Avenue D – A Look Back as the Dream Moves Forward

by John Culverhouse

From a windy creek laden with parks and waterfront apartments, to bustling restaurants, cultural centers, and a college campus; though this describes a conceptual overview of tomorrow's Avenue D, the revitalization is already underway. This won't be the first time Avenue D would serve as a cultural hub. In days past, Avenue D and the Lincoln Park area was historically this area's business and cultural hub for the Black community.

World-renowned author Zora Neale Hurston spent her elder years here and enlightened the youth when she taught at Lincoln Park Academy. The Zora Neale Hurston Dust Tracks Heritage Trail, which highlights the places where she spent time in Fort Pierce, runs through the Lincoln Park area and ends at her grave site. The famed Highwaymen artists were also native to the area, learning from Beanie Backus and painting landscapes of old Florida.

A renaissance is underway in the Lincoln Park area, and the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency (FPRA) is fueling the resurgence. Continued on page 8 …
Delivering a Tradition...

Helping To Build A Better Way For Over 100 Years

YARDS - Cocoa, Ft. Pierce, Melbourne, Stuart and Vero Beach
TRUSS PLANTS- Ft. Pierce, Melbourne

1902 2005
It’s refreshing to see another Main Street program emerging in Fort Pierce. Yes, the Lincoln Park Business Association, Inc., has taken a big step with the initiative of developing the Lincoln Park Main Street and is in the process of establishing state designation. After 18 years of Main Street Fort Pierce focusing on efforts in the downtown area, the Lincoln Park Main Street program will focus on revitalizing the historic area in the Northwest community of Fort Pierce. It is a common-sense way to address the variety of issues and problems that face traditional business districts, such as Avenue D.

With assistance through Main Street Fort Pierce, the Lincoln Park Main Street will strive for community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on their unique assets: distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community. The City of Fort Pierce over the past 10 years has worked to bring millions of dollars of new projects, road reconstruction, to this area with more planned and in the works. Coupled with the efforts of the Lincoln Park Main Street, residents can become a part of their community and become a catalyst for addressing commercial district revitalization.

As we all know, the Main Street approach is incremental; it is not designed to produce immediate change. Your downtown or traditional commercial district is the most visible indicator of community pride, along with its economic and social health. It is either an asset or a liability in the effort to recruit new residents, new businesses and industries, retirees, tourists, and others to your community and to keep those you already have. Quality of life is what separates successful cities and towns from declining communities in the new millennium.

Here are some things to remember as you begin your “Main Street” efforts:
1. There is no magic bullet. No formulas, no big fix answers, nor easy solutions. The Main Street approach cannot save you from hard work, but it can substantially improve your chances for success by giving you an effective and structured framework for your revitalization efforts.

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MAIN STREET AND DOWNTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Calendar

Dine, Shop and Enjoy Beautiful, Historic Downtown Fort Pierce

Friday Fest – Friday, August 4; 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880

2nd Wednesday Walkabout – Wednesday, August 9; 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.; Downtown Business Association, 465-7080

13th Annual Reverse Raffle & Silent Auction – Saturday, August 19; Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880

WEEKLY EVENTS

Ft. Pierce Farmer’s Market – Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to Noon; Marina Square on Melody Lane; Market Manager, 940-1145

Arts and Crafts Show & Sale – Saturdays, north of downtown Fort Pierce Library, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Fort Pierce Bike Night – Thursdays, 6:00 to 9:30 p.m.; 2nd Street, Downtown Fort Pierce; Yellowfin Grill & Raw Bar, 468-7071

COMMUNITY CENTER

For more information on the Fort Pierce Community Center activities listed below, please call 462-7071.

Slimnastics – Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Jazzercise – Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 10:00 to 11:15 a.m.

Adult Flamenco Class – Tuesday, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Adult Social Dance Class – Wednesday, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Pilates Class – Monday, 7:00 to 8:15 p.m.

Karate for Kids – Monday & Wednesday, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. & 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Space Discovery Class – Wednesday, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Archerly Class – Saturday, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Hooked on Fishing – Tuesday, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Tai Chi Class – Monday & Wednesday, 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Dog Obedience Class – Wednesday, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Yoga Class – Tuesday & Thursday, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Kozy Crafters – Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Duplicate Bridge – Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday, 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.

Jazz Jam – Thursday, 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.

Country Line Dancing – Monday, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

RESTAURANT ENTERTAINMENT

The Original Tiki Bar, 461-0880 – Music by “Barely Broken” on Sundays, 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Governor’s Grill, 466-6900 – “Texas Hold ‘Em” on Tuesdays, call for times; “Blues Night at the Grill” on Wednesdays, 8:00 p.m.; “Ladies Night” on Thursdays, 10:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.; Live Music on Friday evenings.

LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

For more information about Downtown Fort Pierce Library activities, please call 462-2787.

Wealth Management and Estate Planning Strategies – August 1, 1:30 p.m.; How to share your legacy with your heirs not the IRS.

Fixed Income Economics – August 8, 1:30 p.m.; How to survive the current interest rising environment.

Economic Concerns in the Financial Markets – August 15, 1:30 p.m.; How are the current market conditions effecting your future?

Hurricanes & Homeowners Insurance – August 16, 1:30 p.m.

Smart Women Finish Rich! – August 29, 1:30 p.m.; How smart women manage their money.

Project HOPE offers assistance to hurricane survivors – Tuesdays, 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.; FREE counseling, resources, referrals & information.

~EVENT SPOTLIGHT~

WHO: MainStreet Fort Pierce

WHAT: 13th Annual Reverse Raffle & Silent Auction

WHEN: Saturday, August 19, 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Pelican Yacht Club

WHAT: Reverse Raffle, Silent Auction, dancing, light fare & fun!

INFO: 772-466-3880
“Surf’s Up” at the 13th Annual Reverse Raffle & Silent Auction

by Pam Gillette

The “Surf’s Up” at the Pelican Yacht Club on Saturday, August 19, 2006 as Main Street Fort Pierce, Inc. presents the 13th Annual Reverse Raffle & Silent Auction. Board shorts, Hawaiian Shirts, and casual attire are the dress of choice, while we watch and wait for your number NOT to be called.

Wait, I said your number should NOT be called!? You heard right, at the Reverse Raffle the winner is the last number standing. Main Street’s Reverse Raffle begins with 300 numbers. The first number and every 50th number called up to 250 wins $100.00. The last 10 numbers is where you want your number to be pulled, because the last 10 numbers range from $250.00 to the grand prize of $2000.00. So last is best at this raffle.

Main Street Fort Pierce Inc. will transform the Pelican Yacht Club at 1120 Seaway Drive, Fort Pierce into a tropical paradise. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m. with registration and the silent auction. The raffle begins at 7 p.m. as the excitement begins counting down the numbers to the grand prize winner. The band will provide beach sounds to shag the night away or relax with your cocktail. Come enjoy the evening with us at the 13th Annual Reverse Raffle and Silent Auction.

Only 300 tickets will be sold for the raffle. Each ticket is $80.00 and entitles the bearer to one number, admission for two people, light hors devours, 2 free drinks, live tropical music, dancing, and a fabulous silent auction. Advanced purchase only, No tickets will be available at the door.

The Reverse Raffle is a fundraiser for projects and goals of Main Street Fort Pierce, Inc. Revenues from the raffle will benefit the restoration of the Backus House and the continual revitalization of Historic Downtown Fort Pierce. For more information or to purchase a ticket, please call Main Street at (772) 466-3880.
2. **There are no handouts.** Most traditional government and foundation grants shun projects that involve commercial enterprises, and the days of urban renewal’s big fix projects are gone.

3. **Most resources are local.** Whether you need people or money to make projects happen, they are most likely to be found in the community, and YOU must find them.

4. **Not everyone will like you, not even everyone you must work with.** You must forge coalitions that have never been formed, and many of the people involved may not be used to working with each other.

5. **Everyone has an agenda, and it is probably not just commercial district revitalization.** YOU must create the culture — and the priority — for Main Street’s renewal.

6. **Some change will be needed.** Most traditional commercial districts will never again be able to provide the range of goods and services they offered decades ago. To support the rehabilitation and maintenance of commercial areas in today’s market, we must aggressively expand Main Street’s business mix — and its market area.

7. **You can’t do it alone.** Main Street is not entirely city hall’s responsibility, but independent business owners can’t do it alone, and neither can citizen activists. A collaborative effort, combining the unique skills and vantage points of public and private sectors, is essential.

8. **Revitalization won’t happen overnight.** It is a gradual process that begins with small steps, eventually building capacity to tackle larger, more complicated revitalization projects and problems. “Big fix” solutions to commercial district revitalization almost always fail to bring the kind of lasting, positive change that they promise.

9. **The process is never finished.** Traditional commercial districts, like shopping malls or industrial parks, require full-time, professional management.

10. **You are just as qualified as anyone else to make it happen.** Thousands of concerned citizens and business owners make a difference in revitalizing their downtowns and commercial districts just by stepping up to help, regardless of experience or background.
Lincoln Park Community Organization Vie for Main Street Designation

by Sue Dannahower

They have a plan! Their plan is to restore and revitalize the Avenue D corridor. The Lincoln Park Business Association is in the process of applying to become a Main Street organization. Affiliation with this national organization would give them solid direction and much needed support. Currently there are 45 Main Street organizations in Florida, and over 1,600 organizations nationally. Main Street has invested over $23.3 billion dollars in downtowns across the country.

The mission of the National Trust Main Street Center is to empower people, organizations, and communities to achieve ongoing downtown and neighborhood district revitalization based upon the principles of self-determination, resource conservation, and incremental transformation represented through the comprehensive Main Street Four-Point Approach.

Wednesday, July 12th Joan Jefferson, the Main Street Coordinator for the State of Florida and Sheryl Harvey, St. Petersburg’s 22nd Street Redevelopment Corporation Main Street Coordinator, visited the Lincoln Park area.

Concluding their visit the Lincoln Park organization had a Town Hall meeting conducted by Elise Rollins. Elise explained how Main Street outlines a proven plan for the economic redevelopment of America’s historic commercial districts. Her group has been hitting the streets to encourage businesses and homeowners to clean up the neighbor and become a part of their mission.

Jon Ward, Executive Director of the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency said “we’ll do what it takes to make this (project) successful.” He explained that redevelopment of the Lincoln Park area is currently in the works with the Moore’s Creek project, designed to establish affordable housing, and the recent purchase...
“When I was director of Cultural Affairs for Saint Lucie County, I quickly discovered the number of cultural assets emanating from the Black community,” said Jon Ward, Director of the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency. “In many senses, Lincoln Park is the beating cultural heart of this community, and I’d like to see it restored to this prominence.”

The Lincoln Theater, on the corner of Avenue D & Douglas Court, was built in 1948. The venue brought in famous acts and provided attendees with great times and fond memories. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Committee now owns the theater, and with FPRA assistance, plans are in process for a full restoration into a cultural center. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Committee will re-open the theater and oversee programming.

Another FPRA venture is the Moore’s Creek project. From North Seventh Street south to North Fifteenth Street, a beautiful linear park will be built. Affordable housing will accompany the park project. The FPRA has
already spent $4.5 million acquiring land and demolishing buildings in preparation for construction, slated to begin in July 2007. To accommodate public transportation in the area, a new bus terminal is also in the works for North Eighth Street and Avenue D. Avenue D’s streetscape, with palm trees, brick pavers and fancy lighting, will also be installed along major feeders leading into the area. Tenth and Thirteenth Streets are important feeders into Lincoln Park, and will receive facelifts so that they may properly welcome travelers into the area.

Steps away from Moore’s Creek is the Betts Building, at the corner of Means Court & Avenue D. The FPRA purchased the building in conjunction with the Saint Lucie Historical Society, Inc. The Historical Society will

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restore the building, and the City of Fort Pierce will
streetscape Means Court. The Historical Society will
locate their offices there and host meetings and other spe-
cial events at the new location. “The Saint Lucie Histor-
ical Society is very grateful to the Mayor and to the Fort
Pierce City Commission for the opportunity to partner
with the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency,” said Brad
Culverhouse, President of the Saint Lucie Historical
Society, Inc. “The Society is looking forward to having its
home in the soon to be restored Betts Building, and to
being a good neighbor to the fine people of the Lincoln
Park area, who together with their ancestors, have been
such a vibrant force in the evolution of the cultural, reli-
gious, commercial, and political history of Fort Pierce.”

Just on the horizon for Indian River Community Col-
lege is the groundbreaking of their two-story Northwest
Campus, scheduled for the first of September. IRCC’s
Human Development Resource Center will be situated at
North 29TH Street and Avenue D. Administrators are
hopeful that the center will be completed in time for Fall,
2007 enrollment. The FPRA contributed $2.5 million
for the gymnasium, which is being built to withstand
190 MPH winds, and will serve as a Fort Pierce hurricane
shelter. The Center is being built next to the Zora Neale
Hurston Branch of the St. Lucie County Library, which
is slated for a 5,000 square foot expansion.

The FPRA is working hard with local citizens and
community groups to revitalize Lincoln Park. The City’s
various department heads meet regularly and they all take
turns hosting lunch. Ward’s lunch is coming up, and he
plans to take all of the department heads to lunch along
Avenue D. Simple things like attending cultural events at
the Lincoln Theater, attending Zorafest, having lunch
along Avenue D, and embracing Lincoln Park as a vital
part of this community all send the message that we are
one community and that we’re in it to make a difference
together. Perhaps quaint parks and fancy bistros will line
Avenue D, rivaling West Palm Beach’s Clematis Street or
Delray Beach’s Atlantic Avenue. Clematis Street and
Atlantic Avenue have made major comebacks in recent
years. With the support from property owners, business-
es, the City, FPRA, and local citizens, Avenue D will
once again thrive as the cultural and business hub of
north Fort Pierce.

What is Project CARE?

A Helping Hand for Your Neighbor In Need

Project CARE
A program that provides emergency assistance to help pay a past due utility
bill, plus the tools to prevent future financial problems.

Do YOU want to help a neighbor in need? Then donate to Project CARE.

Your tax-deductible* donation will directly help a Fort Pierce Utilities customer
make a one-time payment, but more importantly, will provide education to
avoid future problems.

*tax-deductible to the extent of law

Project CARE...
requires applicants to pay a part of the bill themselves.
does not help the same household more than once in any 12-month period.
is administered by Mustard Seed Ministries of Fort Pierce.

Project CARE: Donating is as easy as 1, 2, 3
1. Round up - let FPUA know that you’d like to round up your bill each month.
2. Set a monthly donation amount that can be placed on your FPUA bill.
3. Or just make a one-time contribution.

Call FPUA now to donate!
and restoration efforts of property on Avenue D. Jon, holding up a 1913 rendering of the area, explained how the area got the name Lincoln Park. The rendering shows a central park, surrounded by housing. The park was called Lincoln Park.

St. Lucie County commissioner, Joe Smith stated, “Sometime in my lifetime I would like to own property and live on Avenue D.” Joe quoted JFK “…God’s work must truly be our own”. He spoke of some of the signature investments the county is working on which included the Lincoln Park Recreation Center.

Greg Homier, owner of NetCom, is working with the Small Business Administration to secure small business loans for area businesses. He stated, “We need things to attract people”.

The Lincoln Park organization is soliciting for new members. The district faces many challenges, but they will work together to ensure positive change and economic prosperity. Membership is open to anyone interested in the revitalization of the Lincoln Park area. For more information call (772) 467-9779.

Lincoln Park Organization: Program Coordinator – Elise Ann Rollins, Liberty Medical Supply. Board Members: President, Havert “Coach” Fenn, Former County Commissioner; Vice-President, Joe Smith, County Commissioner; Treasurer, Gloria Johnson, Chief Accountant at City Hall; Secretary, Lillieeth Reece, owner of Buffalo Soldier Caribbean Restaurant on Avenue D; Mike Adams, President of the Adams Ranch; Rufus Alexander, City Commissioner; Vernon Dixon, owner of Church’s Chicken and the Cartoon Car Wash and Laundromat on US1; Herb Ellis, Treasure Coast Times Editor; Sandra Gordon, Supervisor of Operations in the County Clerks office; Jay Lundy, director of Fort Pierce One Stop Career Center; Eugene Williams, property owner on Avenue D and 14th Street.
Main Street Fort Pierce

As Fort Pierce Main Street begins its 18th successful year, it is undertaking an aggressive Membership Drive. “The Next Big Thing” campaign took off in May, 2006. Please consider becoming a Main Street Member.

Membership in Main Street Fort Pierce is open to anyone interested in helping preserve our unique heritage. Our goal is to encourage and assist in keeping Downtown Fort Pierce a vibrant shopping and business district for future generations.

We invite you to share your expertise and contribute toward making Fort Pierce Main Street a success in historic preservation and revitalization. Donations to Fort Pierce Main Street, a 501(c)3 corporation, are tax deductible.

Complete the form below and join our growing group of committed members. By joining Main Street Fort Pierce, Inc., you are supporting the economic well being of the entire community.

Main Street Membership Levels

Private:
- Student . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . ..
History of the Platts/Backus House: Part 2

by Patty Moll

Last month we read the first chapter about the history of Main Street Fort Pierce’s new home. We met Clyde Phillips Platts and Clara Kingsley Platts, the home’s first owners. The young couple moved here from Michigan looking for a milder climate, hoping it might improve the rare blood disease Clyde suffered from. He was the first full time doctor in Ft. Pierce. His bride Clara was just 22 years old in 1896 when she purchased the property from the Florida Canning Company.

The dawn of a new century filled our young town with challenges and opportunities and gave the pioneers who settled here a chance to leave their mark on the development of a new community. Dr. Platts became a familiar figure riding his bicycle around town in a time when doctors did make house calls. He treated all who came to him and often accepted wild game as payment from local Indians who brought the sick and injured to the house, then camped out in his yard until they were well enough to travel.

Transportation by wagon and waterway was commonplace and Clyde traveled as far as Okeechobee and Kissimmee by horse and buggy and used his sailboat The Alligator to visit patients up and down the coast. Local families traveled the river to visit neighbors or walked along familiar streets with long forgotten names. Ask Clyde or Clara where they lived and they’d reply: Seminole Avenue. You’d be well and truly lost if you went looking for the Avenue C of today.

Progress was arriving at a steady pace, and now Dr. Platts could send patients by railway to the FEC hospital in St. Augustine. In 1894 Dr. Platts was paid $44.00 by the hospital for treating forty-two patients. He played an active role in our fledgling community and in 1905 when St. Lucie County gained her independence from larger Brevard County, Clyde served as the first Superintendent of Public Schools for the new district.

Born on August 15th 1869, Dr. Platt lived his life in service to others. He was just 37 when he passed away on June 26th 1907, leaving Clara a widow with five small children to take care of. Clara never remarried but remained a vital part of the community. She served on the board of trustees for Dutton Memorial Church and

Continued on page 14 …
at the time of her death on July 18th 1952, had eleven grandchildren and one great grandson. Clyde and Clara are buried together at Riverside Memorial Park here in Ft. Pierce. Although they relocated to White City prior to Clyde’s death, Clara retained ownership of their old homestead until August 13th 1946, when she sold it to the St. Lucie County Welfare Association for $7,500.00.

The welfare association maintained 122 Avenue C for eight years. On March 20th 1952 they sold it to John J. and Lois P. Mertz. At that time the principle sum of $7,300.00 was still due on the note written by Clara in 1946. John and Lois held the home in their name for two years before they wrote a mortgage deed to The Southeastern District of the Christian and Missionary Alliance based in Maitland Florida. The Alliance operated a church here sometime between the years of 1954 and 1960. You may have noticed the interior shots of the house, which ran with the first half of this article. They were taken sometime during this period while it was in use as a house of worship.

Clyde and Clara knew this street as Seminole Avenue, we’ve known it for years as Avenue C. Today it is Backus Avenue honoring a man and a family who lived much of their lives at various locations along the avenue.

Long before Beanie called this house home, the Backus Dock and Boat Builders were located just down the street on the waterfront. As early as the 1930’s advertisements for, “Backus Sign Studio (Albert E. & Geo. S. Backus) foot of Avenue C” ran in the local city directories. Beanie lived for many years just across the street from this house, at 103 Avenue C. When the city needed land to expand the King Power Plant, Beanie sold them his property. On April 20th 1960 he became the owner of what would fondly become known as the Backus House. Beanie didn’t move in right away, taking time to work on the home, making repairs, adding his own personal style with additions like the front balcony and arched entry door.

In the interim, he took up residence at 200 Avenue C,
right next to the Ft. Pierce Cabinet Shop. Avenue C was a busy place. It was a short walk under the FEC underpass to the Bell Bakeries and Dandee Bread Company. The last city directory I found listing Beanie at #200 is 1962, I couldn’t locate a copy of the 1963 directory, but 1964 finds Beanie firmly entrenched in his new home at 122 Avenue C.

Beanie transferred ownership of this property to one of his protégées, Don Darwin Brown, on December 5th 1986 while retaining residency with the clause “The grantor hereby

Continued on page 19 …
Red, white and blue was all around. Flags waving in the air. Laughter filled the Veteran’s Memorial Park as The City of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County and Main Street Fort Pierce, Inc., presented Stars over St. Lucie on Tuesday, July 4, 2006. The weather was warm and sunny and residents came from all over to enjoy the day, listen to music and watch the fireworks.

Mayor Bob Benton placed a memorial plaque by the Lyles Statue in the Liberty Garden Memorial Park, located north of the Fort Pierce Community Center. The rededication signifies the completion of the life-size bronze statue of a 9/11 heroine, CeeCee Ross Lyles who perished on Flight 93 during the tragic 9/11 events. Lyles served the City of Fort Pierce as a police officer before becoming a flight attendant. Lyles’ family members and guests were in attendance to participate in the rededication ceremony.

After the ceremony, all you had to do was close your eyes as you were transformed back into the 30s and 40s with the sounds of Johnny Cool and the Mobster Swing Band. Johnny Cool and the Mobster Swing Band, a contemporary swing band out of Orlando, Florida entertained the crowd with swing sounds of old and new.

Memorials of Backus House — We Want To Hear From You

Renovations are underway! Work on restoring our beloved A. E. “Beanie” Backus House officially started in early July. While the contractors handle the heavy lifting, we get to focus on the fun stuff — shaping the future of this historic landmark.

And it only makes sense that you be involved. So, we’re asking you to share your fondest recollections of the Backus House.

Maybe you were one of the many local kids who stopped by the house on a summer afternoon for a snack and to learn a bit about art. Or perhaps your memories go back even further to the days before Beanie took up residence, and Backus House belonged to the Platts and Rowe families. Let us know what you remember about our new home — and how you think the building’s history should be incorporated into its future.

We hope you’ll join us for a mini-charette later this year, when we’ll start organizing all of your suggestions into a master plan for the restoration and the future role of the house in our downtown community.

In the meantime, share your memories of Backus House and downtown Fort Pierce with us. We’ll collect them all for the charette, and may even publish a few right here in Focus.

Email your memories to MainStreetFocus@aol.com with “Memories of Backus House” in the subject line. Or mail them to us at Main Street Focus, 122 AE Backus Avenue, Fort Pierce, FL 34950.

We look forward to hearing from you.
4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION

The Rhythmic Harmony Dancers put on a show of swing dancing and interacted with the audience. Fort Pierce jumped, jived and wailed into the night, concluding the evening with a dazzling fireworks display over the beautiful St. Lucie River.

Many thanks to the City of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, St. Lucie County Parks and Recreation, and Main Street Fort Pierce for providing the citizens of St. Lucie County with a wonderful day.

Johnny Cool and the Monster Swing Band performed on the Fort Pierce Amphitheater Stage. There was something to do for all ages at the Stars Over St. Lucie 4th of July Celebration.

Professional Swing dancers from Busch Gardens, sponsored by Southern Eagle Distributing, entertained crowds with their exciting moves before the start of the spectacular fireworks display.
Sunrise Theatre
In Beautiful Downtown Fort Pierce

by Sue Dannahower

Rockin’ the Riverkeeper 2006
Saturday, August 5th, 8:00 p.m.

Acclaimed drummer Lee Koenig and his Celebrity All-Star Band promise a rockin’ night to raise funds for the Indian River Keeper Organization. Your ticket purchase will directly assist efforts to protect and restore the waters of North America’s most diverse estuary, our Indian River Lagoon, its tributaries, fisheries and habitats through advocacy, enforcement and citizen action.

Renee Taylor & Joseph Bologna
Saturday, November 18th, 8:00 p.m.

Don’t miss this winning evening of Marital Bliss and Blunders, headed for a permanent home in Las Vegas after it’s boffo Broadway box office success!

“The Timing? Exquisite. The cumulative effect? Quintessential entertainment. Watching these two lobbing lines back and forth is like seeing Venus and Serena Williams square off on the tennis court, or savoring George Burns and Gracie Allen in their heyday.” — Miami Herald

The Pink Floyd Experience
November 2006 - Date to be announced

As it’s quite clear that the real Pink Floyd will never again grace our shores, the Sunrise will bring you what’s regarded in the concert industry as the next best thing. Their evening of stunning sounds and sights prompted the Toronto Sun to say “PFX might be the closest thing to capturing the real deal!” As the Boston Symphony Orchestra is to Beethoven, PFX is to Pink Floyd in their solid and faithful recreation of rock’s most moving classics. An evening you’ll never forget.

Sunrise Theatre, 461-4775
www.sunrisetheatre.com
reserves a life estate in the property described herein, anything to the contrary notwithstanding”. And here he stayed until his death on June 6th 1990.

Don sold the property to Everett and Sophia Ives in 1993 and they in turn sold it to Sean Murray and Harold Austgen in 1996. In 2000, Patty Ferris McGee purchased the house and opened the doors once again to art (and food) lovers with her Backus Café and Studio. She offered a place to stop, unwind, and have a bite to eat while enjoying the atmosphere of the old home.

Beverly Bailey Watkins bought the home on March 12th 2004 and on June 23rd 2005 we purchased it from her. Beverly will always have a place deep in the heart of Main Street for allowing us to become stewards of this home and the history that lives within, and for giving us the opportunity to share that history with the community.

We are entering an exciting time as renovations begin. Our plans call for restoring much of the original home, while honoring those who have passed through its doors. We are reconstructing Dr. Platts’ front porch, enclosing Beanie’s second floor sleeping porch and rebuilding the utility room and carport. When we move to our offices upstairs, Pam is looking forward to enjoying the murals painted in hers.

When renovations are complete, we hope to open the downstairs to the public with a museum and display area. We are always eager to hear from folks who have shared in the growth of this house and would love to include your memories in the display area.

Great indeed was Beanie’s talent as an artist; greater still is his legacy as a humanitarian. The Backus House was a social gathering place in the days when downtown was the center of activity for Ft. Pierce. Join us in preserving this heritage for generations to come and secure your place in the history of this home. Choose a color from the palette below and mail your contribution today. Together we can continue Beanie’s legacy and renew this historic home’s place in our community as a center for growth and diversity.

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A little over a decade ago, the City of Fort Pierce decided to end their lease arrangement and take over operations at the city marina. The call went out to find a person qualified to take over the task of daily operations. The City’s plan was to use the marina as a starting point and anchor for the revitalization that was about to take place in historic downtown Fort Pierce. The Marina Manager they chose for the job turned out to be the perfect candidate. The man is Dean Kubitschek.

Dean is usually busy doing all the necessary tasks a Marina Manager is responsible for and his dedication to his profession has made Fort Pierce’s City Marina one of the most popular boat docking destinations on the East Coast of Florida. Dean goes above and beyond his job duties by always leading a hand when needed and he is usually a willing participant in organizing any project or event that helps the businesses of downtown. Although he always assists any one who asks for his help, he is uncomfortable being singled out as a downtown hero. “Without the work of a great staff and the support and encouragement of city officials, none of this would have been possible. I may be the man who receives the accolades, but it took the effort and cooperation of countless others to make it happen,” says Dean.

Dean first visited Fort Pierce in 1979 while doing search and rescue for the Coast Guard. While his Coast Guard tour had him traveling the continents including an ice breaker tour in Antarctica and working a light house in the Dry Tortugas, Dean never forgot about Fort Pierce. After spending thirteen years learning the Marina business in Vero, Dean sent out resumes to the surrounding area. As fate would have it, Fort Pierce was looking for a person who would help the marina serve as a catalyst for the city’s vision of the downtown area. Dean was hired and the transformation has been nothing short of spectacular. Dean is quick to credit city officials
with giving him the “freedom to be successful.” If success were to be measured monetarily then Dean certainly has been successful. Since his first year on the job, the marina has been a profit source for the city. “It is not unusual for city’s to have to reach into the budget and subsidize their marinas, but not in Fort Pierce.” Commented Dean. Every city official I spoke with had nothing but praise for Dean and his staff at the city marina.

Dean is proud of the marketing plan produced by his staff and Anne Satterlee, assistant City Manager. “We are on the front covers of the major marina guides that are distributed at marinas and boat shows nation wide,” added Dean. Dean is also happy with the amount of transient boat traffic the marina generates. “We are the water gateway to the city” commented Dean. “You can come for lunch or for a vacation. Just radio ahead on VHF channel 16 or call 464-1245 to let us know you would like to visit.

Thanks to the hard work of Dean and his staff the Marina has become a sought-after place for individuals and families to visit by foot or by vessel. Thanks to his willingness to participate in promoting his surrounding community, multiple events that draw hundreds of people are held every year with ease in the Marina itself or on its grounds.

The Downtown Business Association, Main Street Fort Pierce, and the many businesses within walking distance of the City Marina have benefited tremendously from Dean’s friendly assistance and expertise throughout the years. This is the reason why Dean Kubitschek is a downtown hero.
Often customers and friends will stop by the bank to tell me their teenager has graduated from high school and will be going away to school, or leaving home for one reason or another. They ask what to do about their banking. If they’re going somewhere that doesn’t have a Riverside Bank branch, what should they do? Should they open an account at another bank? If so, what bank? I have a couple of responses for that.

Will the parent(s) be making deposits into an account for the young man’s or young lady’s living/school expenses? Who will keep up with the check book balance?

It really isn’t necessary to get another bank account just because there isn’t a Riverside Bank branch office in Georgia, Tennessee or wherever. In those instances of the parents funding the student’s living expenses and education, it’s best to have an account here at home so deposits can be made quickly should some unforeseen emergency come up. Actually, one of the advantages of being a local home-town community bank, here at Riverside Bank we still do our best to manually review the accounts that are over-drawn on the current day. Having grown up here and being active in my community I know a good many folks. The young students of today were the youngsters when we started Riverside over twenty years ago. Many, many times I would recognize the name, and checking a little further, it would be a student, their grocery check or rent check would be coming through a day or so before Mom or Dad would be making the monthly deposit to the student’s account. I called Mom or Dad, and the deposit could be made a day or so before expected. The local advantage is, checks are not returned on the student. I have been introduced as “banking Mommy” by some students returning home to begin their professional career.

It’s best to have a checking account with the student and a parent, or both parents, also on the account. The student will have printed checks, with only their name on the check, from Riverside Bank, but can have the local address of where they are living while attending school. With parents on the account also, if a local obligation needs to be addressed while the student is away at school, the parent is able to write a check against the account locally.

Depending on the financial ability of the family, if the school budget is tight, I recommend the statement be addressed to the parents here at the local address. I see that both ways with some parents wanting their young
The next important step is to make sure the student has a debit card. When using a debit card, the money is taken directly from the checking account. Also, the debit card can be used as a credit card as well as a personal identification number (PIN) driven card. I recommend it be used as a credit card when possible. This reduces the chance of anyone else seeing the student’s PIN when they’re using their card. The debit card can be used in any Automatic Teller Machine (ATM). It must be remembered that using any other ATM than the debit card’s issuing bank, there will be a fee. That fee is disclosed before money is dispersed by that particular ATM, requiring acceptance of that fee before continuing the transaction.

These suggestions are only to help in the decision making process in families. It is a family decision as to what works best for parents and student.
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October 18th — “The Four County Juried Show.” Artists from St. Lucie, Martin, Indian River & Okeechobee Counties compete in this highly competitive exhibit.

November 11th — “The Vultures for Culture Scavenger Hunt & Bone Picking BBQ.”

Scavenger hunt.

January 27th — ‘Art Auction Gala.” The Gallery’s annual art auction pays homage to Bean Backus’ 101th Birthday.

March 3rd & 4th - “19th Annual A.E. Backus Art Festival.” Over 75 artists, musical performances and tasty food grace the Gallery’s oak shaded grounds for this two-day art extravaganza.

March 21st — “The St. Lucie County High School Show.” The best of things to come from the area’s public and private high schools.

April 14th — “The Art of Dressing Well.” Fashion divas trip to Palm Beach for a luncheon fashion show.

April 25th — “The Eye of the Camera Juried Photography Show.” Open to both amateur and professional photographers, this exhibit brings in fierce competition.

Youngsters Enjoy Lemonade
by John Culverhouse & Mandy Taylor Green

Rosa is a cheerful little girl who, while on a journey to visit her grandparents, is detoured by the delicious thought of lemonade. As Rosa realizes she does not have enough money to purchase a cup, she offers to help work at the lemonade stand to earn a mouth-watering cup of lemonade. While being thoughtful and considerate of others’ desires for a cup of lemonade, Rosa fails to leave a lemon for herself. She ventures on to her grandparents’ house and Grandma and Gramps make it all better for Rosa by preparing a tall glass of lemonade just for her!

Sound like a good book? The outline above describes Lemonade: A Part of TeenC Stories, the new children’s book written by Mandy Taylor Green, a new local author in our area. This is Mandy’s first book, and AuthorHouse published it. Though targeted to entertain elementary aged children, the story amuses all ages by its catchy rhyme and vibrant illustrations, which were prepared by Christy Ivey Tindall.

Family and relationships have been the most important assets in the 22 year-old Green’s life. “The story about Rosa and Lemonade was inspired by my grandparents,” said Green. “I have been so blessed with my grand-parents that I wanted to honor them. Either one of them would have responded to my troubles the same as Rosa’s grandparents did for her.” Green feels grateful to have close family and friends in her life, and enjoyed sharing her book with her nephews, her niece, and several “nieces and nephews through friends — adopted with love”.

This is not Green’s first writing endeavor. Personal circumstances led her to pick up a pen and begin writing poetry when she was ten years old. She found poetry as an escape from day-to-day realities and earned positive praise for her work. Since then, she has tuned her craft and now she is a published author. She hopes to write more books and make TeenC Stories a series.

So far, things are going well. In May, Green and Tindall attended their first book signing, which

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took place at the Orange Avenue Baptist Church School, which they attended. It was a positive occasion, as they were able to interact with the kids who look up to them. Green and Tindall were able to show the young students, as well as their former teachers and school staff what they have done with their natural talents.

Lemonade is currently available online at www.authorhouse.com, www.amazon.com, www.barnesandnoble.com, or by phone at 1-888-280-7715. Plans are underway for local merchants to carry the book in the near future. Mandy welcomes opportunities for book signings and other events to share the book. You can e-mail your comments about the book, or contact Green at teencstories@yahoo.com.
Summer Fishing

by Dan Dannahower

The heat of summer is upon us. August is one of the hottest months in south Florida and with the heat come some subtle changes in the fishing scene. There are always fish to be caught in Fort Pierce’s numerous water venues, but you may need to adjust a bit in order to be successful.

In the Indian River Lagoon the heat of midday may slow the action as game fish lay in the shade of mangroves or deep holes. Early morning, late evening, or even night fishing may produce better results. Deeper holes, channels and structures with shade like docks or overhanging shrubbery may produce results if you must fish during the heat of the day. The lagoon and inlet always have a lot of feeding activity going on at night. It’s usually cool, no sunburn to contend with and most of the species you hope to catch are probably out looking for a meal. If you elect to boat at night be sure you have plenty of lights and know the area where you’re going to fish. It’s much easier to run aground or hit a channel marker at night.

Offshore fishing also changes in the summer months. The general thinking is that trolling for game fish like kingfish, dolphin, cobia, etc., slows down quite a bit and bottom fishing is the only way to get any action. While that’s probably true to some extent you never know what our dynamic ocean and the gulfstream will do. For example, as of this writing, kingfish continue to be abundant offshore with many boats bringing home a limit if desired. Dolphin continue to be spotty. Bottom fishing on the reefs continues to be good.

If you’re going to fish either the lagoon or offshore on your own our local tackle and bait shops continue to be your best bet for information on what’s happening on the water. They get reports on a daily basis of what’s biting and where. They can also help you with

Continued on page 31 …
Downtown America: Brainerd, Minnesota

by Traveling Main Street Focus Writer, Kathleen McKee

Ice Fishing Anyone? If you live in Brainerd, Minnesota, you know about the annual Fishing Contest. The prizes are major and the crowds are big. In the state of Minnesota with thousands of lakes, the Brainerd Lakes area is a summer vacation spot for people from all over the world. But this fund raising annual Fishing Contest is held in the winter on Gull Lake where 10,000 contestants converge. They cut holes through the ice, drop a line and wait for the “big one.”

Brainerd, Minnesota, is located in the north central part of Minnesota — approximately 100 miles north of the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. It has a population of 13,800 and is the gem of the North Country with its beautiful blue lakes. As a visitor here I can confirm its beauty. Summer is the prime season for visitors but fall attracts hunters of ducks, geese, deer and bear. The popular sport of fishing just continues through winter but with fish shanties on the frozen lakes.

Mark Ostgarden is the City Planner for downtown Brainerd. Downtown Brainerd covers an area bordered by Highway 371, Highway 210, the railroad, and the beautiful Mississippi River. Downtown restoration is at the beginning stages. A Downtown Master Plan has been developed. Many downtown groups, the Chamber of Commerce, and volunteers work on the project and planning.

Brainerd is the county seat of Crow Wing County. The west end of Downtown is the government center. The Community Services Building and Judicial Center are new. Other buildings include the Court House, Post Office, and City Hall. Five hundred people are employed in the government center.

Just east of the government center are a variety of shops and restaurants. This area is undergoing revitalization efforts to bring people back to the area. Mark Ostgarden is enthusiastic about the future of Downtown Brainerd and invites everyone to visit this area of natural beauty.
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the correct rigs for your type of fishing and with baits and how to fish them.

One other option, not just for summer but any time of year, is a trip with one of our local charter captains. These extremely knowledgeable gents provide everything except your food and work hard to provide you with a great day of fishing. Both river guides and offshore boats can be found at your local marinas, through your tackle shop, or in the phone book. I was lucky enough to fish with Captain Fox Watkins recently who charters out of the Fort Pierce City Marina. Six family members brought home more kingfish than we could carry and had a wonderful time out on the ocean.

Hope you get to catch a big one this summer. Good luck and good fishing.
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