



Gulf Coast REC

October 2007
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(813) 634-0000

Wrinkled was not one of the things I wanted to be when I grew up!

Two of our OPS employees at Plant City who are also students there have graduated this past summer! We congratulate **Erin Brown** (rt) and **Mindy Napier** (lft), OPS for Michael Andreu, on their achievement.



Mindy has been celebrating with a vacation to Utah and has recently returned to take up a full



Congratulations! time position with Natural Resource Planning Services, Inc. in Lakeland as a

"Forester". She plans to obtain her Arborist certification and prescribed burners certification. Mindy's degree was in Natural Resource Conservation. Erin continues to work in Dr. Andreu's forestry conservation department.

Welcome New Faculty...

We welcome our newest faculty member, **Andrew MacRae** (Weed Science). Dr. MacRae is a citizen of Canada and received his BS degree in Agriculture - Pest Management from Nova Scotia Agricultural College and his MS and PhD in Horticultural Science - Weed Science from North Carolina State University. He has more recently been working as a Post Doctoral Research Associate at the University of Georgia, conducting research on small fruit, tree fruit, and vegetable weed management trials. If you've had the opportunity to talk with him, you'll know he really enjoyed working with the cotton crops. Sorry, Andrew, no cotton here, but *lots* of weeds to research!



October Birthdays



- 1.....David Czarnecki
- 1.....Carolyn Wildes
- 4.....Charlie Pratt (ret.)
- 4.....Jaime Arias
- 8.....Jose Moreno
- 13....Gary Wilfret (ret.)
- 13....Cami Esmel
- 15....Becky Willis
- 21....Tito Fuentes
- 24....Rafael Caballero
- 25....Marilyn Tucker
- 27....Emily Tucker
- 28....Carol Campbell
- 29....Bielinski Santos
- 29....William Maclsaac
- 31....Monica McGarrity





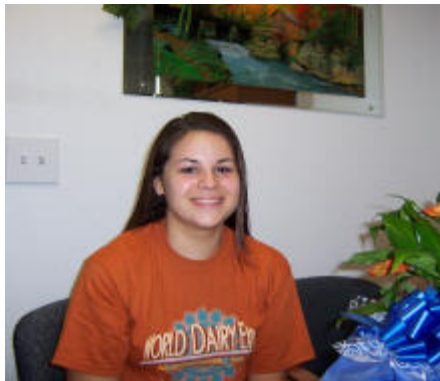
Beenish Bashir, OPS Technician for Dr. Guralp Singh Toor in Soil & Water research, is new to the US as well as the Center. Beenish received her Masters degree from the University of Punjab in Pakistan in 2004, majoring in molecular biology. She is now a permanent resident living with her husband Osman Amin in Gibsonton.



You've been seeing this guy around for awhile, as he has been working for Bayer Corp with Dr. Marco Toapanta, Courtesy Faculty. **Damaso (Tito) Fuentes, Jr.** has begun work as OPS for Dr. Natalia Peres in Plant Pathology this past month and will also be assisting with Dr. David Schuster in Entomology later on. Tito is a graduate of East Bay High School and lives with his family in Ruskin.



Robert Whitmire has joined Dr. David Schuster's Entomology team as OPS. Bob graduated from Virginia Tech with a BS in business administration. After working a number of years in merchandising management, Bob and wife, Connie, settled in Ruskin. Bob delivered mail for Wimauma for six years, and still does periodic tomato inspections for the State Dept. of Agriculture.



Just starting this month for Dr. Gary Vallad as OPS is **Kelli Jo Hamilton**. Kelli is a graduate of Riverview Senior High School and will be attending college in January. Until then she will be assisting in the Plant Pathology research program.

In Plant City, Dr. Sydney Park-Brown has hired an OPS to manage the care of the teaching garden there. You may recall the article and photos of Plant City's teaching garden in the June newsletter.



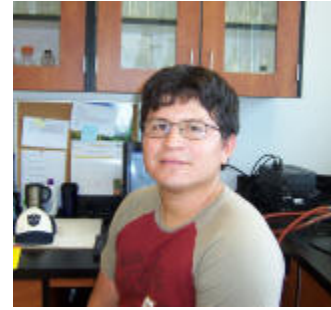
Monica Ragukas graduated from HCC with a Liberal Arts degree this past summer. She and her husband live in Brandon.



Lynn Proenza, a student at HCC working on her prerequisites for USF biology program, has joined the Plant City staff as OPS for Dr. Michael Andreu's Forestry Conservation team. Lynn received her BS degree from University of South Florida in Environmental Sciences.

**New Employee
Welcome..**

Dr. Natalia Peres' Plant Pathology group has been joined by **Nelson Proano Triana**, a Research Scholar from Ecuador. Nelson graduated in Agricultural Science and Production at El Zamorano University in Honduras.



Important Dates...

October 26th - at 5:30 PM Open Enrollment ends!

October 29th - Confirmation statements will be mailed to employees who made changes during OE.

November 9th - 5:30 PM deadline to make any *corrections* to changes that were made during OE.

October 31st - Application deadline for **Superior Accomplishment Awards**

Open Enrollment Notes

- **Vision Care** - ending 12/31/07
- **TRICARE** - ending 12/31/07; if no changes are made in OE, you will default to the State PPO.
- **State Life** - Prudential is changing to Minnesota Life; you will need to designate a beneficiary
- **Eagles Dental** - ending 12/31/07; if no changes are made in OE, you will have no coverage for 2008
- **Health Savings Accounts (HSA)** - maximums increase to \$2,400 (Ind.) and \$4,800 (family)
- **OHS Dental** - ends 12/31/07; if no action is taken you will default to Compbenefits or United HealthCare
- **People First assistance** - 1-866-663-4735
- **Other UF Plans** - go to www.hr.ufl.edu to complete forms found on line and give to HR
- **November 9th - BONUS PAY!** No raise has been legislated for University employees this year, but there will be a one-time, lump-sum payment of \$1,000 for eligible faculty, TEAMS, and USPS employees who were hired before July 1, 2007 and have been continuously employed by the University through November 1, 2007. These payments are subject to applicable taxes. Part-time employees will receive lump-sum payment prorated based on FTE.



Don't forget our STAFF MEETING, Tuesday, October 30th. This will be a pot luck with a Halloween theme. Bring a dish to share and wear a costume. There will be prizes for costumes!.....On the serious side, we will have some employee awards and administrative updates, along with introductions of our new faculty and employees, as well as a short "refresher course" of our inmate program from Officer Phillips. Everyone's presence is requested!

October 26th.....USDA Foreign Ag Service; Chinese experts and technicians will visit GCREC to study vegetable production; 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

October 30th.....All Faculty and Staff meeting; Pot Luck Luncheon with a Halloween theme; 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

October 31st.....Extension training/testing of Ornamental & Turf and Research & Demonstration in the Auditorium; 10:00 am - 3:30 pm

November 8th.....Ruth Hernandez of UF Human Resource Services will be coming to Balm to conduct two workshops for all employees at GCREC. The morning session, *“What to do First: Planning, Priorities, and Delegation”* will count towards the Supervisory Challenge Courses (courses open to managers and non-managers; you will get a certification after completing four core courses and two electives). The afternoon session is requiring **MANDATORY** attendance for all new employees (faculty and staff). All employees are required to attend a *Sexual Harassment* seminar. We offered this last year, so if you have not attended this seminar, you are required to attend it.

November 13th.....Faculty meeting with office of Technical Licensing (John Byatt, Assist. Director of Life Science); Main Conference Room 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

November 28-29.....Tomato Committee Meeting

December 6-7.....AG EXPO (visit the Expo web site at <http://flagexpo.ifas.ufl.edu/>)

Job Opportunities

Visit our Job Opportunities page on our GCREC Home Page for more details on our current open positions: (1) Chemist for Soil & Water, (2) Biological Scientist for Tomato Breeding

TO BE POSTED SOON...Biological Scientist for Weed Science and Office Assistant for Plant City Campus - watch our web site for openings.



Parting shot...

Remember **Fahrettin Goktepe**, PostDoc for Zhanao Deng in 2006? He sends greetings from a potato field in Colorado! Fahrettin took a job with SLV Research Center in Center, Colorado.