

Florida veterinarian

Advancing Animal Human and Environmental Health

Summer 2005

Husband-wife veterinary partners strive for balance of beauty, efficiency in hospital redesign to better serve associates and clients

By SARAH CAREY

Drs. Virginia Quelch and Mark Gendzier, partners in work and in life, have combined their visions of personal and professional success since the morning of their graduation from UF's College of Veterinary Medicine in May 1987, when they got married only a few hours before tipping their tassels to the right.

Today that joint vision is manifested in a beautiful building that houses St. John's Veterinary Clinic in St. Augustine, a facility rich in history and unusual architecture – it was designed by world-renowned golfer Vijay Singh's architect, Craig Thomson – and which is currently undergoing its second major renovation in five years. Quelch and Gendzier, D.V.M.s, who own the practice, hope the finished product reflects their contemporary but client-oriented philosophy – “Sort of high-tech, without the tech-ness,” as Quelch puts it.

“You can get so high-tech that it almost becomes about the tech-ness, and sometimes animal owners are lost in the process,” Quelch said from an enclave separating a retail pet store from a

glassed-in hallway connecting to offices, a peaceful courtyard with statuary of St. Francis of Assisi, and examination rooms designed to bring in natural light. “We want to be high-tech, but not to the exclusion of the owner or the patient.”

Five years ago, the couple doubled the

size of their hospital and added a retail area and new boarding facilities. This year, they are remodeling the center of the building, which had been empty for five years, and will be using the space for expanded treatment and intensive care facilities. Among other things, the renovations will feature floor-to-ceiling cabinet and library areas, heated cages for post-operative and hospitalized cases and wireless computer networking.

Picture minimalism with a twist. Envision the efficiency of form that follows function, with function driven by

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Dr. Virginia Quelch, Dr. Mark Gendzier, Dr. Kathleen Deckard, Dr. Brooke Burkhalter and Dr. Jeanine Wihbey. Dr. Deckard, a member of the UF veterinary college's Class of '99, holds an American Bald Eagle who was about to be released to a rehabilitation facility. Dr. Kristi Jackson, who completed a small animal surgery residency at UF in '99, had performed orthopedic surgery to repair a limb fracture.

Sarah Carey

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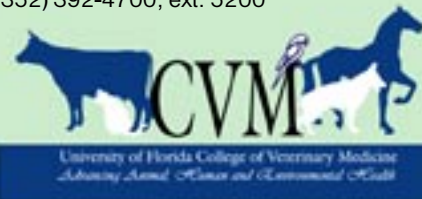
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Dean Joe DiPietro

It's hard to believe the summer months are again upon us. Amidst the humidity, the 90-degree temperatures and the consistent rainstorms, our new junior students are adjusting to their clinical rotations while our new graduates from the Class of 2005 are trying on the title of "doctor" and embarking on fresh journeys in their professional lives.

Meanwhile here at the college, a task force has been charged with exploring possibilities for expanding our DVM program enrollment. The task force, chaired by Dr. John Harvey, is charged with planning and conducting a study to assess the feasibility of increasing DVM class size and determining how many more students we might be able to accommodate. Results of the task force's study are expected in early fall. Should the group's findings be favorable, we anticipate holding focus groups around the

state with practitioners and other college constituents to obtain feedback regarding our plans.

Anyone familiar with our mission of advancing animal, human and environmental health knows that today's veterinarians do much more than take care of dogs, cats, horses and increasing numbers of exotic pets. Today's veterinary students enter the work force with training that equips them to enter the human, as well as the animal, world of disease control and prevention; to play important roles in environmental health; and to plan successful careers in the military as well as in industry and in agriculture. In these important capacities, today's veterinarians occupy a key role in keeping the nation's food supply safe and protecting national security.

The American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges points to a critical shortage of veterinarians in areas including public health, governmental regulation and biosecurity. The Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act, introduced by Sen. Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) would provide additional funds on a competitive grant basis to support colleges who wish to build programs that will funnel more students into these areas of need. As president-elect of AAVMC, I have been very involved in this group's efforts to bring about such legislation, which will clearly enhance the contributions our profession can make in areas ever more crucial in today's society.

I encourage everyone to support this bill and to educate themselves about this important issue.

Finally, we are making a final push to reach our goal of \$4 million in private donations toward our new Small Animal Hospital project. As we go to press with this newsletter, we have reached the \$3.2 million mark. Please help us make it to the finish line by Dec. 31.

Happy Dog Days of summer to you and yours, and don't forget to stop by if you're in the neighborhood.



Sophomore veterinary student Hillary Hart and graduate student Edward MacKay are pictured with their award-winning poster.



David Freeman

Honors and Awards

UF veterinary students honored for ophthalmology poster

A poster developed by University of Florida veterinary graduate student Edward MacKay and sophomore UF veterinary student Hillary Hart received top honors during the recent annual meeting of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists in Washington, D.C.

The poster described the discovery of a protein associated with inherited glaucoma in dogs. Identification of the protein and the genetic mutation that produces it could lead to a better understanding of the mechanisms that gradually elevate fluid pressure within the eye in both dogs and man.

Faculty advisers and co-authors included professors Kirk Gelatt, V.M.D., and Don Samuelson, Ph.D., from the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's department of small animal clinical sciences, and Mark Sherwood, M.D., from the College of Medicine's department of ophthalmology.

UF veterinary surgeon presents lecture on colic to British Equine Veterinary Association

David Freeman, M.V.B., Ph.D., associate chief of staff of the University of Florida's large animal hospital and service chief of large animal surgery, presented the Sir Frederick Hobday Memorial lecture at the Dec. 15 meeting of the British Equine Veterinary Association in London.

"The person chosen to be invited to give the lecture is usually selected on the basis of their expertise, in Dr. Freeman's case, colic surgery," said Anna French, an assistant executive secretary at the association. "This is determined by research, publications, presentations and expertise, and because the lecture is selected on a global basis, this represents an international recognition by the association."

Freeman spoke on advances in diagnosis and treatment of colic.

UF veterinary dermatologists adopt, treat dachshund to save from euthanasia

By Sarah Carey

Never let it be said that UF veterinary dermatologists are thin skinned.

In early February, the owner of a severely infected dachshund, named Baby, contacted Jennifer Lopez, a veterinary technician with the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital's dermatology service, to say the cost of treatment for the dog had become prohibitive. Unless a home could be found for Baby, the owner said, she would have no choice but to euthanize the dog.

Lopez conferred with the dermatology group – a tight bunch — about Baby, who had severe demodex and bacterial infections.

"As a group effort, especially through Dr. Millie Rosales, we treated Baby," said Lisa Akucewicz, D.V.M., a clinical assistant professor of dermatology with the UF College of Veterinary Medicine.

Rosales adopted the dog, who stayed at her home and comes in for treatments as needed.

"All dogs have a low number of demodex mites in their hair follicles," said Rosales, a second-year dermatology resident. "It is when the number of mites increases that this causes skin disease."

She added that the exact cause of what leads to this increase in mites in certain



Dr. Lisa Akucewicz, left, and Dr. Millie Rosales with Baby, who shows improvement after less than a month of treatment by UF's dermatology team.

dogs and not in others is not fully known, but it is believed this may have something to do with the animal's immune system.

"Once a dog gets demodicosis, then bacterial infections result secondarily," Rosales

said. "The infections can be superficial or become deep, as was the case with Baby."

Rosales said Baby's condition was probably hereditary, meaning that her

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Manatee bone studies may influence public policy debate on boat speeds

For the manatees who call Florida's coastal tributaries home, speeding boaters are like charging bulls in an underwater china shop.

University of Florida researchers have discovered that despite the placid sea cows' huge size, their bones are actually as brittle as some porcelain plates. That may make them even more vulnerable than anyone thought to suffering life-threatening injuries in a collision.

Boat strikes are the leading cause of manatee deaths in Florida, but until now scientists haven't understood the mechanics of what happens to the endangered marine mammals when these deadly accidents occur. The surprising finding could ultimately change public policy for the management of Florida's

manatee bones fragile and more likely to break than most other types, with fractures occurring more or less along straight lines as opposed to being dispersed within the bone, Reep said. The typical manatee rib weighs about 2 pounds and has a higher mineral content than other types of bone, researchers also found — up to 70 percent compared with 65 percent. While the difference seems small, it apparently translates into large changes in mechanical properties, they said.

Additional findings from the ongoing project, which mingles veterinary physiology and engineering expertise in a first-ever effort to describe the biomechanics of impact injuries, will be published in an upcoming issue of the *Journal of Biomechanics*. UF scientists also discussed the study April 9 at the UF-sponsored Marine Mammal Medicine conference in Gainesville.

Using an air gun to hurl a 2-by-4-inch board toward a manatee bone target, and strain gauges to measure load at the moment of impact, the researchers are able to reconstruct the way various forces are distributed through the bone.

"You can actually measure the amount of energy that was propagated through the bone just by looking at the geometry. What we're doing is getting an idea of the amount of energy it takes to break a bone," said Reep, who has teamed with Jack Mecholsky, the study's other principal investigator and a professor and associate chairman of the department of materials science and engineering at UF's College of Engineering. They are working with UF graduate student Kari Clifton on the project, who began the study as part of her dissertation research in 1998 with funding from UF's Marine Mammal Medicine Program.

The force applied by a boat to a manatee during impact depends primarily on boat speed, but also on variables such as the size of the boat, researchers said.

"One thing we're not sure about yet is how much of the force of the boat actually reaches the ribs, since manatees don't get hit directly on the ribs, but rather on the soft tissue covering the ribs," Reep said. "This is an unanswered question."

Manatees, listed as an endangered species by the federal government since



1967, are large, slow-swimming, gentle mammals that are entirely aquatic. Human activities are the major threat to their survival through boat-related injuries and deaths, habitat loss or degradation, and in some countries, hunting, according to the U.S. Geological Survey's Sirenia Project. Only about 3,000 manatees remain in the wild. Most are concentrated in Florida, but can be found in summer months as far west as Texas and as far north as Virginia. West Indian manatees can also be found in the coastal and inland waterways of Central America and on the northern coast of South America.

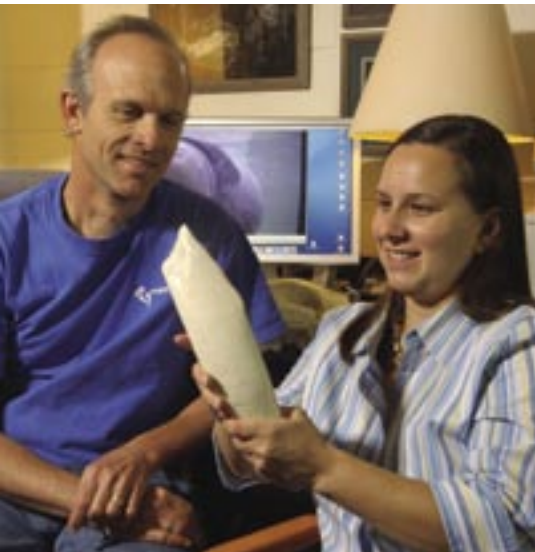
Officials have documented 5,329 manatee deaths in Florida from 1974 to 2004, of which 1,164 were attributed to watercraft collision, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The U.S. Geological Survey's 2003 population model predicted that if the manatee mortality rate from boating accidents continues to increase at the rate observed since 1992, the situation in the Atlantic and Southwest regions is dire, with no chance of the manatee population recovering within the next century.

"Most concerning is the fact that watercraft collisions are the leading cause of death of adult, reproductive-age manatees," said Patti Thompson, director of science and conservation for the Maitland, Fla. based Save the Manatee Club. "Reducing adult manatee mortality is the most effective method to increasing the manatee's recovery rate, and the reduction of watercraft-related mortality is the most productive and reliable means to reduce these deaths."

Thompson said the UF research is significant because it could eventually lead to better boat management in the environment.

"It's a surprising outcome of UF's research that their bones are much more fragile than anyone expected," Thompson said.



Dr. Roger Reep and graduate student Kari Clifton examine the rib bone of a manatee.

waterways, said Roger Reep, Ph.D., a professor in the UF College of Veterinary Medicine's physiological sciences department.

"When you pick up a manatee rib, it's much denser than a cow bone or a human bone," Reep said. "Most people would think these ribs would be really strong, as they're so heavy. But in fact they behave like a ceramic material. We feel this information will contribute significantly to our understanding of manatee-boat interactions, and will be critical in establishing boat speed zones adequate to minimize the chance of fatal impacts."

Manatee bones have no marrow cavity, which is why their bones are so dense. That density makes



Dr. Amara Estrada prepares the horse for shock treatment by opening electrode patches. Dr. Sheila Robertson monitors anesthesia.

Florida veterinarians become first in U.S. to perform electric shock treatment to correct heart abnormality in horses

Borrowing from a Canadian veterinarian's unique expertise, University of Florida veterinarians recently became the first in the United States believed to have successfully performed intracardiac electrical conversion of a common arrhythmia in horses that causes irregular and fast heartbeats.

Two horses received the procedure in March 2005, including an Ocala Thoroughbred named Captain who was part of a training exercise conducted for UF veterinarians by the individual who developed the technique. University of Guelph veterinarian Kim McGurrin, D.V.M., visited Gainesville in mid-March to perform the procedure on a horse from Ocala. McGurrin developed the cutting-edge technique over the last four years along with her mentor, Peter Physick-Sheard, B.V.Sc., at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada.

Captain's arrhythmia had been treated medically several times but without success, said Mel Valley Farm owner-caretaker Carl Stump. Now, however, Captain appears to be doing well, Stump said.

"He is now training at a local place here in Ocala, so he is back to work," Stump said.

McGurrin said the intracardiac electrical conversion technique was developed to offer new treatment options for atrial fibrillation.

"It is excellent that UF is now capable of performing this procedure," McGurrin said. "We have applied this technique

"We have applied this technique on more than 50 horses, including 44 client-owned horses referred from the states."

-Kim McGurrin, D.V.M.

on more than 50 horses, including 44 client-owned horses referred from the states. Most horses have returned to performance and we now consider this procedure routine."

Amara Estrada, D.V.M., an assistant professor of veterinary cardiology at UF's

College of Veterinary Medicine, and her colleague, Darcy Adin, D.V.M., were both involved in the recent UF procedure.

Estrada said the cardiac abnormality for which the procedure is used is "an important arrhythmia for many reasons."

"Probably it is most important to horse owners and trainers of race horses because it causes poor performance and poor racing," Estrada said. "But certainly pet horses develop the condition as well."

It is also the most common arrhythmia in horses, occurring in 1 to 2 percent of horses.

Estrada said irregular or fast heartbeat, also known as atrial fibrillation, causes a decrease in cardiac output, negatively impacting a horse's performance. The disease is said to be frustrating to both horse owners and veterinarians because medical therapy frequently has to be administered many times and often has serious side effects.

"Typical medical treatment has consisted of antiarrhythmic drugs given orally or intravenously, but the drugs can have fairly significant side effects, including toxicity," said Steeve Giguère, D.V.M., Ph.D., an associate professor of equine medicine at UF.

The UF veterinarians had heard of McGurrin and were aware that intra-cardiac electrical conversion technology was now being performed in horses at the University of Guelph routinely with "great success," Giguère said.

The procedure, which takes about two hours, involves surgically threading two catheters through veins in the horse's neck into the heart's right atrium and the pulmonary artery. During the catheter placement, echocardiography, or ultrasound technology, is used to determine the exact placement of the catheters.

"Once the catheters are in the correct location, a short shock is delivered to 'reset' the atria and terminate the fibrillation, thus establishing a normal rhythm," Estrada said.

The equipment used to administer the shock is a biphasic defibrillator, the same technology used in human emergency medicine to treat cardiac arrhythmias.

"Most horses with atrial fibrillation do not have underlying heart disease," Giguère said. "So if you can restore their normal sinus rhythm, they usually return to their previous level of performance."

the desire to create user-friendly space for four associate veterinarians and other staff to better do their jobs, and you'll get a sense of where the latest renovations at St. John's are headed.

"Our strength is that we are a full-service facility," Quelch said. "A pet can get all its care here at our facility. We also handle intensive care cases well because we do not have an emergency clinic in the St. Augustine area."

Associates in the 40-employee practice include UF veterinary college graduates Dr. Kathleen Deckard, '99, and Dr. Jeanine Wihbey, '00, as well as Dr. Kristi Jackson, who completed a residency in small animal surgery at UF, and Dr. Brooke Burkhalter, a University of Georgia veterinary school graduate.

Quelch and Gendzier say they their practice renovations could be finished by Oct. 1, when the couple is scheduled

"When Mark's father found out it was available for sale, I jumped at the chance," she said. "Mark did have a dream of owning a practice in ski country, so I had to contractually give him an extra week of skiing each year in order to get him to agree to the purchase."

This year, Gendzier's allocated skiing week was spent in Montana in March with former classmate, Joel Mann. Quelch and Gendzier also skied with classmate Melly Thomas Curtis in Colorado in February.

Quelch and Gendzier also have visited former classmates Ramon Perez in Puerto Rico and Karen Clark Ashby in St. Croix.

"It helps to be an exotic location," Gendzier laughed.

Added his wife, "We do stay in touch with our classmates, and we're just obnoxious enough, we'll go see them, just about wherever they are. People

know they can't hide from Mark and Ginny."

Quelch and Gendzier refer to their graduating class as "The Class of Love" because 16 people in the class married each other. All eight couples, reportedly, are still together.

When Quelch and Gendzier reminisce about their experience as students at UF, it's clear that much of what they learned has helped shape who they are today.

"I think what Florida taught us was to offer each pet the best that medical science has to give, but to remember that pets and owners have needs that are sometimes not met by science," Gendzier said.

"You try to look at each patient and each owner to determine the best options for each situation."

Quelch recalls one of her favorite UF stories, featuring professor of internal medicine Dr. Michael Schaer – "Uncle Mikey," as he's fondly known by many former students.

"I remember when I was with Dr. Schaer as a student on the medicine rotation, and we had a dog come in with lymphoma," she said. "I didn't feel the lymph nodes. Well, Dr. Schaer put his hands over my hands just right where



Dr. Mark Gendzier and Dr. Virginia Quelch with Ann Pearrow and Teddy. The pet store is a frequent stop for clients who visit the veterinary hospital.

to host a St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce networking event.

Located off of U.S. 1 in a rapidly growing business hub between St. Augustine Beach and the historic city of St. Augustine, the practice was built by Dr. Jack Schuler, an Auburn graduate.

"He practiced in a small house that was on this site, and dreamed of the perfect hospital," Quelch said. "He built it, and I fell in love with it when I interviewed with him shortly after graduation."

Although Quelch never worked for Schuler, she remembered the hospital long afterward.



Dr. Mark Gendzier and Dr. Virginia Quelch visit a boarder in the cat condos at St. John's Veterinary Clinic.

those lymph nodes were. He said, 'You'll never miss another one again.' And I haven't."

Quelch, whose father was a machinist, has always had a keen interest in industry and in, well, making plans – of the business as well as the architectural kind. She developed the commercially successful MicroPearls line of veterinary dermatologic products and has presented numerous seminars for veterinarians in Asia and South and Central America on canine and feline skin diseases and treatment. Right now, however, her industry interests are on hold while she supervises the hospital's redesign.

Quelch said she is proudest of the academic attitude that permeates St. John's.

"The doctors have formal rounds where cases are discussed at length," she said. "No doctor is allowed to say, 'in my experience.' Instead they must quote a reference or a study to support their point. Our clients' pets get the benefit of a team of veterinarians."

Gendzier, who serves as hospital director and senior surgeon, has a special interest in cancer medicine and innovative cancer therapy. He recently applied to participate in UF's Visiting Practitioner Program during the month of April to beef up his expertise in that area.

"Mark and I are very fortunate because our skills are complementary," Quelch said. "He is a wonderful clinician and a good mentor to younger veterinarians. I see the big picture and have done the hospital design work. We have rarely crossed swords at work and we value each other's counsel."

parents likely had demodicosis.

"This also means that Baby should not have puppies," Rosales added. "We will need to spay her soon."

The UF dermatology team decided to treat Baby with milbemycin, which she takes every day along with antibiotics. Baby also gets bathed frequently with an antibacterial shampoo.

Rosales said it would likely take four to six months for Baby's situation to totally turn around, even though in just three weeks, there has been dramatic improvement.

"Her skin is not scaly or crusty anymore," Rosales said. "She is no longer bleeding from her skin. We could barely touch her at first because her skin hurt so much, but now she loves to be touched and petted."

Akucewich added that the service found Baby a "really good home."

"She was adopted by Dr. Rosales' sister, Maria, who always dreamed of owning a dachshund," Akucewich said.



Philanthropy News

We would like to thank our CVM alumni for the gifts and pledges they have committed to support our new small animal hospital facility. The college Alumni Council sent letters to classmates requesting support for this project, resulting in a wonderful response. Anyone wishing to write additional letters may obtain a copy of a sample letter and a pledge form from Kristi Esmiol, senior secretary in the college's Office of Development & Alumni Affairs, (352) 392-4700, ext. 5015.

The gifts and pledges in response to Alumni Council letters so far by class year are:

Class Year	Gifts & Pledges
1980	\$5,000
1981	\$20,750
1985	\$1,900
1987	\$350
1989	\$1,000
1994	\$400
1997	\$175
2000	\$750
2001	\$1,250
Total Gifts & Pledges	\$31,625



Drs. Rowan Milner, Michael Schaer and Colin Burrows all were on hand for the Feb. 12 "Party in the Jungle" fundraising event for the new Small Animal Hospital. Held at Parrot Jungle Island in Miami, the event drew supporters of the college from South Florida and other parts of the state. Zoe Haynes, senior director of development and alumni affairs for the college, said the event raised \$145,000 for the new hospital project.



Dean Joe DiPietro and his wife, Deb DiPietro, enjoy the birds at Parrot Jungle.

Cover Girl

Leanne Twomey, a third-year clinical pathology resident, graced the cover of the February 2005 issue of *Compendium*. A paper Twomey co-wrote with Rick Alleman, Ph.D., professor of clinical pathology with the college, titled "Cytodiagnosis of Feline Lymphoma," is included in the journal and discusses how to cytologically diagnose feline lymphoma.

"Diagnosis of canine lymphoma by cytology is often relatively easy, but with feline lymphoma it can be more difficult," Twomey said.

The reason is because of the increased prevalence of lymphomas made up of small lymphocytes which are difficult to differentiate from normal lymphocytes.

"The paper has lots of pictures and talks about lymphomas in different anatomic locations," Twomey said. "Its target audience is veterinarians in private practice."



Clinical pathology resident Leanne Twomey holds the issue of *Compendium* with her photo on the cover.

Calendar items for Florida Veterinarian

Aug. 19-20

Orientation for incoming freshmen veterinary students and "Family Day" for their families will be held Aug. 19. The annual college picnic will be held Aug. 20 at Lake Wauburg. Contact Jo Ann Winn at (352) 392-4700, ext. 5013.

Oct. 2

The Horse Farm Hundred bicycle ride through Ocala horse farm country begins at Morningside Nature Center in Gainesville. Support Team VetMed! For more information, go to <http://team.vetmed.ufl.edu/>

Oct. 7

Homecoming weekend at UF begins with Gator Growl on Oct. 7. The college will hold its traditional alumni barbecue on Saturday morning prior to the game kick-off against Mississippi State (time TBA.) Contact Jo Ann Winn at (352) 392-4700, ext. 5013.

Sept. 9-11

The Florida Veterinary Medical Association will hold its annual meeting at the Wyndham Palace Hotel and Spa in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. The college will hold an alumni reception on Sept. 10, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Wyndham Palace. See www.fvma.org for more information or contact Jo Ann Winn at (352) 392-4700, ext. 5013.

Jan. 7-11

The North American Veterinary Conference will be held in Orlando at the Gaylord Palms Resort with the Marriott World Center serving as co-hosting hotel. The college will hold its annual alumni reception on Jan. 8 from 7 p.m. until at the Marriott. For more information, see www.tnavc.org.

April 22

UF's Spring Weekend, which includes the traditional Orange & Blue game, will be held and members of the college's Class of '81 will be honored for their 25-year graduation anniversary. Activities TBA. Contact Jo Ann Winn at (352) 392-4700, ext. 5013.



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