

Appointments

■ **River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens, Inc.** has announced that **Adriana Quiñones** is their first Executive Director.



Adriana Quiñones

Quiñones comes to the Peace River Gardens from the Cape Fear Botanical Gardens in Fayetteville, NC. During her five years at Cape Fear, she served as Director of Horticulture and Education, Interim Executive Director and was later named the Executive Director.

Quiñones, a graduate of The Ohio State University, also serves as a member of the Board of Directors of the American Public Gardens Association, the nation's leading professional organization for the field of public horticulture.

According to Quiñones, "One of the many things that appeal to me about the Peace River Gardens is the art. I was raised by an artist, my father. My family has always been involved with the arts, and I have often mentioned the beauty of how art and science go together, and the best place to see that is in a garden."

Quiñones will assume the Executive Director's position in the near future, building on the work begun by the volunteer Board of Directors. The organization anticipates expanding opportunities for classes, speakers and special events.

Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit organization with the responsibility for operating and maintaining the Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens. The Gardens, located at 5827 Riverside Drive, east of Punta Gorda and I-75 are open to the public Tuesday-Sunday from 10-4. For more information, visit www.peacrivergardens.org.

■ **State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota (SCF)** has hired **Linda Otero**, who holds her doctorate in nursing, as faculty member in the Associate in Science in Nursing and Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. Otero will teach in the class-



Linda Otero

room, clinic and laboratory and has been appointed a co-chair of the curriculum committee for SCF's nursing program.

Before joining the faculty at SCF, Otero assisted in the development of curriculum for the nursing programs offered by Bryant & Stratton College in New York, where she also participated in the college and nursing program's accreditation reviews. She has taught nursing for 12 years and has been a nurse for more than 30 years. For more information on SCF's nursing program visit SCF.edu/Nursing.

■ **The law firm of Icard, Merrill, Cullis, Timm, Furen, and Ginsburg, P.A.** has announced that **Bianca N. Manos** has joined the firm as an associate in the Sarasota office. Her practice is focused in the areas of family law and commercial litigation. Prior to joining Icard Merrill, Bianca represented corporate and individual clients in matters involving personal injury, premises liability, and property damage litigation.

Bianca received her undergraduate degree in English from the University of Florida, and her J.D. from the University of Florida Levin College of Law. While in law school, she served as the editor in chief of the University of Florida Journal of Law and Public Policy, and was a member of the Trial Team. Bianca is an active member of The Florida Bar and the Young Lawyers Division of the Sarasota County Bar Association.

■ **Coldwell Banker Residential Community Commercial Real Estate** has announced that Lakewood Ranch resident **Christy May** has affiliated with the company's Central Lakewood Ranch office in Bradenton. As an RCC agent, Christy belongs to the Realtor Association of Sarasota and Manatee and Commercial Investment Division. Christy will provide strategic planning for companies and employees and those looking to make a move.

Christy brings with her 20 years of experience in the industry. Her resume includes working with Fidelity's FMR Properties in Boston to acquire the Massport Pier which has evolved into the South Seaport. She produced a summary video of the project while she was attending Boston University for her Master's in Communications and working as TV News Producer at Channel 5. She was a TV Reporter with Channel 10 in Miami, while attending U of M in Marine Science, covering happenings at RSMAS.

As constituent representative for the South Station Area where her advertising and public

relations firm was located, she spearheaded what became the Rose Kennedy Greenway. She can be reached at 781-258-6022.

■ **Visit Sarasota County (VSC)** has promoted **Ellen Thomas** to senior meeting sales manager, and appointed **Amanda Walker** leisure group sales manager and **Allison Jones** group sales coordinator. The growth of



Ellen Thomas



Amanda Walker



Allison Jones

VSC's sales department will allow the tourism bureau to better identify, attract and entertain conferences, meetings and groups, resulting in extended stays, large bookings, and an upsurge in first-time visitors to the area.

"It was important for us to grow the sales team for Visit Sarasota County so that we are able to help keep our hotels full during the midweek period," said Kelly Defebo, VSC's director of sales. "The business traveler becomes intrigued with all we have to offer here, and often they end up returning so that they can enjoy our amenities with their spouse or families on vacation."

With the promotion to Senior Meeting Sales Manager, Thomas will lead a team devoted to marketing the destination to meeting professionals and leisure group planners. This will allow VSC to enhance and expand its efforts to strategically target qualified contacts who bring meetings and groups to Sarasota County.

In the newly appointed position of Leisure Group Sales Manager, Walker will work to secure accommodations and community activities for the social, military, educational, religious and fraternal (SMERF) groups market as well as for weddings and travel agents. Previously she was with The Ritz-Carlton Sarasota sales department.

As Group Sales Coordina-

tor, Jones assists Thomas and Walker in acquiring leads and showcasing qualities that make Sarasota the best destination for group conferences, meetings and events.

Visit Sarasota County leads and supports the tourism industry in Sarasota County. To learn more, visit www.visitsarasota.com.

Accolades

■ **Northeastern University** has announced Sarasota resident **Paige Howell**, a student majoring in Environmental Science, was recently named to the University's dean's list for the fall semester, which ended in December 2018.

To achieve the dean's list distinction, students must carry a full program of at least four courses, have a quality point average of 3.5 or greater out of a possible 4.0 and carry no single grade lower than a C- during the course of their college career. Each student receives a letter of commendation and congratulation from their college dean.

In addition to achieving distinction through the dean's list, Paige is a member of the University Honors Program, which offers high caliber students the chance to further hone their studies and interests, live in special interest on-campus housing, and participate in one or two honors courses each term. Invitation into the honors program is highly competitive and students must maintain a high GPA and strong commitment to campus leadership to remain a part.

■ On January 27 at the **Annual "Boots and Bling" Celebration for SWAT Networking**, CEO, **Dr. Robyn Spirtas** and SWAT Executive Director, **Deb Gerard** presented a check on behalf of the entire **S.W.A.T. organization** to Melissa Wandall, Founder of The Mark Wandall Foundation.

\$2396.00 went to the foundation, an organization that serves children and teens in grief. "We collect 'brag dollars' all year long to give to a charity" stated, Gerard, "doing a 'brag' at our meetings is a great way for us to get to know each other on a more personal level while collecting for a charity at the same time."

S.W.A.T. which stands for Successful Women Aligning Together, is a unique women's networking organization of 300 professional women. There are seven chapters from Venice to Sun City and Lakewood Ranch to Anna Maria Island in three counties - Hillsborough, Manatee and Sarasota. "What makes SWAT special is that we really care about one another" claimed Dr. Robyn Spirtas, the founder and CEO. "We take the time to

really know one another and support each other both personally and professionally."

SWAT is always looking for new members and guests. All women in business are welcome to any meeting location. More information about SWAT Networking can be found at www.swatnetworking.com.

Business News

■ **Flynn Design Style** is a new company that offers home staging. **Marybeth Flynn**, owner of the company, is able



Marybeth Flynn

to integrate the beauty of Florida and her world-travels experiences into instinctive designs that can add a higher value to your home.

As a native, Flynn was inspired by Florida's natural beauty and draws her creative palate from the colorful Florida sunsets, beaches, flowers, and wildlife. He has also traveled the globe and has experienced many different cultures which helped her create a broad base of experience and creative skills. Flynn believes that color, fabrics and materials are the foundation of every great design plan and uses color to set the tone and mood of a room.

"I look at a home through the eyes of a buyer," said Flynn. "Your home is personal and represents who you are, but when it comes time to sell, the house needs to speak to everyone and appeal to a broad range of tastes. That's where I can help transform a space to become alluring and enhance the buyer to have an emotional bond, which helps attain maximum price and can expedite the selling time."

Studies show that staged homes spend an average of 73% less time on the market and can increase dollar value by 9-12%.

Flynn Design Style provides consultations for furnishings, wall colors, window treatments, artwork, etc. They can work with your existing pieces while integrating newer décor to revive your space or create an entire new look. They stage homes for sale, beautify occupied homes, events and open houses. To learn more about Flynn Design Style, please visit www.flynnndesignstyle.com.

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