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## UF sends representative to The Ink Pad; *Levy County people help publisher accommodate meeting*



Associate Director of Development and Alumni Affairs of the UF College of Journalism and Communications Angie De Leon makes a Gator Chomp gesture next to The Ink Pad sign. This sign was designed by Sharon Hardison, and built and installed by B4 Signs and Advertising. It is on the campus of The Ink Pad. Sunlight streaming through the trees makes some of

the blue sky, clouds and smiling sunshine of the sign disappear in the photo. De Leon was visiting the business on Thursday afternoon (Oct. 19). The Ink Pad is located in the unrecorded subdivision in the unincorporated part of Levy County between Carter's Crossroads and Fowler's Bluff. The Ink Pad includes the *Code Orange Office*, where news is sent to readers, viewers and listeners worldwide. *HardisonInk.com*, a daily news website that covers primarily Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties currently (although it knows no geographical bounds), continues thriving in its eighth year of existence.

*Photo by Jeff M. Hardison*

**By Jeff M. Hardison © Oct. 19, 2018 at 10:08 a.m.**

**LEVY COUNTY** -- A serendipitous set of events unfolded Thursday (Oct. 18) as a representative of the University of Florida visited The Ink Pad.

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**Associate Director of Development and Alumni Affairs of the UF College of Journalism and Communications Angie De Leon (left) and Jeff M. Hardison, multiple daily and weekly newspaper award-winning journalist, and founder and owner of *HardisonInk.com*, confer in one of the meeting rooms available for banquets, meetings, conferences and the like at The Gathering Table Restaurant in Chiefland. Paige Brookins, restaurant owner, granted a last-minute request by Hardison to use the facility, while Rance Damron of R&R Refrigeration made the Code Orange Office and other indoor areas of The Ink Pad air-conditioned again – due to an unanticipated A/C failure on Wednesday night.**

*Photo by Zoe Llovet of The Gathering Table*

Sorangi "Angie" De Leon, associate director of development and alumni affairs of the UF College of Journalism and Communications met with *HardisonInk.com* owner Jeff Hardison.

The meeting almost had to be cancelled due to an electrical-mechanical failure of an air-conditioning system at The Ink Pad.

"I had a great meeting with Associate Director De Leon," Hardison said, "and it was in no small part thanks to help from Paige Brookins and Rance Damron."

Hardison explained that The Ink Pad office air-conditioner had blown an internal transformer on Wednesday night. That issue appears to have come to be as the result of wiring problems in an area that is difficult to reach to repair.

"At the last minute, I called Ms. Brookins to ask if I could use a meeting room at The Gathering Table. There was one open and she let me use it, gratis. Associate Director De Leon and I met there for an hour or so.

"Then I showed Ms. De Leon The Ink Pad, which young Mr. Damron (of R&R Refrigeration) had made habitable by a temporary repair. That repair kept the building air-conditioned and will serve until he can make a more permanent fix to some damaged wires that run under the structure to connect the thermostat with the A/C unit outdoors."

Hardison said he is grateful for workers like Damron and others who go into unfriendly environments, such as under structures or in hot attacks, when duty calls.

During the meeting with De Leon, Hardison learned about offering UF Journalism students the opportunity to write stories, take photos and videos for publication, and to sell ads for *HardisonInk.com* as interns or even as independent contractors.

De Leon also gave him the newest developments at the Gainesville campus, especially at Rae O. Weimer Hall

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– home of the College of Journalism and Communications. The college continues to be a leader by providing the highest standards of education for potential members of The Fourth Estate.

“It’s such an exciting time for us (at the UF College of Journalism) as we are celebrating 50 years as a college,” De Leon said.

She spoke about the UF College of Journalism and Communication continuing its legacy of earning national awards through its efforts.

She presented Hardison with a hefty notebook full of information and donor opportunities. She also gave him two silver-colored Gator lapel pins, and a credit card holder.

Hardison mentioned that at some point early in the past eight years of *HardisonInk.com*, former Assistant Director of Development and Alumni Affairs at the UF College of Journalism and Communications Lindsey Stevens had presented him with a gold-colored Gator lapel pin and bought him lunch at the Red Lobster in Gainesville.

DeLeon said she knows Stevens and had gold pins if the UF CJC alumnus wanted, however Hardison wrangled two silver pins from the visitor.

“One had dropped to the floor,” Hardison said. “I asked Ms. De Leon if I could have that one too, and she agreed.”

Stevens served in her post at the UF office from 2011 until January of 2018, when she became the Director of Development and Alumni Affairs for the University of South Florida (USF) Sarasota-Manatee.

“I went to USF in Fort Myers and Sarasota,” Hardison said, “at some point in the 21st century, long after I had graduated from UF (with a Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism in 1984) so that I could become certifiable to teach English to students in grades six through 12 in Florida. That was just before Florida Gulf Coast University (Fort Myers) became the 10th state university.

“I love all of the public and private colleges in Florida, although some more than others,” Hardison concluded. “The college that has directly helped *HardisonInk.com* the very most so far is the College of Central Florida, which has campuses in Levy County, Marion County and Citrus County. CF has a marketing department that is smart enough to see its economic and social return on investment from advertising dollars spent in *HardisonInk.com* that bring positive results, not only from an economic standard, but from the perspective of supporting an independent, free press.”

The publisher said he enjoyed the visit from a representative of one of the many institutions of education where he has sojourned since first starting his education in kindergarten at Grace Lutheran Church in 1960, and continuing first through sixth grades at Harris Elementary School in St. Petersburg, and then continuing to Meadowlawn Jr. High School, Northeast High School (Vikings Class of 1974), Modern Media Institute, St. Petersburg Jr. College, UF (BSJ '84), Manatee Community College, and USF Fort Myers-Sarasota.

“I hope other Gator alumni can donate to the UF College of Journalism and Communication too,” Hardison said. “It is vital for a free society to have a free press. One of the first things tyrants do is to attack the mass media that has, does and will expose their lies, corruption and various other evil, hateful, divisive, power-mad deeds.

“Journalists are embraced by statesmen and ambassadors, because just as the reporters show the results from the forces of evil, they share with the masses the happiness seen from success that results from civilized, positive building of humanity,” Hardison said. “Reporters and photographers cover the warm and fuzzy, fluffy-bunny stories as well as the thorny backstabber scoops.”