

Contributing Author Biographies

Sean Cruikshank:

Born October 27, 1992 in New York, Sean Cruikshank moved to Florida when he was one year old. There, he attended St Lawrence Catholic School, followed by Tampa Catholic High School where he discovered his passion for science and specifically physics. He then went on to study at the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University where he planned to expand his knowledge through a rigorous liberal arts and sciences course load. Now a graduate of FAU, holding a bachelor of arts in liberal arts and sciences with a concentration in physics, Sean plans to take a year off from schoolwork to study and prepare for the physics GRE. With a good score on this test, he then plans on applying to graduate programs in astronomy with the hope of eventually obtaining his Ph.D.

Nick Brandimarte and Andrew Tabaque:

Nick Brandimarte and Andrew Tabaque are undergraduate researchers perusing B.S. degrees in Biology and the Environmental Science Certificate at Florida Atlantic University. Their major interests lie in the domains of aquatic health issues of bivalves, restoration ecology, wetland ecology, and aquaculture. Nick and Andrew began volunteering and conducting research with the avian ecology laboratory of Dr. Dale E. Gawlik in 2013. They have been collaborating with research staff and other students to collect data on wading birds, fish and aquatic invertebrates in the everglades ecosystem. As undergraduates, Nick and Andrew's research has been focused on studies of wood stork nesting behavior, a pilot study of crayfish burrows as aquatic refuges, and elucidating exotic fish abundance in roadway corridors. While working on this project they received two awards from FAU – a monetary award for supplies on their project and an award for their oral presentation.

Brandon Gilliland:

Brandon Gilliland is a student at the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College at Florida Atlantic University. He will receive his B.A with a concentration in Biological Sciences in December 2015. In addition to his studies, Brandon works as an undergraduate research intern in the neuroscience department at The Scripps Research Institute Florida campus in Dr. Seth Tomchik's lab. The primary focus of the Tomchik lab is to study how dopaminergic neurons are involved in memory acquisition, as well as other innate behaviors. Brandon is currently finishing his thesis on how Nf1 mutations impair memory related plasticity in *Drosophila melanogaster* mushroom bodies. It is Brandon's desire to further his academic pursuits by attending medical school to become a pediatric surgeon.

Zachary Humphrey:

Zachary Humphrey is a recent graduate of the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University with a concentration in English Literature. Humphrey is currently focusing on expanding the breadth of his literary knowledge by exploring regions of the canon not fully treated during his undergraduate academic career and working as an independent scholar while taking two gap years before pursuing graduate school. While his studies highly vary in terms of subject, his literary research and criticism centers most heavily upon contemporary poetics, Irish literature, comparative literature, criticism of non-canonical works of literature, and multidisciplinary approaches to literature.

Aleksandar Vuk Nikolic:

Aleksandar Nikolic was born in Serbia where he attended elementary and middle school, and then transferred to a sports' academy, IMG Academies in Florida. Due to great performance in school and the basketball court, Aleksandar was recruited by Ivy League schools. Unfortunately, at 17, an injury ended his basketball career. After graduating high school, Aleksandar attended George Mason University where he was a part of the basketball staff while studying Psychology. One year later he was offered an internship in a Sports Technology company in South Florida. Aleksandar accepted it and transferred to Florida Atlantic University where he is a senior now, pursuing a degree in Neuroscience. On February 21st 2015, he held a lecture "The Mind-Body Solution" on human consciousness at the Undergraduate Philosophy Symposium at the University of Central Oklahoma. His lecture "Reality: A Subjective Empirical Illusion" won 1st place at the Undergraduate Research Symposium held at FAU.

Elizabeth Rubino:

Born October 24, 1995 in Boca Raton, Florida Elizabeth attended FAU High School and dual-enrolled for the last 3 years of her high school career allowing her to graduate with a bachelor of science from FAU with a major in physics and a minor in mathematics at the age of 19. Elizabeth has participated in several research experiences in nuclear physics as well as this research in quantum optics. She has recently began a graduate program in physics with the end goal of obtaining her Ph.D. in nuclear physics. She wishes to eventually work in a national laboratory conducting research in physics.

Sarah Stamos:

My name is Sarah Stamos and I am a sophomore at the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College of FAU. I am currently pursuing a concentration in Biological Chemistry with a possible minor in Spanish. I am a Henry M. Flagler Scholarship recipient and have attended the Florida Collegiate Honors Council and National Collegiate Honors Council Conferences with research on native medicinal plants in South Florida and the economic barriers and issues surrounding using the Soursop plant as a potential cancer treatment. I plan to either become a physician's assistant or go to medical school and hopefully continue in my growth of the Spanish language to study natural medicine in South American countries.

Jodi Weissman:

My name is Jodi Weissman Antman. I returned to school to pursue my passion for writing, specifically fiction, and found a love for literary research as well. I am a senior and will graduate this Spring. As a wife and mother of two wonderful boys, I am a teacher, taxi driver, cheerleader, cleaning lady, answering service, chef and social secretary. In the world beyond our home, I have been a teacher for GRE, GMAT and MCAT test prep, an operations and compliance manager for several brokerage firms and even ventured into real estate investment, but always, the writer inside fought to burst out.