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IRCC designers help Harbor Branch

Students get hands-on experience designing interior of new Ocean Discovery Center which is to be unveiled today

BY SUZANNE WENTLEY
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FORT PIERCE — Indian River Community College student Janice Battaglini was expecting to learn out of a

textbook when she signed up for a commercial design class last year.

Instead, she and her 11 classmates helped design the entire interior of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Insti-

tution's new Ocean Discovery Center, which is being unveiled to a small group of donors and invited guests today.

"It's so unlike anything you ever do in school," said Battaglini, who now works as an interior decorator at L.K. DeFrances and Associates in Vero Beach. "It wasn't an imaginary assignment. It was more exciting."

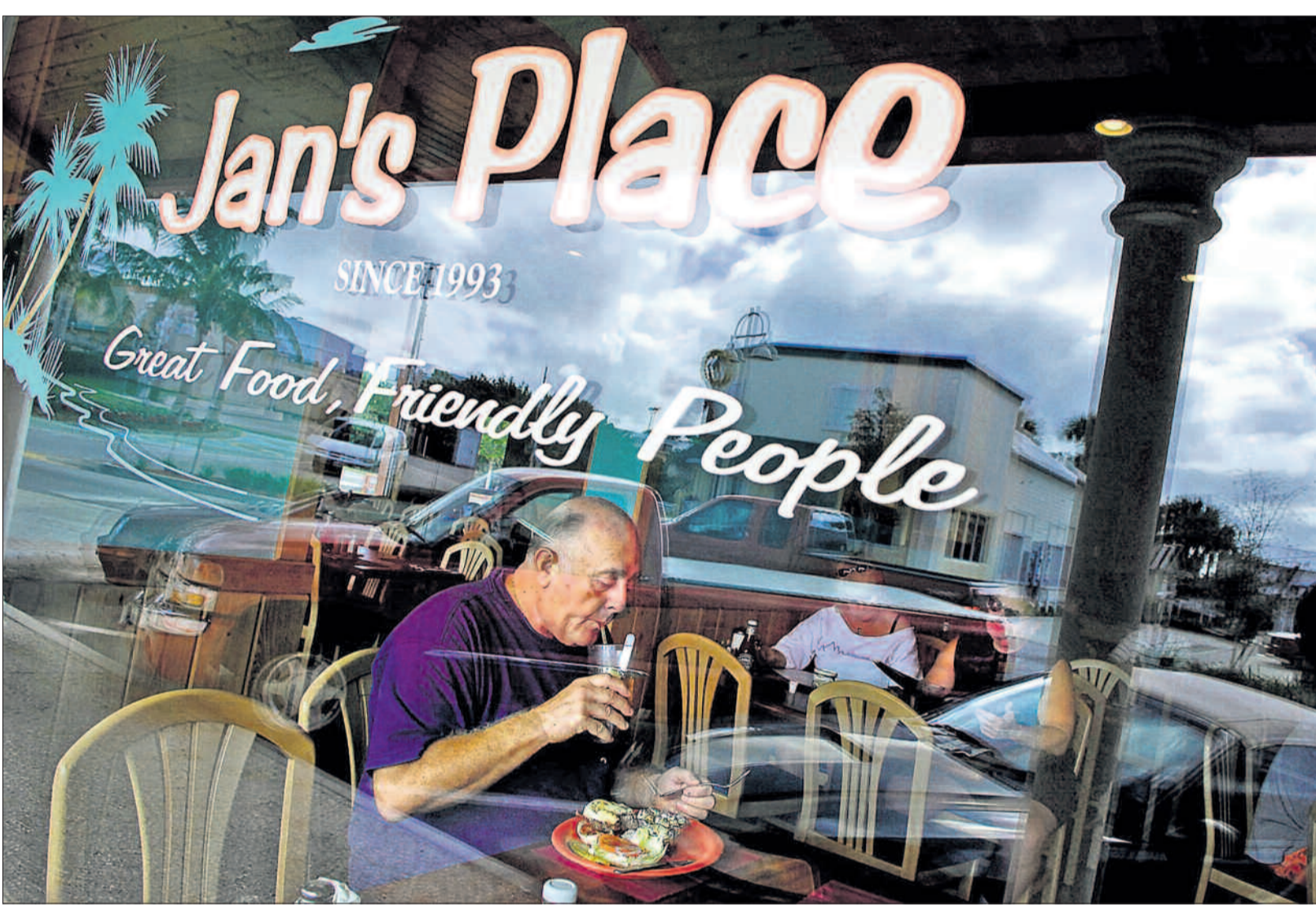
Adjunct professor Paul Kegel had organized the project with Harbor Branch officials, who approached the college last spring after Vero Beach residents John and Jodine Duerr donated \$250,000 for renovations to the visitors center.

"We knew we'd be on a shoestring
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IN NEED OF DESIGNERS?

Adjunct professor Paul Kegel, who teaches commercial design at Indian River Community College, is in search of a nonprofit agency that can serve as a real-life design exercise for his class. Call him at (772) 223-0090 for more information.

After gray days of storm repairs, it's sunny-side up for Jan's Place



Photos by MATTHEW RATAJCZAK • matthew.ratajczak@scripps.com

Vince D'Angelo of Palm City has lunch at the newly renovated Jan's Place in downtown Jensen Beach. This was D'Angelo's first time back to the popular eatery since its reopening on Nov. 24. The restaurant was closed for 13 months after being damaged by Hurricane Wilma. Rodney Fletcher, building owner and part owner of the restaurant, said he has spent close to \$3.7 million repairing the property. The restaurant also has expanded to include a bar area, and the upstairs is being turned into a bed and breakfast.

Popular Jensen brunch spot looks a bit different, but is packing them in once again

BY MEGAN V. WINSLOW
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JENSEN BEACH —

Katie Trudel's ponytail is getting a workout. The blonde hank of hair whips back and forth as the Jan's Place hostess makes laps across a newly tiled floor. "Hey folks, how you doing?" she said, energetically greeting each batch of customers and jotting down names on a three-page list. Thirteen months after Hurricane Wilma peeled the roof off the historic Ricou building and drenched the popular restaurant inside, that recent Sunday brunch scene is like

most meal times at Jan's Place: hectic.

But Katie Trudel isn't the only one busy these days. Her father and stepmother, restaurant owners Bob and Jan Trudel, have not had a day off since the revamped restaurant re-opened three weeks ago. Her twin brother, Matt, a partner in the business, is back to running the kitchen and whipping up his famous 10-egg omelets. Rodney Fletcher, the Delaware-based owner of the Ricou building, made 35 trips to Jensen Beach in the past 58 weeks.

And it's all paying off. "The best thing about this busi-

See JAN'S PLACE, page B13



Jan's Place waitress Doreen Schaffer shares a laugh with some customers after taking their lunch order. Schaffer has worked at the popular Jensen Beach restaurant for about eight years.

The rustic Key West look was replaced by brightly colored walls, warm wood paneling and a marine motif.

PSL assistant police chief's daughter sentenced for DUI crash

BY MEGAN V. WINSLOW
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STUART — The teenage daughter of Port St. Lucie's assistant police chief was sentenced to three years probation for a January DUI crash.

At Thursday's sentencing hearing, Martin County Circuit Judge Robert Makemson also revoked 19-year-old Kristen Irene Reuth-

er's drivers license for a year for the DUI with serious bodily injury charge.

Reuther, who is from Port St. Lucie but attends the University of Florida, was returning home on Interstate 95 when her car collided with a Jeep driven by North Carolina resident Jason McClain, 21, on a very foggy Jan. 5 morning, according to a Florida Highway Patrol report.

According to a witness, Reuther, the daughter of Assistant Police Chief Brian Reuther, was driving south in the northbound lanes of the interstate.

The right side of Reuther's 2002 Volkswagen struck the right side of McClain's 1996 Jeep in a near head-on collision, according to the report. Both Reuther, in serious condition, and McClain, in critical condition, were flown to St.

Mary's Medical Center in West Palm Beach. They have since recovered.

It was later determined that Reuther's blood alcohol content was .160 at the time of the crash, according to an FHP report. In Florida, the legal limit is 0.08.

McClain, who was in a coma for more than a week after the crash, approved of Reuther's sentence, prosecutors said.



The political neophyte is setting up his offices, hiring his staff and finding himself a place to live before getting down to business when the House convenes after the new year.

Mahoney preparing for life in the Capitol

BY AMIE PARNES
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WASHINGTON — So much can happen in three months. Just ask Tim Mahoney.

At that time, the businessman was trailing incumbent Mark Foley in a race many saw as an easy win for the Fort Pierce congressman.

Overnight, that all changed. Now, Mahoney is spending his days preparing for Washington. The political neophyte is setting up his offices, hiring his staff, finding himself a place to live. This week, in an interview, he brought us up to date.

Q: So what have you been doing these past few weeks since you were elected? What are you doing to prepare?

A: You're doing three things. You're learning the mechanics of the job. Learning how to be effective, building the relationships and trying to figure out where you can be the greatest contribution. The last thing is — because there's been a change in the House—the speaker-elect has a new agenda. As a member-elect, you have to not only get oriented. But on top of that, we've had the responsibility of being prepared to govern starting on the 5th of January. We're working on a package of rules changes, bills to address ethics, minimum wage, college costs, implementing 9/11 Commission, instituting fiscal controls, embryonic stem cell research and we're trying to get these things through the House in the first 100 hours.

Q: Speaking of ethics, this week you said Congress should establish an independent ethics office to restore faith in the institution. Do you plan to make ethics reform a priority, especially in the wake of the Mark Foley scandal?

A: I've been talking about it from the day I got into the race. Approval ratings for Congress are under 30 percent. We need to reestablish that trust we're given. The foundation is strong ethics reform. With Mark Foley, I think the sad part about that (House ethics) report is that there was a known problem for over six years. The report states that the leadership knew about what was happening. But the House code of ethics rules are so weak that nothing happened. How could this possibly have gone on for so long? It's a combination of factors. It's an inherent weakness when you have peer-to-peer management. You add on top of that politics. It all adds up.

Q: How will you be running your district offices? We've heard rumors that you plan to make it "user-friendly."

A: I believe in constituent services. You have to be available. We're going to be taking a higher profile in the community. We're consolidating two offices and bringing them to Stuart. We signed a lease for office space in downtown Stuart. We wanted to be a part of the community. We're encouraging staff to be thinking about lots of things to be active and relevant in the community. People reach out to their congress-

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DESIGNERS

FROM PAGE B1

budget from the get-go, but we had a good resource right in our backyard," said Jim Masterson, a Harbor Branch educational specialist. "They gave us wonderful ideas and worked in groups. We're using design elements from every one of the groups."

Kegel, a designer with the Palm City-based firm Kegel and Associates, had his students meet with the "clients" — Harbor Branch officials and the donors themselves — and then formulate a design concept. They then pitched the concept to the clients.

"They're a research facility, so they wanted something very high-tech looking, edgy," Kegel said. "We tried to incorporate the ocean theme with the color and finishes."

Masterson said today's invite-only dedication will show donors for the first time what the building looks like before the institution's staff starts in-

"They're a research facility, so they wanted something very high-tech looking, edgy."

Adjunct professor Paul Kegel

MAHONEY

FROM PAGE B1

man only when there's a problem. But I want to be involved in the day-to-day issues. What I want to do is encourage people to stop by and say hi. After all, they're my bosses.

Q: Will you be traveling back and forth between the district and Washington every week?

A: Yes. It's the nature of the job. In my particular situation, given the size of the district, I'm going to go back and forth every weekend.

Q: What are your top priorities when you arrive in Washington?

A: The first thing I'm very interested in is making sure there's meaningful ethics reform. Another issue that is important to the district is embryonic stem cell research. Starting to look longer term, we need to have some national catastrophic insurance. It's broken and it is a crisis that has to be addressed in Florida. Also want to make sure we get a good farm bill and make sure Florida is properly represented in that bill. We're the third-largest agriculture state in the nation and we do not have a single person that sits on that committee. We need to make sure our agriculture interests are protected.

stalling the interactive exhibits, murals and signs.

The Ocean Discovery Center, expected to be open to the public by the spring, will be 3,000 square feet with a 1,100-square-foot exhibit gallery, offices for the institution's associates program, a small theater and a conference room.

Battaglioni, who is now studying to receive her designer's license, said she's excited to see how Harbor Branch officials decided to design their center.

"We focused on making it a fun, family-oriented, educational way to view the exhibits," she said. "It will be interesting to see what they've chosen."

JAN'S PLACE

FROM PAGE B1

ness and the way it's run is that we have a lot of regular customers," said Katie Trudel, 22. "People will wait 45 minutes for a table and not bat an eyelash."

Thanks to \$3.7 million Fletcher spent renovating the building, those tables and almost everything else inside the restaurant are brand new. The rustic Key West look was replaced by brightly colored walls, warm wood paneling and a marine motif.

"We're so fortunate to open with something so spectacular," said Bob Trudel, 56,

taking a break in the restaurant's new bar area after a recent lunchtime rush. "It probably misses some of the aesthetic charm that use to be here, but that's the fault of the hurricane."

Prior to Wilma's wrath, Jan's Place was a quaint, kitschy sort of place with knickknacks hanging from the walls and names carved into the tables. The notoriously problematic restrooms often featured clogged toilets and disabled stall doors. Now those restrooms boast beveled glass murals of underwater scenes paired with blue walls, creating an aquarium effect.

Upstairs, Fletcher, 58, is completing "Rodney's Roost," an upscale, six-room

inn which, paired with the restaurant, will create a bed and breakfast-like setup. Each room comes complete with a flat-screen TV, an antique armoire and a one-of-a-kind Florida-wildlife mural.

"It's going to be a very unique environment and you can go down and get your meals afterward," said Fletcher, now a part-owner of Jan's Place after buying in 50 percent.

For Jensen Beach, the return of the restaurant and the impending grand opening of the inn provide the community with a real "boost," further making the historic downtown area a "dining destination," said Ronald Rose, Jensen Beach Chamber executive director.

Jan's Place staples Nason Henry, 67, and Armand Houston, 73, are just happy to have their old haunt back.

"You have to go on," said Henry, who lives in Palm City. "And, the place looks fabulous."

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