



Navy
crew part
of Harvey
relief

By Joe Daraskevich
joe.daraskevich@jacksonville.com

Personnel from Jacksonville Naval Air Station flew over areas of coastal Texas on Wednesday to assist with search-and-rescue efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

The “Pelicans” of Patrol Squadron 45 left the Jacksonville installation about 10 a.m. in a P-8A Poseidon aircraft equipped with MX-20 cameras, as well as search-and-rescue kits ready to be deployed for possible survivors in the Gulf of Mexico.

The kits consist of large inflatable rafts with basic survival equipment that can be dropped from the weapons bay of the aircraft. Wednesday was the first time the squadron has used the search-and-rescue packages in a live mission, according to the Navy.

The crew of nine didn't need to deploy the rescue equipment, and mainly concentrated on making sure the basic infrastructure was holding up and dams weren't running over, said Lt. Marcus Costa, the mission commander.

“This is a pretty new event for us as far as an overland flooding disaster type relief situation,” Costa said. “We really had no clue what to expect, but it was kind of a sigh of relief once we got to the Houston

HELP continues on B-4



terry dickson

Firefighter
stays strong,
ready to move

ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GA. | It was Sunday afternoon and the TV was on in Todd Thompson's living room. There was a lot to watch, PGA golf, some pre-season football, home improvement shows and infomercials on everything from magic cooking devices to new workout programs to take off the weight from using the magic cooking devices.

Thompson opted for something related to his job and to the chest sitting open on the floor. The big screen showed scenes from Houston, cars, trucks and people in deepening water as the rain still poured, while helicopters pulled people off the roofs of houses with water up to the eaves.

He was packing gear into the chest getting ready for a call to go to Houston, Rockport or other areas flooded by Hurricane Harvey. A firefighter, Thompson is head of Glynn County's water rescue team.

“We're preparing in case we get deployed,” he said.

Should the call come, the team would tow its boat west, launch it into the flood and go about helping people to safety, a little different from their typical river and ocean rescues.

If you're trapped somewhere and you see a rescue boat coming, it would be a good thing if Thompson were standing in the bow. Thompson just competed in the 2017

DICKINSON continues on B-4

MEDICS FOR MANATEES



One of the two new manatees at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is reflected off the surface of the water in its new tank as it surfaces to get a breath of air shortly after arriving from Orlando Wednesday morning. (Bob Self/Florida Times-Union)

Zoo's critical care center gets 2 new patients

By David Crumpler
david.crumpler@jacksonville.com

The Manatee Critical Care Center at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens admitted its first two patients Wednesday: Cassie and Buckeye.

Both are just kids, only a couple of years old.

But they've grown a lot since they were rescued separately two years ago and taken to SeaWorld Orlando's rehab facility.

At the time, Buckeye was a mere 63 pounds. He's now up to 625. Cassie, who was 66 pounds when she was found, now weighs 775.

They still have a lot of growing to do — Florida manatees can reach a ton or more — and the Jacksonville Zoo's new center will monitor their health and progress for the next several months.

If all goes well, the two orphans will be released back into the wild in winter, in warmer waters farther south, said Craig Miller, the zoo's curator of mammals. The young manatees will be able to join the groups that gather as a result of more moderate temperatures.

Cassie and Buckeye are providing an ideal start for the zoo's center, Miller said. They haven't been injured, don't need emergency treatment and aren't ill.

Caring for them — monitoring their health and making sure they continue to



Cassie the manatee lies on her back as she and tank mate Buckeye are inspected before being lowered into their new home.

gain weight — allows them to ease into the role of responding to more urgent situations.

“That has been our plan,” Miller said. “We get experience under our belts. These guys are healthy, but they need to grow before they are released in warm water sites with other manatees around.”

The zoo's manatee \$2 million rehab center was completed in the spring. It is one

MANATEES continues on B-2

Event touts importance of art in economy

Keynote speaker signed
copies of her book; PNC
Bank awarded 4 grants

By Charlie Patton
charlie.patton@jacksonville.com

Lily Yeh's artistic life has been dedicated to transforming “bad land into land of enchantment,” the tiny, charismatic artist said during her keynote address at the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville's State of the Arts luncheon Wednesday.

That talk was part of a daylong celebration of art and culture, and its impact on Jacksonville and Jacksonville's economy.

A native of China, Yeh moved to the United States in 1963 to attend graduate school in Philadelphia. In 1986, she began working with some children in North Philadelphia to transform a vacant lot into an art-filled park, she said. Eventually that effort evolved into The Village of Arts and Humanities, which transformed more than 120 vacant lots into gardens and parks.

After concentrating on Philadelphia for two decades, Yeh began using art to transform “broken places into beautiful places” around the country and the world. She found one of those places in Rwanda where years



Keynote speaker Lily Yeh welcomes students to the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville's State of the Arts luncheon at the Jesse Ball duPont Center in Jacksonville. The Division of Cultural Affairs and PNC Bank were other sponsors of the program. (Will Dickey/Florida Times-Union)

of genocide had traumatized the people, she said. In a film clip, she showed one woman who said that of 134 people in her family, only four survived.

Working under the aegis of the organization she had founded, the Barefoot Artists Inc., which she had started “to bring beauty to broken places in the world,” Yeh designed the Rugerero Genocide Memorial Monument Park in 2004 and built it in 2005 with help from hundreds of local villagers.

Yeh, who signed copies of her

book “Awakening Creativity: Dandelion School Blossoms” after her talk, is the subject of the 2013 documentary film “The Barefoot Artist,” currently available on Netflix.

Following Yeh's address, Cressman Bronson, PNC Bank's regional president for Florida East, announced the four winners of 2017 grants from the PNC Foundation's Arts Alive program. Grants of \$15,000 went to:

- The Florida Ballet: Its program “Breaking the Barrier: For

Boyz Only” is an educational and performance project, providing an opportunity for at-risk middle-school aged boys to gain exposure to the art of dance through hip hop, jazz and ballet.

- The Cathedral Arts Project's Any Given Child Program: Through the program “Lift Every Student,” artists will be embedded in the classrooms of Hyde Park, Hyde Grove, John Love and Smart Pope Livingston public elementary schools to help children who are on the free/reduced lunch program to experience the value of the arts in helping with other learning topics.
- The Jax Civic Orchestra: The orchestra will host a cultural festival in February that will include a 50-minute concert featuring music influenced by African, Jewish American, Cuban and Arabic music, as well as music by a contemporary southern composer, and by Frederick Delius, a European who spent time in Jacksonville.
- The Performers Academy: The academy will use the money to continue its focus on helping disadvantaged teens express themselves, allowing them to resolve conflict and improve social skills through artistic expression and the creative process.

Cultural Council executive director Tony Allegretti told those at the luncheon that the Art in

ARTS continues on B-4

Art, culture is great for economy

By **Charlie Patton**
charlie.patton@jacksonville.com

Giving money to a not-for-profit arts organization isn't so much a charitable act as it is an investment in Florida's economy, Sandy Shaughnessy, director of the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, told a gathering of arts advocates Wednesday morning.

Arts & Economic Prosperity 5, a national study of the economic impact nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and their audiences had in 2015, found that the impact in Florida was \$4.7 billion, Florida Secretary of State Ken Deltzer said during the meeting.

The morning meeting, held at the JAX Chamber of Commerce offices, was part of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville's State of the Arts events Wednesday that also included a luncheon and an afternoon panel discussion.

"Arts are real business," Shaughnessy said. "They are a fundamental component of a healthy economy."

The Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 report said the overall \$4.7 billion



Vladimir Manzhos, known as Waone of the mural team Interesni Kazki from Kiev, works on his mural creation on the side wall of the building on 315 Forsyth St., on Nov. 2, 2016. Manzhos is producing one of 11 murals being done in downtown Jacksonville as part of the Art (Re) Public international art and mural event. (Bob Self/Florida Times-Union)

economic impact in Florida includes \$2.4 billion spending by audiences of nonprofit arts and cultural audiences, and \$2.3 billion in spending by arts and cultural organizations.

Arts and cultural organizations and the events they create lead to the equivalent of 132,366 full-time jobs. People attending nonprofit arts and cultural events spent an average of \$33.53 per person, a figure that does not include the cost of admission, the report, commissioned by Americans for the Arts, found.

Shaughnessy called arts

and culture "a cornerstone of Florida's tourism industry," noting that 15.2 percent of the people who attend arts and culture events in Florida are not state residents.

During an afternoon panel discussion, Dave Harrell, the city's sports and entertainment officer, talked about the challenge of producing the annual Jazz Festival, the most recent of which had \$300,000 in city funding and a budget of \$1.3 million. That necessitated finding corporate sponsors.

"We're very reliant on

the corporate community," he said. "Without 25 corporate partners, we are nowhere."

Jennifer Santiago, president of ArtRepublic, which staged an ambitious arts festival last year, said she found support for last year's inaugural ArtRepublic by looking for money from "innovative" sources like Estee Lauder.

Kimberly Beckley, vice president of client and community relations for the PNC Foundation, whose job involves finding projects the foundation will support financially, said her first priority is to find projects that fit PNC's funding priorities. But she also said she wants projects that interact with the PNC Foundation and keep it apprised of progress.

"Sometimes we give and never hear from them again," she said.

She said that the arts can be a crucial recruitment tool for cities. Most corporations considering moving to a city make the city's school system, and its arts and cultural scene priorities.

"You want to be a cool city," Harrell said.

Charlie Patton: (904) 359-4413



Keynote speaker Lily Yeh hugs Tony Allegretti, executive director of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville, during the luncheon. Yeh founded the Barefoot Artists Inc. organization and is the subject of a 2013 documentary. (Will Dickey/Florida Times-Union)

ARTS

Continued from **B-1**

Public Places program has added 38 new pieces since last April and now supervises 138 public works of art, some of which pre-existed the Cultural Council, but are now part of the program. That includes two statues honoring the Confederacy in public parks, one in Hemming Park and one in Confederate Park.

The 25 cultural and arts organizations that received money in 2016-

2017 through the city's Cultural Services Grant Program, administered by the Cultural Council, generated \$80 million in economic impact to the city, Allegretti said. They offered more than 250,000 free or reduced admission for children and students, offered more than 1,500 education programs, offered more than 14,000 opportunities for public participation and employed more than 3,000 vendors, he added.

Charlie Patton: (904) 359-4413

Pediatric specialists assist in Houston

Situation is 'dire' for sick children

By **Beth Reese Cravey**
beth.cravey@jacksonville.com

Nicole Lanier, a pediatric critical care nurse, and Pete Mrgich, a pediatric respiratory therapist, specialize in neonatal and pediatric transports for Wolfson Children's Hospital in Jacksonville.

But this week they volunteered to use their expertise to help Houston-area hospitals slammed by Hurricane Harvey. They are part of a team flying sick babies to and from neonatal intensive care units in and around Houston.

Conditions are dire, Lanier said Wednesday.

"It is exactly like you see on the news. A lot of standing water, pretty devastating," she said. "Our hearts go out to them."

Houston hospital personnel are working "round the clock," taking occasional breaks in sleeping rooms where they are working, she said. "We help as we can."

The logistics of transporting pediatric patients by air can be difficult on a good day, but Houston has not been having good days. Medical transport helicop-

TEXAS HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE FUND

To help Houston area hospital employees who suffered significant property loss or damage because of Hurricane Harvey but are working round-the-clock to help others, go to tha.org/Harvey/ReliefFund.

ters can be grounded by high winds but have to be ready at a moment's notice when the winds die down and skies clear. The added expertise of other pediatric transport teams from across the country — including physicians and nurses and mechanics and paramedics — are crucial, she said.

"Right now logistics are sort of challenging," Lanier said. "We help with prepping ... having all the critical care resources ready."

Lanier and Mrgich are members of Kids Kare, Wolfson's mobile intensive care unit for infants and children, which typically serves a 250-mile radius surrounding Jacksonville. The unit began as a neo-



Wolfson Children's Hospital's Pete Mrgich (right) and Nicole Lanier, who specialize in neonatal and pediatric transports, are in Texas this week helping with medical air transports of sick children to and from Houston area hospitals impacted by Hurricane Harvey. At left is a representative of AirMethods, the national medical air transport company that asked Mrgich and Lanier to participate in the storm response. (Provided by Wolfson Children's Hospital)

natal transport service for critically ill newborns but now serves infants and children up to age 18, according to Wolfson.

Kids Kare includes two mobile intensive care ambulances, each staffed by a nurse and respiratory therapist cross-trained in pediatric and neonatal intensive care. Operated by Century Ambulance, they transport about 1,000 infants and children to Wolf-

son every year. Kids Kare teams also work with Life Flight, which provides air transport for critically ill infants and children.

They were asked to help in Houston by AirMethods, a nationwide air medical transport company based in Colorado. Wolfson also sent equipment and supplies for the effort, according to the hospital.

Beth Reese Cravey: (904) 359-4109

Senate renews push for higher education changes

By **Lloyd Dunkelberger**
The News Service of Florida

GAINESVILLE | Universities would have to develop block tuition plans by next fall, and expansions in Bright Futures scholarships and need-based aid programs would become permanent under a Senate bill filed Wednesday.

The legislation (SB 4), filed by Senate Higher Education Appropriations Chairman Bill Galvano, R-Bradenton, revives major parts of a higher-education bill (SB 374) passed during the 2017 legislative session but vetoed by Gov. Rick Scott.

A key difference is the new bill, which will be considered when the Legislature convenes in January, does not include measures

related to state colleges. Those issues will be filed in a separate bill by Senate Education Chairwoman Dorothy Hukill, R-Port Orange.

Scott vetoed the 2017 bill citing concerns about the impact on the state college system.

Senate President Joe Negron, a Stuart Republican who has made elevating the state university system a top priority of his presidency, told the system's Board of Governors on Wednesday that even with Scott's veto of the policy bill, a major portion of the Senate's higher-education initiative is already having a positive impact on the 12 state institutions.

Most of the Senate proposals were included in the new \$82 billion state

budget, including a record expansion of need-based aid and a major boost in Bright Futures scholarships, which are merit-based.

But as part of the annual budget, as opposed to being put into law, the changes are not permanent.

Negron told the Board of Governors, meeting at the University of Florida, that the idea behind the new Senate bill is "to make these tremendous gains permanent and to continue to build this vision" for an elite university system.

One provision in the bill would make permanent the expansion of the Bright Futures scholarships for the highest-performing students, known as "academic scholars," to cover 100 percent of tuition and

fees and to pay \$300 per semester for books. Also, it would permanently allow academic scholars to use their Bright Futures awards to cover summer classes.

A new provision in the bill would expand the Bright Futures scholarships for "medallion" scholars to cover 75 percent of their tuition and fees. The scholarships now cover \$77 of each credit hour, which average about \$215 per hour across the university system.

The new bill also revives a proposed requirement that universities develop block tuition plans, where students pay a flat fee per semester rather than a credit-hour charge, with the new tuition plans taking effect in the fall of 2018.

HELP

Continued from **B-1**

area and saw that everyone was coming together to help each other."

He said the flight to the relief area took about two hours and the crew spent about four hours patrolling the area.

The aircraft surveyed the area from about 3,500 feet in the air, where they could still see portions of highways still shut down from flooding, Costa said. He said at one point they saw a fan boat moving

through the water to assist residents and there were several types of personal watercraft in areas where they wouldn't normally be.

The Pelicans used P-3A Orion aircraft for maritime patrol missions until transitioning to the Poseidon in July 2013. The transition from the four-engine turboprop aircraft to the modified 737 airliner was complete in 2014, making the Pelicans the third operational P-8A squadron in the Navy.

Costa said Wednesday's mission was a new example of the versatile capabilities

of the jet.

"As far as the nature (of the mission it was) a complete change of pace for us," Costa said.

The squadron's most recent deployment was based out of Sigonella, Sicily, and supported operations Dynamic Manta, Joint Warrior and Atlantic Shield, starting in August 2016. The Pelicans returned home to Jacksonville in April.

The Pelicans spent about eight hours in the air Wednesday, concentrating on the Texas coastline. They returned to Jacksonville about 6 p.m.

Costa said the Navy is trying to expand the capabilities of the aircraft, so the long-range mission and the fact that they didn't have to refuel gave the crew confidence they can respond to similar disasters in the future.

Another Poseidon aircraft is scheduled to leave Jacksonville early Thursday, according to base personnel.

The search-and-rescue missions will continue daily until the crews from Jacksonville are no longer needed.

Joe Daraskevich: (904) 359-4308

Let's

GET IT

STARTED

CALL

TODAY

AND GET THE

FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME!

(904) 359-4255

The Florida Times-Union