

Inga Young new president of Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter; 'High Tea' benefit set — retired veteran Maloon–Gibson guest speaker

By Ken Datzman

Through the years, the Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter — an affiliate of the National Defense Industry Association, a national organization based in Arlington, Va. — has been out in the community raising funds for its college scholarship initiative.

The NDIA is comprised of affiliates, chapters, and divisions. It is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association that was funded to educate its constituencies on all aspects of national security.

The Space Coast Chapter funds STEM scholarships. Since the founding of the Space Coast Chapter in 2003, the organization has funded more than \$60,000 in scholarships for area students studying in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The local chapter helps promote the role of women in national defense and security through scholarship awards and other outreach efforts in the community. It also provides networking and professional development opportunities for members.

“As a nonprofit organization, we’re proud of the work we do raising money that supports scholarships for area students,” said businessman Inga Young, the new president of the Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter. “And we are now gearing up for a couple of events that will help support our members’ efforts to raise money for these scholarships.”

She added that Women in Defense is not an exclusive organization just for women.

“We have members who are men and are not in the defense industry. These typically are businesspeople — lawyers, bankers, real-estate agents, and other professionals. We appreciate membership from anyone who supports our organization’s mission — to strengthen women who work in the defense industry.”

The chapter has between 70 and 80 members, she said. “We are working to build up our membership. Like many nonprofit organizations, the pandemic had an impact on new member growth. Now we’re back to hosting fundraisers and spreading the word about the Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter.”

The next event is from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 26, at the Hilton Melbourne Beach Oceanfront. “High Tea” is a “fancy hat” affair, said Young.

“We are asking people to bring their mother, daughter, sister, friend or colleague to this elegant event. We are going to have some fun things, including raffles for fundraising, tea and lunch, and a guest speaker. Attendees are asked to wear fancy hats, like they do in the United Kingdom.”

Table sponsorships for four or eight people are available. Email sponsorships@scwid.org for more information. Individual tickets are \$70. Visit scwid.org to purchase individual tickets.

The speaker will be Dr. Amicitia “Cita” Maloon–Gibson, an executive consultant, author, and certified mediator and life coach. She holds degrees in management, human resources development, and social psychology.

Dr. Maloon–Gibson is a decorated veteran with 29 years of service. She retired as a lieutenant colonel, U.S. Department of Defense, Army Corps of Engineers–Air Force.

“We’re excited to have Dr. Maloon–Gibson as our guest speaker for High Tea,” said Young, president and founder of 8–koi Inc., a government contracting procurement firm



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

Businesswoman Inga Young is the new president of the Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter. The nonprofit organization has a couple of fundraisers scheduled. The first one — ‘High Tea’ — is March 26 at Hilton Melbourne Beach Oceanfront. Young is president and founder of fast-growing 8–koi Inc., a government contracting procurement firm. Her company plans to move into its new corporate headquarters in Suntree in October. She is at the new location on Center Place.

working with agencies such as NASA, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and Army Corps of Engineers. “She is a dynamic speaker and has authored several books.”

Her most recent book is “Growing and Empowering Future Leaders Now!” She is president and founder of the MGAA Professional Development Institute, which helps people develop strategies for mastering business, careers, life, and relationships.

Known as the “Empowerment Doc,” Maloon–Gibson shares effective strategies for leadership through her seminars, keynote addresses, and retreats.

Her mentors and coaches have included her parents, Claude and Juanita Maloon, the late Gen. Colin Powell, and retired Brig. Gen. Robert Crear.

“March is Women’s History Month,” said Young. “This is the perfect time for women to gather at an event like ours.”

Since 1995, presidents have issued a series of annual proclamations designating the month of March as Women’s History Month. These proclamations celebrate the contributions women have made to the United States and recognize the specific achievements women have made over the course of American history in a variety of fields.

Young herself runs a dynamic woman-owned small disadvantaged 8(a) business. Last September her company purchased a two-story, 20,000-square-foot professional center at 2725 Center Place in Suntree. It’s situated on 2.5 acres.

“We’re renovating the building and plan to move into the facility in October,” she said, adding that the building contains 16,000 square feet of office space and 4,000 square feet of high-bay warehouse space.

The company currently has offices in Melbourne and on

Please see Women in Defense Space, page 21

Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter

Continued from page 13

Merritt Island. It also maintains field offices in Jacksonville, and El Paso, Texas.

"We have seen strong growth, and now have between 150 and 160 employees. One year ago, we had 43 employees on staff. We have been able to secure some government contracts that have uplifted our growth. And with the new building, there is room to grow in the future," said Young.

Next to the 8-koi headquarters building is a vacant 2.5-acre lot. "We would love to purchase that lot."

Young said she "was fortunate to have found this gem of a building in a convenient location. We couldn't have done this deal without the expert care and professional attention of Karen D'Alberto and John Curri of Curri Properties. They really listened to what we wanted and needed for our headquarters. They helped make our dream a reality."

She added, "As soon as the property came on the market, we made an offer. So, we moved very quickly to purchase the building and close the transaction."

Young said the new environment will be a pet-friendly workplace, like her firm's offices on Merritt Island and in Melbourne.

"We really wanted a building that reflected our unique corporate culture and located in an area that was easy to get to for most of our employees. Being close to the river with the outdoor space will make our workplace very attractive for our employees to be comfortable and productive."

8-koi runs four divisions: Design Engineering, Construction, Technical and Administrative, and Health Care. The number "8" in the company name "represents the cyclic nature systems. The koi fish represents embracing adversity through persistent focus on positive outcomes."

The follow-up fundraiser to High Tea for the Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter will be the fifth annual Sandbagger Invitational Golf Tournament. That event will be hosted on Friday, May 20, at Baytree National Golf Links in Melbourne. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. Tee time is set for 8 a.m. The Sandbagger Invitational title sponsor is Space Coast Intelligent Solutions Inc.

There is a \$75 player registration fee. After April 23, the fee is \$85 per player. Registration includes green fees, a cart, and lunch. There will be various contests too for men and women players, including longest drive.

Sponsorships are offered for this event. For full details, email programs@scwid.org or sponsorships@scwid.org. To register for the Sandbagger Invitational or to purchase balls for the helicopter drop, visit scwid.org/golf.

"We have added a new twist this year to our annual golf tournament," said Young. "There will be a helicopter ball-drop at Baytree National. We are selling numbered golf balls. The ball closest to the designated pin will win a third of the pot. This event is usually our biggest fundraiser of the year. All of our fundraisers support STEM scholarships."

The Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter is calling for area students to apply for the organization's annual STEM scholarships. The application deadline is April 23.

The local chapter is also asking for area businesses to make donations to the STEM Scholarship Fund directly, or through event sponsorships.

The Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter STEM scholarship awards vary up to \$1,000 for exceptional Brevard County women seeking to further their education in STEM studies with an interest in starting and furthering a career that supports the national defense industrial base.

Awards are based on academic achievement, field of study, work experience, statements of interest, recommendations, and financial need.

Area companies are invited to make a tax-free donation in any amount to the Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter STEM Scholarship Fund. The scholarships will be awarded this summer, tentatively scheduled for late June.

The companies that donate to the Fund will be recognized as "Scholarship Sponsors" and honored for making workforce development a priority initiative.

They will also be promoted on the Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter website and social-media channels. They too will have the opportunity to present the company

scholarship to the awardee at the annual scholarship ceremony.

To learn more about the scholarship program, visit <http://scwid.org/homepage/space-coast-wid-stem-scholarship>.

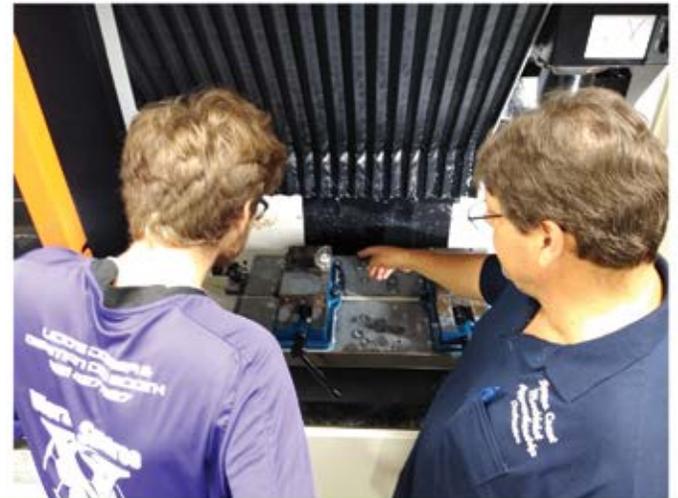
"Today's students are the future of the defense industry in this nation," said Young. "And the Women in Defense Space Coast Chapter is happy to fund STEM scholarships for students in our region. This is one of our chapter's missions."

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