor, in simulating a launch into space of the former house. For the cameras, the space scientists attached rocket motors to the sides of the house, as if readying for blast off.

Among other campus volunteers were about 50 student-athletes, *Crimson* editor **Drew Lacy**, and **Deeon Singer** and **H.L. Singer II**, Nathan M. Bisk College of Business adjunct instructors. *More information, page 34.*



Florida Tech hardhats at the build site, from left, are: Professor Locurcio, Lorenzo Fevola, Brennan Klein, Stephen Craig and Michael Matern.



## Festival Flies Colors of Many Countries

The green of the lawn and the red brick of the Pantheon contrasted sharply with the vibrant colors worn by entertainers in the Fifth Annual International Festival, held on campus in February. Community singers, dancers and musicians joined with Florida Tech international student organizations to present a vivid lineup of ethnic entertainment and cultural displays. Joining the singing, dancing and musicians was TWITCHY, President **Anthony J. Catanese's** all-faculty band.

The festival, attended by several hundred adults and children, is sponsored by Florida Tech International Student and Scholar Services, Florida Tech Residence Life, WFIT 89.5FM and the Melbourne Regional Chamber of East Central Florida.



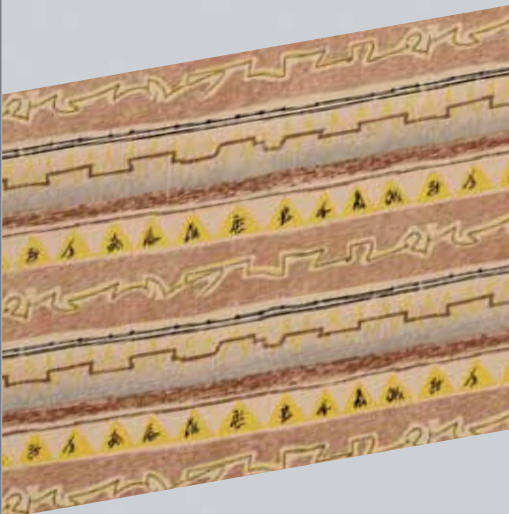


# BRITISH BOLTS

Artists' Fabrics of the Mid-Century

Selections from the Wiltse-Brown Collection

May 21–August 27, 2011



Henry Moore (1898–1986) *Abstract c. 1954*  
Manufactured by David Whitehead Ltd.  
Screen-printed cotton

The textile industry in post-war Britain changed dramatically in contrast to the monotony of what the industry had to offer prior to 1951. A small group of brave manufacturers commissioned artists to design textiles and the result was an explosion of bold and innovative styles. *British Bolts* examines the variety of aesthetic influences and approaches of men and women designers of the period. Artists featured in the exhibition include male designers such as Terence Conran, Marino Marini, Henry Moore, John Piper and William Scott and female designers like Lucienne Day, Jacqueline Groag, Marian Mahler and Paule Vézelay.

Tuesday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Saturday, Noon – 4 p.m.

<http://textiles.fit.edu>

RUTH FUNK CENTER FOR TEXTILE ARTS



At the annual textiles celebration, “Uncommon Threads,” from left: Gabriele Gannaway, Sara Catanese, guest speaker Valerie Steele, Lynne Frank and Honorary Chair Polly Molnar.

## From Little Black Dress to Bold British Bolts

The “Little Black Dress” had a very fashionable run through April 23 at the Ruth Funk Center for Textile Arts with selections from the Costume Museum of Canada. Thirty key historic examples traced the iconic garment’s evolution from the 1890s to the 1990s.

From May 21 to Aug. 27, the center will feature “British Bolts: Artists’ Fabrics of the Mid-century—Selections from the Wiltse-Brown Collection.” The exhibit showcases textiles designed after 1951 by noted artists, such as sculptor Henry Moore, Terence Conran, Lucienne Day and Jacqueline Groag.

For more information, visit <http://textiles.fit.edu>

## First for an Online Grad Globetrotter

When **Chris Parkes** traveled from his home in Kingsland, Ga., to the Melbourne campus last December, he received a double honor. First, he accepted a diploma for a bachelor’s degree in computer information systems. Second, he was the first online student ever to earn Faculty Honors for his perfect, 4.0 GPA—just one of the three out of about 700 fall graduates to do so.

Staying at the top of his class while juggling a full-time job and family responsibilities wasn’t easy.



Chris Parkes

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

“It was a challenge,” said Parkes, who traveled the world while studying. “I took three classes most semesters while I worked toward my degree. I spent a few hours every weeknight, most of Saturday and part of Sunday every week to complete the required work. Luckily my family was understanding and supported my efforts.”

During part of that time, he was in the U.S. navy, retiring in 2010 after more than 23 years of active service aboard three submarines and at several shore stations among other postings. After retirement, he joined Southern Company where he now works toward becoming a nuclear power plant supervisor.

“I chose Florida Tech for the program because the school had a good reputation for quality education. I would highly recommend an online degree program for anyone who has an unpredictable schedule.”

## Florida Academy Meets at Florida Tech

For the fourth time in its history, the Florida Academy of Sciences (FAS) annual meeting was held at Florida Tech in March. Founded in 1936, this meeting concluded the FAS 75th Anniversary. Florida Tech faculty, graduate and undergraduate students were heavily represented in the 141 oral and 52 poster presentations of the 14 sections of the Academy. Several Florida Tech students received Outstanding Student Paper Awards; details will be announced by FAS soon.

Among chairs of the FAS sections were **Kelli Zargiel** (Atmospheric and Oceanographic Sciences Section), department of marine and environmental Systems (DMES), and **Eric Perlman** (Physics and



In April, President Anthony J. Catanese and President Jian Guo Xia of Shanghai Dian Ji University (SDJU) signed a memorandum of agreement for bachelor’s degree programs in electrical and mechanical engineering. Standing behind them in the Trustee’s Dining Room on campus are, from left: Pei-Feng Hsu, head of the Florida Tech department of mechanical and aerospace engineering; Sam Kozaitis, head of the Florida Tech department of electrical and computer engineering; Fred Ham, Florida Tech vice president for research and interim dean, College of Engineering; Chao Hui Zhao, SDJU provost; Gordon Nelson, Florida Tech vice president for academic affairs; T. Dwayne McCay, Florida Tech chief operating officer; Randy Alford, Florida Tech vice president for student affairs; Rong Bin Li, dean of the SDJU Mechanical Engineering College; and Jun Liu, dean of the SDJU Electrical Engineering College.

Space Sciences Section), department of physics and space sciences (PSS). Zargiel also organized and chaired a special session in honor of the late **Beth Irlandi**, DMES.

The 2010 FAS Medalist **Terry Oswalt**, PSS, presented the banquet address, “Stellar archeology: What white dwarf stars tell us about the history of the galaxy.” The FAS President **Richard Turner**, department of biological sciences, officiated at several plenary sessions of the meeting, and **John Trefry**, DMES, was the local arrangements chair.

This meeting of the Senior Academy was shared with the Florida Junior Academy of Science (FJAS), which includes students from Florida middle and high schools, including Brevard County, giving almost 100 students a chance to experience Florida Tech hospitality and facilities.

## Visitors Drawn to Botanical Fest Like Bees to Pollen

Botanical Fest, held in March on the Crawford Green, drew an estimated crowd of 3,000 shoppers and a record 43 vendors, according to **Beverly Sanders**, assistant vice president, development.

She also reported about 300 people took tours of the Botanical Garden.

“The funds we raised from the vendor rental fees will be used to help develop a long-range master plan for the Botanical Garden,” said Sanders.



## Panthers Dine in Style

The \$8.5 million Panther Dining Hall, with gleaming state-of-the-art kitchen, is the new primary dining facility for students, faculty and staff, who began enjoying it in January. A new adjacent three-story parking facility, which cost about \$5 million to construct, officially opened at the same time.

The dining facility replaces Evans Dining Hall as the main location for on-campus meals. Seating is a combination of indoor-outdoor; patio dining will overlook the university's new swimming facility when it is complete later this year.

"Our students deserve this beautiful new facility, and faculty and staff are eager to enjoy the cuisine and pleasant environment of a premier dining center. The university dining experience has risen to a whole new level," said President **Anthony J. Catanese**.

Additionally, the Panther Grocery Store accommodates patrons during hours the dining hall is not open. It offers a delicatessen, "grab and go" meals, groceries and sundries.



## Gratitude in Color

Florida Tech President Anthony J. Catanese presents Ed Scott with a painting created by the students at the Scott Center for Autism Treatment in appreciation for opening his home for the Third Annual Evening of Hope. The event was held on April 8 at the Merritt Island home of Ed and Cheryl Scott. According to J. Carey Gleason, associate vice president, development and community relations, over 260 people attended the event and more than \$190,000 was raised through sponsorships, a live auction and a Rolex watch raffle. The Rolex was generously donated by Kempf's Jewelers.

A portion of the funds raised from this year's Evening of Hope will go toward the creation of a resource room for parents and teachers. It will be located on the second floor of the Scott Center.

An Evening of Hope IV will be on April 13, 2012. The location has not yet been determined.



## RESEARCH NEWS

### Charming Snake Studies

Training Burmese pythons is all in a day's work for Associate Professor of Biological Sciences **Michael Grace**. He earned a three-year, \$369,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for his work on the mechanisms of infrared imaging in pit vipers, pythons and boas. The novel research joins biology and psychology students in a project with a behavioral psychology component.

Part of the research is to make a molecular biological search for the proteins that do the difficult job of sensing very low-energy infrared photons. The other part is, with the use of psychological conditioning, to train snakes to perform complex behaviors in response to thermal/infrared signals, much as a rat can be trained to press a lever for a food reward. This is considered highly unusual work by the NSF reviewers.

Applied behavior analysis faculty and students are working with Grace to shape the snakes' behavior to differentially respond to a lighted stimulus. The snake is trained to sit in a particular location with its head facing a certain direction. A stimulus cues the snake to activate a push button with its "nose" on the left or right side of an apparatus. The correct response results in access to a reward—for example, pushing the button opens a door with food behind it.

"This is a unique opportunity to test out behavioral principles on a species that has not been readily utilized in the past," said **Mark Harvey**, Florida Tech School of Psychology associate professor.

Grace has received more than \$1.5 million in funding for his work on the snakes' infrared sensing ability.



Michael Grace

### Florida Tech Places First Overall in Concrete Canoe

The Florida Institute of Technology student chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), in late March, brought back to campus some huge bragging rights. They earned several honors at the 2011 ASCE Southeast Student Conference, where Florida Tech teams competed in 15 civil engineering events. The competition was hosted by Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville.

The concrete canoe team took first place overall in the concrete canoe competition, winning first in the concrete canoe final product, concrete canoe design paper, and men's sprint and men's endurance races, second in women's endurance and co-ed sprint and third place in the women's sprint.

The canoe team will now travel to the national competition June 16–18 at the University of Evansville in Evansville, Ind., to compete for the ASCE National Championship in Concrete Canoe. Their captain is senior **Andrew Bankert**, a civil engineering major.

The team also placed second in the hydraulics competition and third place in the mystery event. The hydraulics competition requires engineering

calculations to determine the magnitude and direction of a fluid flow event; in the mystery event students are involved in the design and construction of a space frame with limited communications between the designer and the constructor.



From left are Stephen Craig, construction manager; Alvaro Urcuyo, paddling manager; Lorenzo Fevola, #1 male paddler; Cassandra Morecroft-King, business manager; Pete the Panther, Mike Matern; Andrew Bankert, canoe team captain; Michelle Little, #1 female paddler; and Matt Walsh, technical manager.



### Sporting Affair's Chopper Dropper Congratulates Big Winner

Florida Institute of Technology's Eighth Annual Chopper Dropper, part of the annual Sporting Affair athletics scholarship fundraiser, was held in March at the Suntree Country Club. The event delivered cash prizes to 13 lucky winners, including Mary Love of Northwest Palm Bay who took the \$25,000 grand prize. Pictured, from left, are: Athletics Director Bill Jurgens; Mary Love; Assistant Vice President, Alumni Relations, Bino Campanini; and President Catanese.

### Haridopolos Recognized for Support of Higher Education



Senate President Mike Haridopolos, R-Melbourne, is presented the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) All-Star Award for his continued support of higher education in Florida. President Haridopolos is a Stetson graduate and since his first election in 2000 to the Florida House and later becoming a senator, has been a strong supporter of ICUF, student aid and the linkage between higher education and the economic well-being of Florida.

## Lounge and Learn

University leaders gathered in February to celebrate the opening of the College of Engineering's Student Learning Lounge on the second floor of the F.W. Olin Engineering Complex. The state-of-the-art design includes four collaboration rooms, each equipped with two 42-inch LCD monitors that can display from student laptops or the computers in the room. Two glass-encased study rooms contain a white board and space for group work or quiet study. A large table supports six Internet connections and power sources for laptop computers.



Pictured, from left, are Stephanie Hopper, President Anthony J. Catanese, Nelson Cambata '78, Clarke Fowler '80, Heidi Cambata and Deborah Heystek '79.

"So much of the Florida Tech learning model is how to be a member of a team," said **Stephanie Hopper**, director of laboratories.

"The central part of the design for this space was to encourage group work and collaboration."

When it's time to relax, the area contains two 42-inch TVs, comfortable sofas and directional speakers in the ceiling to prevent the audio from disturbing others. Between the two TV areas, a cozy library contains reference books, and a large new vending area contains healthy options to grab a snack or hot meal.

The project was made possible by Nelson and Heidi Cambata, whose generous gift of \$200,000 transformed the area from a crowded, bare-bones, harshly lit room into a magnificent space for all engineering students to enjoy.

"This is quite a wonderful new asset for our students," added Hopper.



The state-of-the-art Student Learning Lounge includes four collaboration rooms, each equipped with two 42-inch LCD monitors that can display from student laptops or the computers in the room. Two glass-encased study rooms contain a white board and space for group work or quiet study.

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the Florida Tech fund

an asset for all

Contact the Office of Development at [csmith01@fit.edu](mailto:csmith01@fit.edu) or (321) 674-8962 for more information.

## Endowment News



Members of Save our Bay, Air and Canals/Waterways (SOBAC) hosted representatives from Florida Tech's department of marine and environmental systems (DMES) in Apollo Beach, Fla., to recognize the first SOBAC endowed fellow, Jayden Roberts. Roberts addressed an audience of 18 SOBAC members as he discussed his research project, "The Implications of Invasive Species on Native Ecosystems." Pictured, from left, are Jeanette Doyle, SOBAC; George Maul, head, DMES; Jayden Roberts, graduate student; and Dominick Gebbia, SOBAC.



Recipients of the Chadley M. Rhodes Memorial Scholarship attended the 2011 Donor-Scholar Reception on campus in February and met the family who created the scholarship. From left: Elinor McKee; Chad Civetti, student recipient; Diane Rhodes; Don Rhodes; Francine Kelly, student recipient; and Lt. Col. Ralph McKee. The annual event brings endowment donors together with the students and faculty who benefit from their generosity to Florida Tech.

## Indiafest's Commitment to Brevard Funds New Scholarship

Fifteen years ago, a mere \$500 created one of Brevard County's most anticipated festivals, Indiafest. From day one, Indiafest's commitment to philanthropy is well documented as this organization has assisted many local charities and provided aid in disaster recovery both nationally and internationally with the funds raised during the annual event.

This year, the Indiafest committee unanimously decided to donate \$100,000 to create the Indiafest Brevard Scholarship Endowment.

Nina Gadodia, Indiafest co-chairman, shared, "The Indiafest committee is proud to help a child achieve a wonderful education. This is one small way to encourage the talent of Brevard to stay in Brevard."

"We are extremely grateful for the endowment, which enables a local student to experience a high-tech education right in their own backyard," said Florida Tech President **Anthony J. Catanese**.

The Florida Tech Office of Financial Aid will award the scholarship to a Brevard County resident who graduates from Brevard Community College (BCC) and transfers to Florida Tech. Additional criteria include commendable academic achievements as well as evidence of community involvement.



From left, Silas Charles; Ken Stackpoole, senior vice president and chief development officer; Kalpana Gadodia; and Pravin Patel at the Indiafest Dinner.



## from the FTAA President

From the desk of John A. Valente '76, '81

The semi-annual board of directors meeting was held in March, and your alumni association continues to make improvements to our organization.

We held a successful networking reception on March 17 for our soon-to-be alumni—members of the Class of 2011. Our intent was to aid them with their résumés, coach them on their interviewing skills, and encourage and support them in their career planning. We plan to host a similar event each semester. If you would like to sign up as a career volunteer and have your contact and employment information included in the next published issue of the *Career Networking Directory*, please contact the Office of Alumni Affairs by emailing [alumaffr@fit.edu](mailto:alumaffr@fit.edu).

The following day, your board members supported the Office of Undergraduate Admission as a part of the Exploration Day activities for student hopefuls. This provided a unique opportunity for prospective students and their parents to interact with alumni. The feedback was extremely positive.

That evening we supported the Athletic Department by attending the annual Chopper Dropper fundraising event, meeting informally with many of the university's trustees, local business leaders and fellow alumni.

As the university grows and continues to diversify, so do the challenges of your alumni association. One of our newest challenges comes as a result of the increased number of students obtaining online degrees. Those of us who received our degrees after attending the "brick and mortar" university have a feeling of the family atmosphere and camaraderie that comes from interacting in the physical classroom setting, attending extracurricular activities and the general day-to-day campus life (and night life!). We need to better understand how this translates to our online students and determine how we can best serve them as alumni.

Since the last edition of *Florida Tech TODAY*, the alumni staff and university officials have hosted receptions in several locations including Washington, D.C.; Long Beach, Calif.; New York City; and Boston, Mass. Receptions will be held in conjunction with the Dad Vail Regatta in Philadelphia and a Happy Hour for our aero alumni in Atlanta.

As the result of a lot of coordinated efforts, our alumni chapters are growing bigger and stronger. Our newest chapters are located in the greater Houston area and Boston, with initial stages of chapter development in New York and New Jersey. If you would like to establish an alumni chapter in your local vicinity, or participate in an established chapter, please contact the Office of Alumni Affairs staff through [Chapters@fit.edu](mailto:Chapters@fit.edu) for more information on how to do so.

This spring the campus saw the largest commencement ceremony in the recent history of our alma mater. There were 735 graduates at the ceremony, and more who did not walk on May 7. With that in mind, I would like to close with some important thoughts.

- I encourage all alumni to sign in to the Facebook fan page (Florida Institute of Technology Alumni Association). This is one channel of communication that allows us to disseminate information and services, which bring value to all our alumni!
- Please visit the new alumni online community (<http://alumni.fit.edu/community>), where you can easily update your contact information (in order to continue receiving this magazine and other offers) and locate friends from your years on campus.
- Consider supporting the alumni association by becoming a sustaining paid member. You can learn more by going to [http://alumni.fit.edu/alumni\\_membership](http://alumni.fit.edu/alumni_membership)

*You're Invited*

In 2011, we're planning Alumni Receptions in these locations:

Seattle, WA • Orlando, FL  
Atlanta, GA

Dad Vail Regatta, Philadelphia, PA  
Phoenix, AZ • Huntsville, AL  
New Jersey • Houston, TX

Save the Date for these Upcoming Alumni Receptions

Contact Melissa Klos for details: [mklos@fit.edu](mailto:mklos@fit.edu)

June 24: Baseball Night Out, Lakewood Blue Claws, New Jersey

## Honoring a Florida Tech Marriage

Deb and Gary Freed '80 Ph.D. celebrated their 33rd wedding anniversary March 18; their wedding took place that many years ago in the Crawford Building on campus. Gary graduated with a doctorate in science education while also serving as an instructor in the Florida Tech department of physics. He retired as a professor in the Florida College and University system in 2000. Today he stays busy as an artist and active volunteer with the Vero Beach Art Club and local Humane Society.

Deb attended Florida Tech and graduated summa cum laude from UCF. Today she serves as vice president of the board of directors of the Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County and as volunteer editor of their news magazine, the *Humane Times*.

The photos on this page were taken in the Botanical Garden on their wedding day and almost 33 years later. Their hair is shorter now, but their smiles are much the same. And their bond to each other and roots at the university endure.



*Deb & Gary*

*33 Years Ago*



*Today*

## To Give is To Receive

*Alumnus and CEO empowers community, is rewarded*

French novelist Albert Camus once said that real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present. Such is the philosophy of Florida Tech alumnus **E. Davon Kelly '90**.

Kelly received his bachelor's degree in finance at Florida Tech then completed his master's degree in business administration at Bowie State University. Since graduating, his determination to make a difference in his future and community has earned him a flourishing company, several business awards and a significant appointment in 2010.



In 2003, Kelly established NOVAD Management Consulting and in 2009, saw a tenfold revenue increase within three years, from \$987,000 in 2007 to \$9.6 million.

Kelly, a Washington, D.C., native, says that "the experience of creating a business that successfully employs others and provides sustainable solutions to his customers' business challenges is equally humbling and rewarding."

For his outstanding performance, Kelly received the *Washington Business Journal's* Minority Business Leader Award last year. He was also named one of the Top 100 Minority Business Enterprise owners of the year.

The award-winning CEO's success has allowed him to give

back to the community that has nurtured him throughout the years. Kelly, a youth advocate who emphasizes principles in team building, leadership and academics, believes that "with more role models, personal support and intervention, young people could believe in a positive future for themselves." He has been a boys basketball coach at a local high school for over 10 years; a mentor to students, the Boys Club and neighborhood groups; and a source for internship opportunities for promising business students.

Because of his leadership and philanthropic efforts, he was recently appointed to the Boys Town Washington, D.C., board of directors.

An instrumental force for his employees and the youth in his community, Kelly has truly given meaning to the phrase, "To give is to receive." Not only has he become a man of success, he has become a man of value.

*Maya Oluseyi*

## General Dunwoody Earns Prestigious Award

Gen. **Ann E. Dunwoody '87 M.S.**, the first four-star female general in the U.S. military, joined a short list of distinguished recipients when she was awarded the National Collegiate Athletics Association's (NCAA) highest honor, the Theodore Roosevelt Award last winter. She was honored for her accomplishments as a starter on the tennis and gymnastics squads at State University of New York, Cortland, where she participated on both teams during her four years there.

Today she continues living an active lifestyle, running with her husband Craig Brotchie, Air Force Col. (ret.), and their springer spaniel, Barney.

Named after President Theodore Roosevelt, whose concern for the conduct of intercollegiate athletics led to the formation of the NCAA in 1906, this annual award is given to an individual "for whom competitive athletics in college and attention to physical well-being thereafter have been important factors in a distinguished career of national significance and achievement."



*Psychology Professor Frank Webbe congratulates Ann Dunwoody at the NCAA annual convention in January.*



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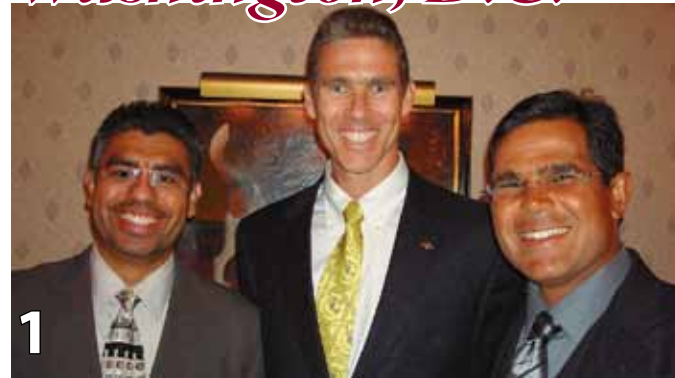
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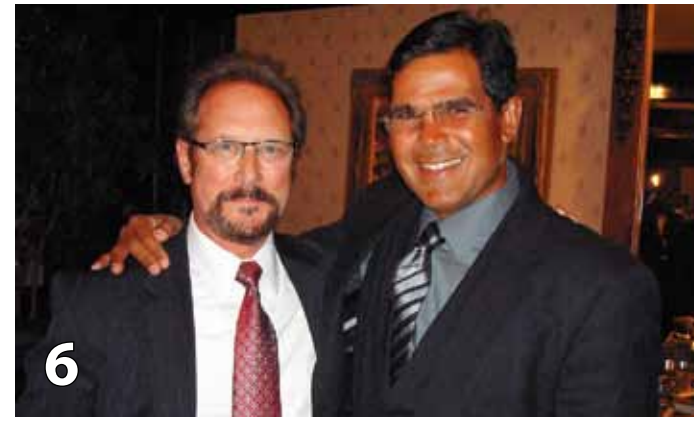
## Washington, D.C.

**Alumni Receptions Reconnect Old Friends and Make New Ones**



Alumni and prospective students gathered for an evening of camaraderie and networking at the City Club of Washington, Columbia Square.

**1)**Tristan Fiedler, vice president for federal research, programs and corporate relations, center, with Milton Garces '89 and Roberto Perez '10 **2)**David O' Connell '90, Bernd Zoller '86 and Bino Campanini '90, '92 M.B.A., alumni association executive director **3)**Bino Campanini, Tom Barlow '96, '98 M.S., and Dave Atkinson '00 **4)**Virginia Barry '95, Kristen Stelzer '96 and Wendy Chaves '93 **5)**President Anthony J. Catanese and Dean Smehil '74 speak with a prospective student



**6)** Fred Ham, vice president for research and interim dean, College of Engineering, with Milton Garces '89 **7), 8)** Attendees enjoy the presentation **9)** President Anthony J. Catanese and Ken Stackpoole, senior vice president and chief development officer, speak with Andrew Stanton '03

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- Update your information online and it automatically updates the alumni database
- Join the career center for correspondence and professional networking
- Become a mentor and help current Florida Tech students prepare for their field of interest
- Search class notes
- Register for permanent e-mail

## Aviation Alumni Notes



Florida Tech College of Aeronautics alumni gather at the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) 22nd Annual Schedulers & Dispatchers Conference in Savannah, Ga., in February. From left: Russ Lawton '74, director, safety management, Air Charter Safety Foundation; Amy Koranda '76, director, safety and training, National Air Transport Association; Bryan Burns '78, president, Air Charter Safety Foundation; and Joanne Lomurno Damato '97, director, operations and educational development, National Business Aviation Association



Richard Crosman '74, airport manager at St. George Municipal Airport in St. George, Utah, received the Utah Airport Manager of the Year award for 2010–2011 from the Utah Division of Aeronautics.

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At Florida Tech, your endorsement counts! The deserving student(s) you refer will receive a \$1,000 grant, renewable annually for up to four years, toward their tuition for full-time undergraduate study on the Melbourne campus. You may recommend as many students as you wish.

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Sons and daughters of Florida Tech alumni, enrolling in a full-time undergraduate program at Florida Tech, are eligible for a \$2500 grant on top of the alumni endorsement grant. This award is renewable for up to four years.

These awards are given in addition to any merit scholarship earned by the student. For more information and the appropriate forms, go to: <http://alumni.fit.edu/benefits> or [www.fit.edu/ugrad/financial\\_aid/scholarships.php](http://www.fit.edu/ugrad/financial_aid/scholarships.php)

A simple form that takes 5 minutes to complete can be worth more than \$4,000 to a worthy student.



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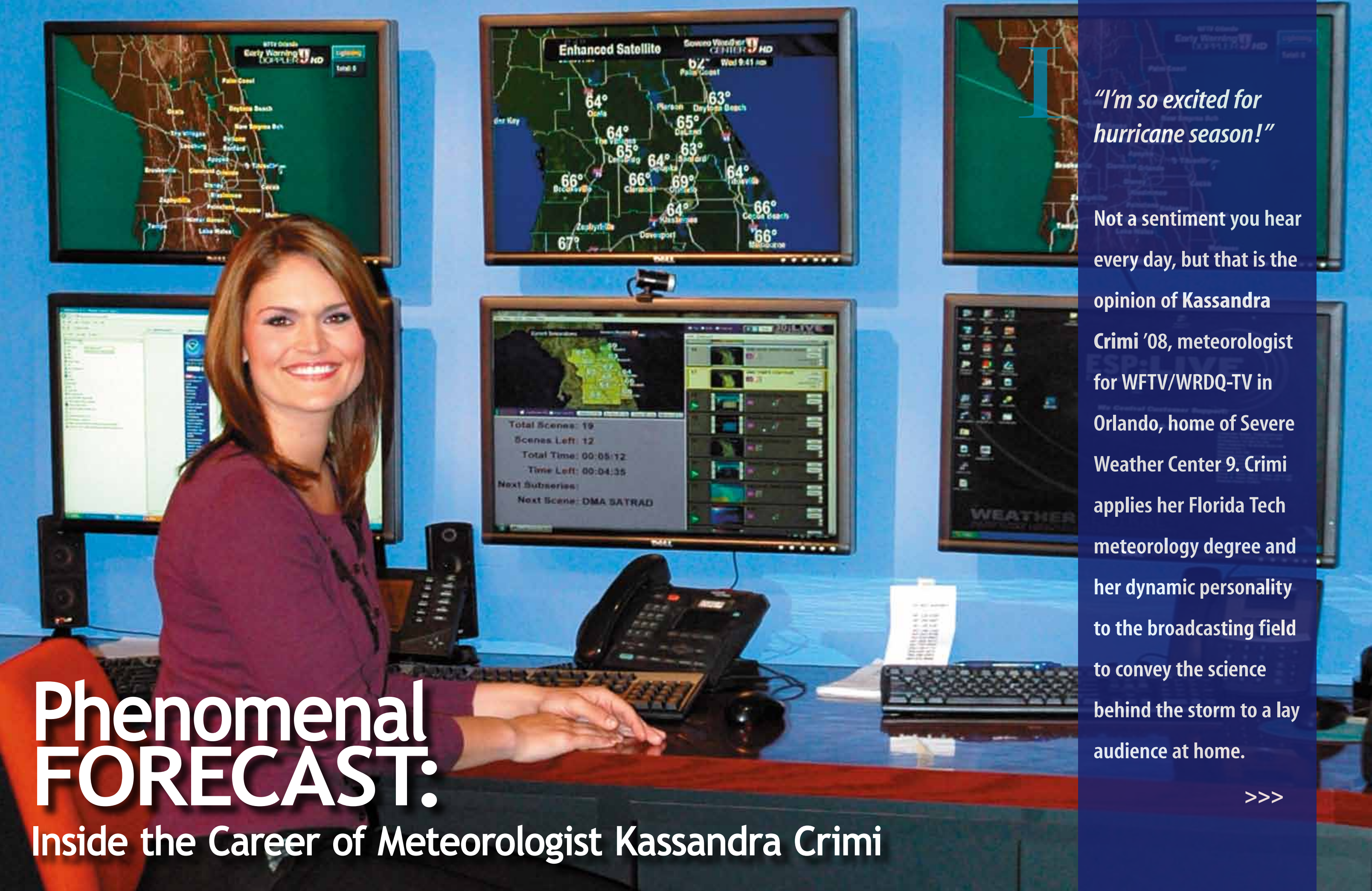
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Florida Institute of Technology

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



*"I'm so excited for hurricane season!"*

Not a sentiment you hear every day, but that is the opinion of Kassandra Crimi '08, meteorologist for WFTV/WRDQ-TV in Orlando, home of Severe Weather Center 9. Crimi applies her Florida Tech meteorology degree and her dynamic personality to the broadcasting field to convey the science behind the storm to a lay audience at home.

>>>

# Phenomenal FORECAST:

Inside the Career of Meteorologist Kassandra Crimi

While it may have been possible to forge a career as a non-meteorology-degreed “weather caster” in the past, nowadays the industry demands a scientific professional, holding a degree in meteorology.

“Our job [as broadcast meteorologists] is to inform the public and keep people safe if there’s bad weather,” she explains.

This starts with the science—analyzing weather patterns around the country, applying her knowledge and expertise, and interpreting that data to determine how it will affect viewers. Next comes the fun—creating graphics, preparing the presentation and sharing the information with the public over the broadcast channels.

“We think scientifically, but we speak in terms for a lay audience,” says Crimi. “It’s very what-do-I-need-to-do: wear short-sleeves, wear long-sleeves, grab extra water, grab the umbrella.”

“I like that about my field. I love science and I love math, but I also love people and I love talking,” she says with a smile.

That enthusiasm has translated to career success. She landed her first job out of college quickly in a notoriously competitive field, where

it’s not uncommon to remain unemployed up to 7 or 8 months chasing your big break. Next, she jumped from market 137 (New Bloomfield, Mo.) to market 19 (Orlando) in her first move.

One of her favorite professors and early mentors **Steven Lazarus**, associate professor of meteorology, says it’s no surprise. He remembers Crimi as a top-notch student who could “do anything she wanted.”

“I’m very proud of her,” says Lazarus. “She’s going places.”

Ironically, her most recent stop is right where her journey began ... at WFTV, where Lazarus was instru-

mental in helping her get a foot in the door.

Her own initiative led Crimi to pursue an internship in broadcasting. She reached out to WFTV Chief Meteorologist Tom Terry, who took a course that Lazarus lectured when he was a graduate assistant at the University of Oklahoma.

As an intern, Crimi honed her craft, practiced her presentation, produced a demo reel and gained valuable network connections to launch her career. A career inspired by hurricane season.

Crimi was a freshman studying astronomy and astrophysics during the 2004 hurricane season.

“Coming from Minnesota, it was so foreign to me,” she recalls, of the weather most coastal residents grow accustomed to.

But 2004 was a year for the record books, and the eventful season triggered Crimi’s interest in taking Introduction to Meteorology.

“I took it as a science elective, and I just loved it. So from there, I switched majors,” she says.

The rest, you might say, is history. Fast forward to 2011, and her anticipation for hurricane season is understandable.

“For me to come back and actually be in a working environment during hurricane season, I’m just tickled to death for my first hurricane,” she laughs.

And the Severe Weather Center team will be ready.

The five-member group manages weather forecasts across a variety of media platforms—TV, radio and the emerging social media environment including Facebook, Twitter and blog feeds.

Today’s weather broadcaster must be more educated, more savvy and more available than ever before.

While it may have been possible to forge a career as a non-meteorology-degreed “weather caster” in the past, nowadays the industry demands a scientific professional, holding a degree in meteorology. For Crimi, in addition to her live, unscripted five-day forecasts delivered Monday through Friday mornings on Channel 9 and Channel 27, she also does live and pre-recorded radio reads, sends a morning weather tweet, posts a daily forecast via Facebook and publishes a weather blog post when inspiration strikes.

“It’s amazing,” she explains. “Weather forecasting has transformed to cater to people’s needs. Everybody’s so web-oriented, so Facebook-oriented ... who doesn’t check their Facebook or Twitter feed on a daily basis? Social media has become a way to reach out to more people and potentially get more viewership.”



Meteorologist Cassandra Crimi forecasts from the Severe Weather Center 9 broadcast desk weekday mornings.

It also offers an opportunity to connect with the audience and provide a little something extra beyond the two-minute broadcast segment. For example, blog posts provide more detail for the weather “science buffs” in the audience or cover significant weather occurring in other areas of the country. And as far as Facebook followers go, Crimi says, “I think people like having that personal touch with you. I like people being able to feel as though we are friends in a way.”

In that same vein, she always tries to respond to fans’ comments and questions.

“I’ve always been very much a people person, and I never want to be rude,” she says.

Being a local celebrity can be a double-edged sword when you just want to run an errand or two in your sweatpants, though.

“Outside of work, you’ll catch me in windpants and a T-shirt. I’m very much still my old athletic self and not done up as I am on TV. I remember being in Missouri at a grocery store and I think I had sweats on, and someone recognized me and I was

just mortified. Of all the times to recognize me,” she laughs.

Since she’s new to the Orlando airwaves—beginning in January 2011—she still enjoys a level of

“I love science and I love math, but I also love people and I love talking.”

Kassandra Crimi

anonymity in public, but that’s likely to change, as it did in her first market.

“When I was in Missouri, I couldn’t leave the house without being recognized,” she admits.

For now, Crimi is right where she wants to be. Her next step is achieving her CBM (Certified Broadcast Meteorologist) credentials. Then, who knows where the wind may ultimately take her.

“Movement in my field is not uncommon. It’s very typical for someone to be at a station for two to three years, and then move to another station. Looking back, at the beginning of my career, I always wanted to return to Orlando, but I thought, maybe, it would be my fourth stop. I’m ecstatic that I’m back so soon. I love where I’m at and hope to be here for quite some time.”

Christena Callahan

- Catch Kassandra Crimi Monday–Friday, 7–9 a.m., on
- WFTV, Channel 9, during local weather cut-ins on *Good Morning America*
  - WRDQ, Channel 27, every 10 minutes on *Eyewitness News This Morning*
  - WDBO, 580 AM, live every hour
- Online
- [www.wftv.com/weatherblog](http://www.wftv.com/weatherblog)
  - Search Kassandra Crimi on Facebook
  - Severe Weather Center 9 on Twitter

Visit *Florida Tech TODAY* online, <http://today.fit.edu>, for a behind-the-scenes video tour of Severe Weather Center 9 with Kassandra Crimi!

# Get Going: IMPROVING HEALTH ONE STRIDE AT A TIME



Andy Dutra competes in at least a 5K race every weekend.

*Andy Dutra competes in at least a 5K every weekend. Sometimes it's a half-marathon or a full marathon. The science education Ph.D. student turned his life around through diet and exercise ... and it started with a flight of stairs.*

As a sophomore at the University of Maine at Machias, Dutra had a wake-up call when he couldn't make it to his second-floor apartment without becoming winded.

"I decided this is enough. I need to change my lifestyle and do something different," he recalls.

He started running—first a quarter-mile, then a half-mile, then a mile. One mile became 2 miles, which became 3 miles, until he ran his first 5K. Over the course of two to three years, he lost nearly 90 pounds.

His personal journey to improved health and fitness involved competing in weekend races, adopting a vegan diet and becoming a certified personal trainer.

Making a lifestyle change is not easy, he admits, but you have to persevere.

"That's why I became a trainer," he says. "I want to share my experience with other people and help them reach their goals. It's not about having the perfect six-pack abs. It's about being able to walk up a flight of stairs and not be winded and pouring with sweat. It's just improving the quality of life by making little lifestyle changes."

As a trainer at the Clemente Center, Dutra helps students and faculty realize their fitness goals on



Dutra crosses the finish line at the 2010 Space Coast Half-Marathon.



Bill Rotella ran in the 2010 Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C. Before starting his marathon training, he tipped the scale at 340 pounds.

a daily basis. Working with **Michelle Robinson**, assistant director of weight and fitness, and **Susan Erickson**, human resources wellness specialist, they developed the FIT Challenge, an incentive and support program for Florida Tech students, faculty and staff.

It began as a grassroots effort and is evolving for a broad-based, campus-wide rollout this fall. Participants start by learning their benchmark measurements, and enjoy fitness classes, educational lectures, incentive prizes and weight loss tracking.

"We're just trying to help the campus community be more health-conscious," says Dutra. "We're going to revamp the program this summer, do a bigger push on campus, and then hopefully have it become a full-blown university experience in the fall."

Off campus, another member of the Florida Tech community has made huge fitness strides while supporting a charitable cause at the same time.

**Bill Rotella**, an adjunct instructor of accounting in the Nathan M. Bisk College of Business online undergraduate program, transformed his life after a health scare. In 2009, Rotella was diagnosed with Type II diabetes. The former marine had ballooned to more than 340 pounds and had a heavy smoking habit.

Determined to get his health back on track, he dropped the smoking and picked up an old pastime ... running. Rotella entered the Marine

Corps Marathon, a race he competed in more than 20 years earlier as a fit, young Marine Reserve staff sergeant. To keep himself motivated, he embraced the opportunity to run for a cause, raising funds and awareness of the Semper Fi Fund during his training. The Semper Fi Fund provides financial assistance and support to combat-wounded veterans and their families.

"Every year for the rest of my life, I will run in the Marine Corps Marathon and support the Semper Fi Fund," says Rotella. "I served in the Marine Corps and fought in Desert Storm. Now I fight to help my fellow injured servicemembers."

As passionate as he is about his cause, he's also eager to achieve the personal goal of beating his original marathon time.

He is successfully managing his diabetes through diet and exercise and no longer requires medication. And with 100 pounds down and 40 to go, he echoes Dutra's sentiments—making a lifestyle change is not easy, and it takes commitment.

"In accounting, we look at the opportunity cost," Rotella explains. "What are you giving up to do this, and what are you earning?"

Ultimately, the answer is improved quality of life.

Dutra has found that includes social as well as health benefits.

"I've made more friends through this lifestyle than I ever did going out to a club or a bar. You meet good, healthy people who are involved in fitness. People who have the same interests as you," he says.

And Rotella is getting compliments in the classroom, where he once got concern.

"My students say, 'you're half the man you used to be!'" he chuckles.

Both men have more marathons on the horizon. Dutra is training to qualify for the Boston and New York marathons, while Rotella is preparing for the Marine Corps Historic Half Marathon on May 15 and this year's Marine Corps Marathon on Oct. 30.

"When I started running, it was to get to a mile, one mile and not stop half way through," laughs Dutra. "It's an evolving process. You hit one point and then there's just a little bit to reach that next milestone. I never set out to run a marathon, but it's addicting!"

To support Bill Rotella in his "Run for the Fund," visit [www.active.com/donate/semperfund-mcm2011/fundWRotell](http://www.active.com/donate/semperfund-mcm2011/fundWRotell)

To learn more about fitness programs at the Clemente Center, visit [www.fit.edu/clementecenter](http://www.fit.edu/clementecenter)

Christena Callahan

# Panthers Pay It Forward

*Florida Tech alumni show love for their alma mater through student recruitment*

We all remember college—the classes, the dorms, the campus activities and the way our lives grew and changed during that time. Many alumni look back fondly on their time at Florida Tech and realize it made them part of who they are today.

With the impact Florida Tech has made on so many lives, it is easy to understand why so many alumni are helping recruit new students, sharing with them how Florida Tech provides a fantastic atmosphere to budding professionals and brilliant minds entering college. Reaching out to new students not only brings back that exciting time in an alumnus' life, but also helps the student along the path of choosing a university to attend.

**Rebecca Mazzone** '04, '09 M.S., started recruiting new students for Florida Tech while she was still a student herself, as a Student Ambassador. She continues today by volunteering for Discovery Day events and campus meetings with

high school counselors such as the Sunshine State Tour. She also volunteers as a contact point for prospective students, discussing classes and campus life with them and answering questions from the perspective of someone who has been a Florida Tech student.

"For some of us, college experiences are a large part of who we are. Being able to reach back and help the university, no matter how, is a way to keep in touch with a part of ourselves," she says.

But you don't need to have recruitment experience to help. Take, for example, **Sara Fieberg** '01, '09 M.S., who volunteered to represent Florida Tech at a high school college fair in Wilmington, Mass. As an alumna who loves her school, she spoke with prospective students about the Florida Tech experience, from classes to student life.

"I talked about what made me choose and stay at Florida Tech, everything that made me enjoy my time there. It made me happy that I could be proud of where I went, show that I love the school and try to share that with someone else," explains Fieberg.

She recalls the appreciation of students and parents at meeting an alumna who has "been there, done that," walked in the shoes of a Florida Tech student, because "we really, truly know what it's like to be a student there."

She also attended an alumni reception in Boston where prospective students mingled with alumni too.

"This time was more relaxed," she says. "The students, usually invited by their admissions counselor, were already interested in Florida Tech and just wanted to learn more. We mingled, talked about their goals and gave them an impression of what life at Florida Tech was like."

Alumni don't need to be near campus or even attend official events to get involved in recruitment. Many alumni have recommended deserving prospective students for the Alumni Endorsement Grant. Recipients of this grant receive \$1,000 annually, renewable for up to four years, toward their full-time undergraduate tuition at the Melbourne campus.

Alumni can recommend as many students as they wish. Just ask **Vic Ross** '90, who has personally endorsed over 25 students for the Alumni Endorsement Grant, in addition to years of volunteering for campus recruitment events.

He comments, "If you find a deserving student, endorsing them is such an easy thing to do—just sign the form and turn it in. It's not much work on your part, but it means a lot to the student receiving the grant."

Mazzone shares similar sentiments, having received thank you letters from recipients she has endorsed and even some parents expressing their thanks for supporting the student in their quest for a Florida Tech degree.

"I just like to help," Mazzone admits. She sees these grants as an opportunity to invest in the potential of these students and feels the university will also benefit.

"Alumni help define the university, and the university shapes the students. Do some good now and hope it goes forward."

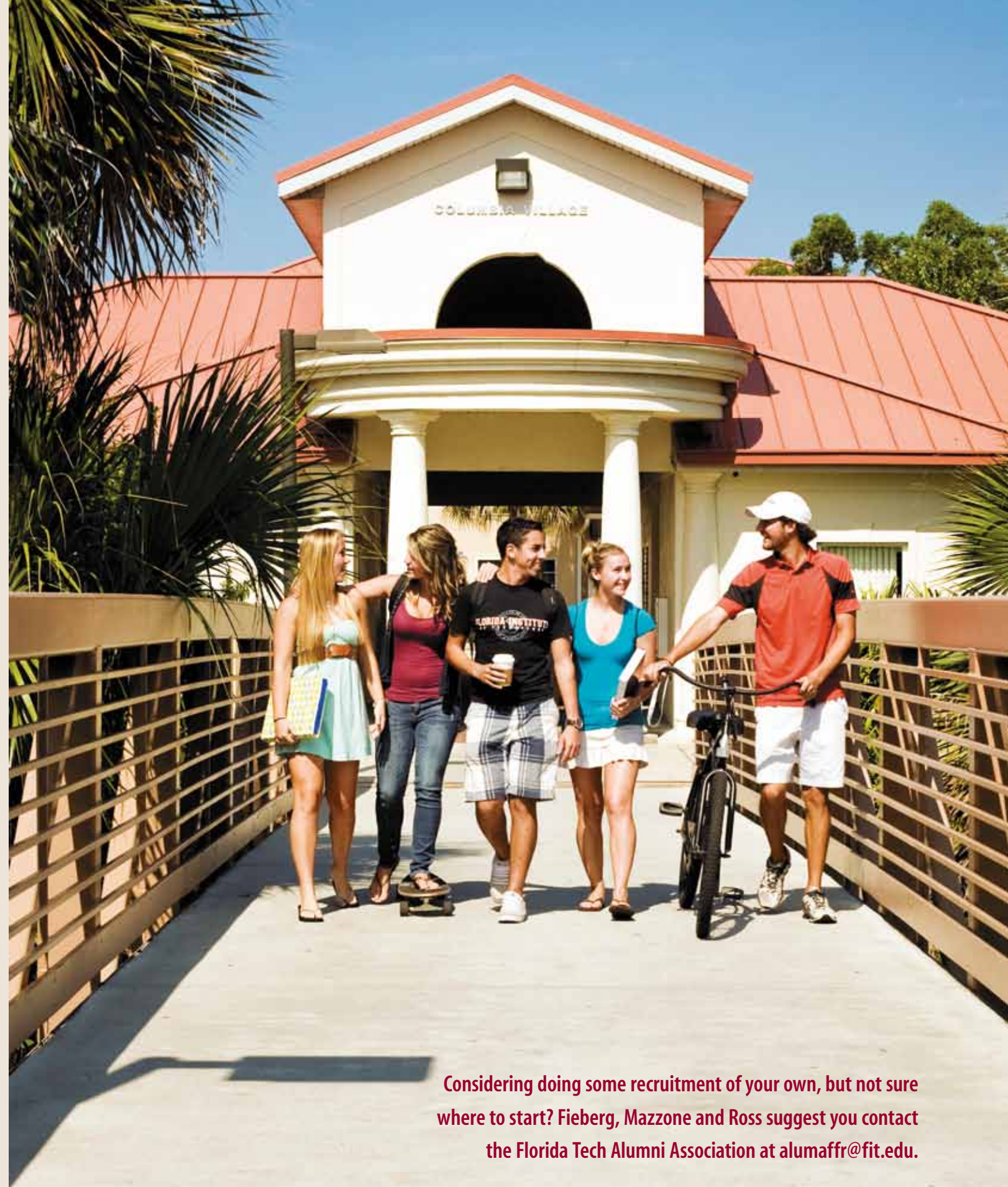
*Stephanie Herndon '07  
www.StephanieHerndon.com*



*Bec Mazzone*



*Sara Fieberg*



Considering doing some recruitment of your own, but not sure where to start? Fieberg, Mazzone and Ross suggest you contact the Florida Tech Alumni Association at [alumaffr@fit.edu](mailto:alumaffr@fit.edu).

As a national research university, Florida Tech conducts studies with a range and a depth that one might expect. One might not anticipate, however, the variety of experiments capturing the attention of researchers.

In the On Campus section, for example, is a story about collaborative research between biological sciences and psychology that involves training snakes via thermal/infrared signals to push buttons for food.

Another experimental psychologist created a project that involved the animal kingdom. It allowed her to justify what many of us would like to do: take our pet to work. **G. Susanne Bahr**, bringing her Akita named Yogi into her research, asked the question: What do dogs see that catches their attention? She and other researchers in Florida Tech's Cognition Applied Research Laboratory (CARL) are working to find the answer. They usually conduct their eye-tracking research with humans, but they made an exception and invited a group of dogs and their owners to the lab. As a result, CARL is the first lab in the world to eye-track canines.

"Our dogs watch TV, scan the backyard for small and large intruders and look out windows to fixate on their departing or arriving owners," said Bahr, director of CARL and Florida Tech associate professor of

## Researchers Doggedly Investigate

# WHAT CANINES SEE



Susanne Bahr and Yogi



Harley and his owner, Ed Griffith, during headtracking. Zack is taking a break.

psychology. "Would it not be great to know exactly what they're looking at?" So, she thought, "Let's take the pooches to the lab and see if we can track their eye movements."

Bahr earned a doctoral degree in experimental psychology with a specialty in human cognition. Her work is the first documented dog eye-tracking ever conducted.

With researchers Edward Griffith, D.V.M., owner of Lake Jessup Animal Hospital in Winter Springs, Fla., and psychology undergraduate student **Ashley Catlin**, Barr worked and played with four dogs to run a proof of concept study, which means they didn't know what was going to happen. Open to the experiment were Yogi; Harley, a St. Bernard puppy; Zack, an Australian Shepherd; and Berkley, a black Labrador.

The lab's eye-tracking equipment is called FaceLab. FaceLab uses two cameras that capture separate views of the participant's face and processes images of the eye area, namely, the iris and pupil. Much computation and calibration are involved as a person (or a dog) sits at the computer, looks at the monitor and the world around, while the eyes are being tracked.

The university head carpenter built a versatile experimental table to accommodate the equipment, the experimenter and the dog. Canines were controlled only by gentle posture corrections made by their owners. Dog treats were used to enhance participant compliance and redirect their attention; during the experimental session the dogs, not unlike human

participants, tended to become bored and tired.

The researchers successfully tracked canine head and eye movements for three of four dogs. What is the value of further research?

"It's early days," said Bahr. "Still, some applications are obvious, such as the qualification and annual requalification of seeing eye dogs, cataract diagnosis, and visual canine attention and aggressive behavior prediction." Bahr adds with a small smile, "Also, we think of research and development of television ads for canine viewers."

The team now ponders possible refinements to their approach.

For example, they might facilitate the research by restraining dog movement through a humanely designed crate. Or they may limit their sample to sedate, large breeds. These breeds may fatigue quickly but are highly compliant, calm and sized appropriately for the apparatus.

The team contemplates improvements. "In our future work we want to provide gaze accuracy validation and correction, and develop stimuli that

uniquely appeal to canine participants," said Bahr.

Other ongoing projects at CARL include attention and body language during human computer interaction, security decisions and attention to pop-ups, complexity and visualizations, and Alzheimer's and art perception.

CARL is also networked with the Center for International Research Collaboration on Universal Access (CIRCUA) at the University of Middlesex in London, United Kingdom, where Bahr is the executive center head. CIRCUA will have a major presence in Orlando in summer 2011 at the Human Computer Interaction International Conference as 16 papers on universal access were selected for presentation and publication. CIRCUA scholars worldwide will attend—from Japan, Israel, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, United Arab Emirates, the U.K. and U.S.

Karen Rhine

JO DAMATO:

# Alumna Brings Hope from the Sky

Business aviation assets can provide critical relief missions during disasters big and small, but such efforts need to be coordinated beforehand to respond quickly in times of crisis.

To get all the players on the same page before an emergency occurs, industry officials created Sky Hope Network, with the help of **Joanne “Jo” Lomurno Damato** '97.

“It came about after Hurricane Katrina and the earthquake in Haiti. Starting something like Sky Hope just seemed like the right thing to do,” she said.

Three of Sky Hope’s founders were key players in the Katrina and Haiti response through an organization known as Corporate Aviation

Responding to Emergencies. They helped coordinate more than 800 flights on business aircraft, transporting more than 4,000 passengers and more than 1.2 million pounds of critical supplies.

Sky Hope Network takes the effort one step further, helping individuals, under its stated mission to “Use the power of business aviation to solve problems during emergencies and urgent situations.”

“When people have assets like that, they want a way to help and Haiti and Katrina were large-scale examples,” she said.

She added an example of a smaller project involved flying an ill child and a family of six to Texas for the child’s treatment.

“There are people out there who want to do good. We’re just the matchmakers for them. Sky Hope lets us connect the dots day-to-day,” Damato explained.

Volunteers still are needed to act as flight advocates, ground support personnel and administrative staff. Also needed are donations of flights, funds and time, she said.

Sky Hope Network incorporated in Texas as a nonprofit organization in September 2010. Damato, one of five founding board members, serves as secretary.

“It’s very new. We realized that the whole aviation community could use their assets for good. The hope is the next time there is something big, we’ll be ready,” she said.

Being prepared to help in the event of emergencies is worthwhile for many reasons, Damato believes.

“We should all look outside our comfort area and look for folks in need. We should set good examples for our kids. This is a good way to inspire people and to give back. It was really great to see the aviation community rally together,” she said.

Damato is married to **Robert Damato** '92, who is a pilot for a major



airline. She currently works as director of operations and educational development for the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA). The couple lives in a South New Jersey suburb with their two young sons.

Damato holds single- and multiengine Land Instrument Ratings, a Commercial Pilot Certificate and is a Certified Flight Instructor.

She is active with Women in Aviation International, Women in Corporate Aviation and the Florida Tech College of Aeronautics Alumni Board. Featured on the cover of *Aviation for Women* Magazine, she also writes a column for the publication called “The Juggling Act,” detailing the work/life balance of two-parent aviation households.

*George White*

## Sky Hope in Action: Alumni Social Network Brings Hope

Sky Hope Network’s **Jo Damato** '97 received the call: a young burn victim needed a private flight from Boston to Miami for sight-restoring treatment—and Florida Tech alumni quickly responded.

At 14, Chichi fell into her family’s fire pit in Nigeria during an epileptic seizure, resulting in significant burns to her face and upper body and severely impairing her vision. Boston’s Mass General Hospital Pediatrics had treated her burns for more than nine years, and now a doctor in Miami hoped to restore her vision by repairing her eyelids.

Damato posted the request via Facebook, and within 48 hours, Chichi and her mother were on their way to Miami.

Alumnus **Niels Kuyper** '02, pilot for charter airline Miami Air International, saw the request, which was shared from Damato through the College of Aeronautics Alumni Association (FITSA) Facebook page by **Jason Terreri** '01 and ultimately through the Florida Tech Facebook page.

The generosity of Kuyper and his company allowed Chichi to travel on a near-empty aircraft, which eased her anxiety about her heavily scarred face.

Damato says she is grateful to her friends and colleagues in the aviation community who continue to demonstrate their caring nature through their selfless actions.

## Alumni Spotlight

**Kevin Shah** '09 computer engineering, electrical engineering System Test Engineer, LiveTV, a subsidiary of JetBlue Airlines



*Describe yourself in three words:* Ambitious, creative, adventurous

*Describe your work:* The short answer is watch TV and break stuff. But seriously, I test software and in-flight entertainment systems before deploying software to the planes. I am one of the engineers that makes live television happen on planes.

*Favorite Florida Tech memory:* Speaking at graduation. I relive and reminisce those five minutes. It was the best moment in college. It summed up my entire journey there. It was a great feeling to be able to talk to everyone, while graduating.

*Notable achievement:* My first short film called *Hungry* was an official selection for the Melbourne Independent Film Festival and 15 Minutes of Fame Film Festival. Working on a production title and second film called *Maybe*.

**Nikhil Nilakantan** '00 computer science Founder & CEO, Memory Reel Inc. ([www.memoryreel.com](http://www.memoryreel.com))



*Describe your work:* I run a fast growing technology company that has created a mobile engagement platform for experience marketers. It’s a fancy way of saying that we help provide immersive and interactive experiences to attendees at various types of events using their mobile phones—sporting events, music events, conferences, marketing promotions etc. Event organizers and marketers like our product because we can help them measure ROI on their marketing spend and increase overall engagement/revenue. Like at most small companies we all wear a lot of hats. On the average day, I work on new business development, work with existing customers, help the team design features for the next version of our product, interview potential new employees and deal with other operational aspects of the business. It’s a challenging environment but that’s the way I like it.

*Notable achievement:* I joke that I have two startups—my company and my recently born baby girl. Being able to run a startup and raise a newborn baby without going crazy in the process is probably my greatest achievement.

Read more about Kevin and Nikhil at <http://today.fit.edu>



# Knight of the Periodic Table

He may hail from the land of Loch Ness and exhibit a wizard-like understanding of mysterious compounds, but **Andy Knight's** story is no fairy tale. On the contrary, this chemistry professor's work is grounded in practicality.

## Once upon a time ...

Long before he had earned his Ph.D. from St. Andrew's University, Andy Knight was a wee lad with prophetic parents. Visionary in their gift-giving, Mr. and Mrs. Knight presented him a beginner's chemistry set, with which—as if by fate—the young Knight became utterly enchanted.

Knight's first role models came from popular science fiction movies and television shows of the late sixties, whose clever protagonists would save the day through keen observation and interminable wit. "Professor Quatermass. Doctor Who. Kids all wanted to be like these characters," Knight recalls. "The scientist was still a glamorous figure in those days."

But it was a secondary school teacher named Dr. Bryant who nurtured Knight's interest in a very real way, showing him how chemistry could be applied in real life. Knight's vocation became as clear to him as a crystal ball and soon, he himself was gazing into the future.

"I remember buying a graduate level inorganic chemistry textbook from the local bookstore when I was in my early teens. Couldn't understand a word but I liked the diagrams and structures," he says.

## Happily ever after ...

Today, the same tome sits on a bookshelf in Knight's office. In some respects a relic, the text is not wholly obsolete. The professor freely admits to "dipping into it" now and then, perhaps to revisit in print what long ago became second nature. Whatever the reason, it is surely pragmatic.

From his Ph.D. adviser, the renowned chemist David Cole-Hamilton, Knight adopted an approach to inorganic chemistry that continues to inform his work today. "We study the fundamental and basic science behind our observations," Knight explains. "But we apply the research in a very practical way."

It's an approach that is evident in all of Knight's work—it seems nothing he delves into isn't potentially world-changing.

Currently leading a nearly \$1 million study of chemical warfare compounds with the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, D.C., Knight's research has applications in defense/national security, clean chemical synthesis and antiviral compound development.

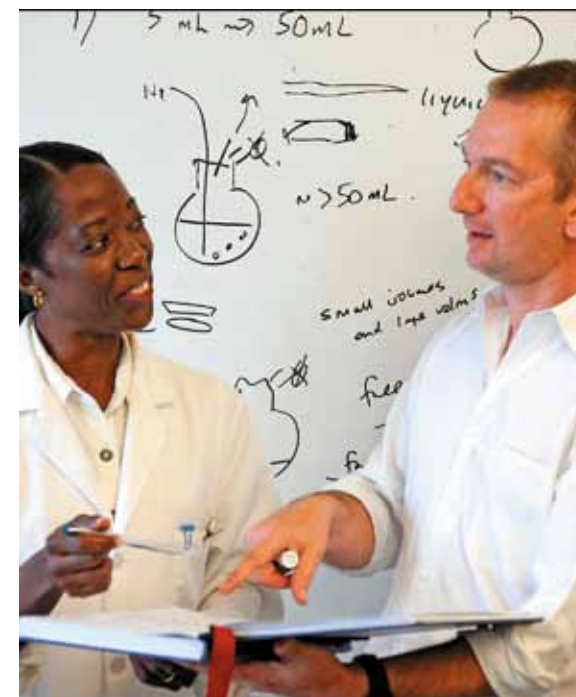


"One of our current antiviral compounds has proved successful in trials against Zaire Ebola, HIV-1 and Adenovirus," he explains. "I think the potential impacts here are clear."

The only problem Knight and his band of student collaborators, The Knight Group, face, he says, is that "our group is interested in so many different scientific challenges." It's a dilemma overcome, according to Knight, by building flexibility into their strategy so that the most urgent scientific questions may be worked on quickly.

"This takes a certain amount of resource availability and student enthusiasm, both of which we have at Florida Tech," he adds. "While I am confident we will still be working in the areas of green chemistry and defense five years from now, I am also sure that new, as yet unknown scientific puzzles will pique our interest."

It would seem a Knight's quest is never-ending.  
Andy McIlwraith



More info about Andy Knight:

<http://cos.fit.edu/chemistry/faculty/knight>

## Faculty Spotlight

**Mark Bush**, Professor and Chair, Conservation and Ecology Program, Biological Sciences Department

Years at Florida Tech: 14

Teaches: Community Ecology, Conservation Biology, Paleoclimatology and summer field programs to Peru and the Galapagos

Research interests: Past climate change in the Neotropics and its impacts on natural communities and pre-Columbian cultures

Hobbies: Being a dad, birding, fishing and kayaking

Notable achievement: Discovering the earliest known maize cultivation in Amazonia

Describe your teaching style and/or teaching philosophy: Challenge the students, prompt inquiry-based thinking, but keep the delivery lively

What attracted you to your field: A combination of the opportunity to travel to remote places and that so little was known about the pre-history of these regions

Favorite thing about Florida Tech: It's a wonderful place to live, and I have great colleagues and students.



**Joe Dwyer**, Professor, Physics and Space Sciences

Years at Florida Tech: 10

Teaches: Physics at all levels, also space and atmospheric sciences

Research interests: I am trying to figure out how thunderstorms and lightning work by studying the X-ray and gamma-ray emissions.

Hobbies: Trying to figure out how thunderstorms and lightning work ...

Notable achievement: Three kids

Describe your teaching style and/or teaching philosophy: Be interested in whether or not the students are actually learning

Favorite thing about Florida Tech: I enjoy coming into work every day. It is that kind of place.





Florida Tech



Florida Tech student-athletes at the Extreme Makeover home build.

## Panthers Take Volunteerism to the 'Extreme'

When Florida Tech received the news that the Emmy-award winning, hit reality television show, *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, was coming to the Space Coast, students, faculty and staff were eager to help.

On Jan. 13, Florida Tech student-athletes came together to volunteer for this wonderful cause. Nobody was sure what to expect, but we all knew we wanted to help in any way we could.

En route to the work site, we were fortunate to learn more about the family we were helping. The Hurston family was doing charitable relief work abroad when a plumbing leak flooded their house, destroying most of their home and personal belongings.

The family did not let their misfortune dampen their spirits, however. They continued to do charity work, providing water purifiers and other aid to devastated countries, despite being essentially homeless.

The Hurston family works together—sacrificing personal time, comfort and safety—to lend a helping hand to local, national and global communities. Putting their own needs aside, the family continued to help others while they were in desperate need of repairs to their own home. Additionally, they used much of the money they needed for their own repairs for their relief work.

For a moment, the atmosphere on the bus of over 50

student-athletes, coaches and staff was quiet as everyone took a minute to appreciate what they had, and the opportunity before them to help this truly deserving family. The silence slowly grew to a positive upbeat energy as the prospect of helping the Hurston family drew closer.

Before heading to the site, we stopped at the Central Disposal Facility to collect our hardhats and complete paperwork. When we finally arrived at the site, we gathered at the gated fence to admire the work that had been done in only a few days' time! We had all seen the show on television before, but there was something about seeing it in person that just took your breath away. At first there

was not much for us to do, as the family was returning home the next day—Jan. 14—and much of the construction had already been completed. We waited patiently though, and little by little, we were assigned different tasks.

There were athletes washing windows, dusting furnishings, unloading trucks, transporting furniture and making several trips to the dumpster. No matter what our role, big or small, we knew we were helping the Hurston's get one step closer to their dream home.

When we finished, we headed to the refreshment tent to enjoy some well-earned snacks and drinks. Everyone displayed this tired, yet satisfied expression as we discussed our hard work and shared our experiences with other volunteers. Like the Hurston family, we were not looking for recognition. We were just happy knowing we made a difference.

Unfortunately, we were not able to be present at the "move that bus" unveiling. I'm sure the family loved their new home. Much hard work and love was put into it. It was amazing to see how one family could bring together an entire community. What we can make relevant from this experience for our own circumstances is the importance of supporting our fellow teammates as well as our community at large. It was a pleasure to be a part of such an amiable exercise. I know I speak for the entire athletic department at Florida Tech when I say, "Welcome home Hurston family!"

Emily Densem,  
Communication senior, softball



## A New Treasure on Campus

If you have not stepped foot on the Florida Tech campus recently, you are in for quite a surprise. The land south of the Clemente Center has undergone a significant amount of change within the past several months.

The area now boasts the Panther Dining Hall, a four-story parking structure and will soon include an ultra-modern outdoor aquatic center. Construction on the aquatic center, located between the Clemente Center and the Panther Dining Hall, began in October and is scheduled to be completed in mid-May. With its completion, Florida Tech will have an impressive aquatic center for alumni, faculty, staff and students.

"We're excited about the new aquatic center and the opportunities it provides for varsity competition and recreation," Tech athletic director **Bill Jurgens** said. "We're looking forward to competing at the NCAA Division II level and being a part of the Sunshine State Conference swimming and diving division."

The aquatic center will feature a competition pool and a recreation pool, varsity locker rooms, a public changing room and offices for coaches and lifeguards.



Both the competition and recreation pools will be heated. The competition pool will consist of nine lanes, each spanning 25 yards, which is the length for NCAA swimming competitions. In the competition pool, there will be one- and three-meter diving boards. Covered seating will be available for spectators alongside the pool.

The recreation pool will be constructed next to the competition pool on the west end of the aquatic center. The depth will range from three to six feet, and it will include three warm-up lanes.

Those interested in viewing the development of the aquatic center may browse through a construction photo gallery accessible on either the men's or women's swimming and diving pages at FloridaTechSports.com.

Ryan Jones



Left: Extreme Makeover home. Right top: Junior setter Hayley Tignor makes final preparations. Right bottom: Senior catcher Lani Ankiel and sophomore second baseman Kara Dickinson, softball, take a break.

# share your news!

Submit your Alumni News Notes to [alumaffr@fit.edu](mailto:alumaffr@fit.edu)

Professor Emeritus **Jim Patterson**, physics and space sciences department head 1987–1999, recently published the latest edition of his book, *Solid-State Physics* (Springer-Verlag, 2010). Dr. Patterson resides in Rapid City, S.D. The book's co-author is **Bernard Bailey** '80, '93 M.S., '02 Ph.D.



Tech. Brian works for United Airlines, based in Washington, D.C. Paul lives near Munich. The Sargents live in Key West, Fla. *Below from left, Gagnon and Sargent.*



### 2000s

**Christopher Kelly** '01 and wife Kari are parents to Paige, born in October 2010. Chris is completing his Ph.D. in ecology, and Kari is a veterinarian. The family lives on Maryland's eastern shore.



Trustee **Malcolm Kirschenbaum** and his wife Jane welcomed their granddaughter Leah Corinne Park on Oct. 31, 2010, in San Francisco, Calif.



### 1980s

Dr. **Liem Dang** '80 has been selected as a Fellow in the American Physical Society, a leading organization for physicists. He is at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Wash.

**Brian Sargent** '88 and wife Amy met **Paul Gagnon** '82 by chance while in Munich, Germany, in November 2010. Seated at the same restaurant table, their conversation mentioned colleges, and they discovered they had both graduated from Florida



**Damian Friebel** '01 and wife Allison are first-time parents of Cassidy, born December 2010. Both parents work for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.



**Jared Christman** '03, wife Leslie and big sister Ella welcomed Chase London in March 2010. Jared is vice president of a federal contracting company. The family resides in Gulfport, Miss.

**Holly and Douglas Rauscher** '04 announced the birth of Heidi Charlotte in September 2010.



**Elizabeth Diaz** '07 and husband Karl welcomed Ramon Alexander in January 2010. Elizabeth works at Quartus Engineering, and Karl is a stay-at-home dad. They reside in the Los Angeles, Calif., area.

### In Memoriam

**Benjamin Norton** passed away in February, in Worcester, Mass. He attended Florida Tech for two years before transferring to UMass Lowell to be closer to family. He is survived by his parents, one sister and one brother of West Boylston, Mass.

# share your news!

Send your information to: [advs@fit.edu](mailto:advs@fit.edu)

or send this form to: Florida Tech, Office of Development, 150 W. University Blvd., Melbourne, FL 32901-6975

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Year Graduated \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Business Title \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Children's Names and Ages (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Your news (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

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Gordon Nelson, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Q: Florida Tech has placed a focus on applied sustainability education. What does this entail?**

University sustainability involves three large components: academics, campus facilities and research. We already have many research efforts across the university, so we have focused on building the other components to best serve our students. In terms of academics, we have launched an exciting new minor program in sustainability that is available to any undergraduate in any college on campus. Results in the first two semesters have been excellent: students from four of our five colleges are already enrolled in the minor, the required classes have exceeded or equaled enrollment expectations, and there are great new partnerships with the facilities program. The first cohort graduates in May. More information is available at <http://cos.fit.edu/sustainability>.

**Q: Why is this topic important in higher education?**

Because of its larger importance for many aspects of society, we should train future leaders in sustainability before they enter the job market. Students with sustainability programs on their résumés can be more competitive in many different markets. Universities across the country have been adding sustainability programs in the last decade. One of the exciting things at Florida Tech is that we can focus on a higher percentage of engineering and science majors, as well as business and other majors. Giving future technical leaders expertise in sustainable best practices will be essential to making society truly more efficient and adaptive over time.

**Q: The university hosted the 8th annual Sustainability Forum on March 8–9. Tell us about this event.**

This is the eighth in a series of transatlantic forums hosted by Florida Tech, the Budapest University of Technology & Economics (the oldest technology university in Europe) and the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany. Overall, the event was a major success. Day one focused on the important issue of retaining the intellectual capital of our Space Coast during the KSC downsizing by re-inventing the region as a national leader in renewable energy manufacturing. Success or failure will have major implications that go beyond the region and state. We also heard the essential perspectives of a visiting professor from China, Dr. Ge Yang, who detailed many important examples from the world's leading producer of various renewable energy products. Day two focused on many case studies of sustainable management from around the globe. Key talks included those from colleagues in Hungary, Germany, India and Vietnam. Day three, for international visitors, provided insight into LEED building certification and environmental requirements/regulations for universities.



At the Sustainability Forum, from left, Imre Hronszky, Hamid Rassoul, Kien To and Gordon Nelson.

**Q: What were the outcomes?**

We had 110 attendees from seven countries. We were thrilled to have students and teachers from five different high schools present. These are future leaders and Florida Tech is proud to help advance their development. The 26 papers were exceptional. Next June, the ninth forum will take place in Eger, Hungary, where it started nine years ago.

Continued from page 38

**Q: Are there additional sustainability initiatives on the horizon?**

There are many new initiatives. Some of the most exciting involve the fusion of academics with campus upgrades. For example, Florida Tech is in the process of going from one to four buildings certified as sustainable by the prestigious Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program (LEED). These achievements come directly from student sustainability projects that work through major tasks in the certification process. Our new Aquatic Center has a LEED Silver rating pending. Students are also working toward Gold ratings for both the Ruth Funk Center for Textile Arts and the new WFIT studios. These ratings will be pending relatively soon. Such products result from a partnership between two of Florida Tech's sustainability experts, **Ken Lindeman** and **Greg Tsark**, that are designed to empower a LEED wave across campus while saving money, reducing carbon emissions and giving students extraordinary project experiences. Over time, we will also investigate the development of a major program in sustainability.

## Florida Tech Brick Terrace



A permanent recognition program for graduates, students, parents and friends of the university.

### Act Now!

Have a brick inscribed in honor of yourself or another special person, in memory of someone not forgotten, or as a gift of encouragement or congratulations for a current student or recent graduate. Go to <http://alumni.fit.edu/brickterrace> to see the bricks already inscribed and to [http://alumni.fit.edu/brickterrace\\_form](http://alumni.fit.edu/brickterrace_form) to download the appropriate form for submission.



For questions or more information, please contact [ddeaton@fit.edu](mailto:ddeaton@fit.edu).

## Alumni Receptions\*

June 24 Baseball Night Out, Lakewood Blue Claws, New Jersey  
\*For actual dates, as they are confirmed, contact Melissa Klos at [mklos@fit.edu](mailto:mklos@fit.edu) or visit <http://alumni.fit.edu/events>

EVENTS ON CAMPUS OR HOSTED BY CAMPUS COLLEGES, ORGANIZATIONS

## May

22–26 Third Annual Creative Writing Institute  
Department of Humanities and Communication  
Lectures, workshops, classes  
Keynote speaker: Susan Hubbard  
<http://411.fit.edu/cwi/classes.php>

Contact the Alumni Office at (321) 674-7190 for more information on alumni events

ONGOING EVENTS | HELD ON CAMPUS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

Women's Business Center Training Courses and Networking Opportunities  
Visit <http://wbc.fit.edu> for schedule.

Professional Enrichment Programs and Seminars  
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# March 5 was an exciting day at Florida Tech with seven concurrent events taking place across campus.

Highlights, pictured here, included Botanical Fest held on the Crawford Green/Botanical Garden, Sunshine State Conference Basketball Tournament held at the Clemente Center and Admitted Student Celebration held in Panther Plaza.



**Go Green, Get Online!**

To see more photos and videos, visit *Florida Tech* TODAY online at:

[today.fit.edu](http://today.fit.edu)



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