Get ready to stomp your feet and laugh until your sides hurt as the Great Southern Cracker Roadshow comes to the Sunrise Theatre on Friday February 25! See page 13...
Downtown Fort Pierce Is Where the Heart Is ♡

by Beth Williams

Love is in the air in downtown Fort Pierce. Our historic district is a fantastic location for making the most of this romance-filled month. Whether you are looking for that special gift or a cozy dinner for two, everything you need is just a stroll away. Come downtown and take a leisurely walk through the many shops, salons, and eateries to create the perfect Valentine’s Day experience for that special someone.

But you don’t need a special day to make the most of downtown Fort Pierce. Just visiting downtown during this time of year is a real pleasure. While we’ve had our share of cold, the temperate climate, swaying palms, and friendly atmosphere create a great experience for our residents and visitors.

It’s fun to tour the area from Marina Square west to the core of downtown. Taking in the various sights and sounds of our community is like a mini-vacation and is sure to open your eyes to some feature of this beautiful city you haven’t noticed before.

When was the last time you toured the Manatee Center, or enjoyed the art at the Backus Museum? Have you visited the Art Bank on Orange Avenue for their weekly exhibition of the incredible works of local artists? Have you attended any of the fabulous productions at the Sunrise Theatre lately? How about a stop at the Platts/Backus House – home to Main Street Fort Pierce?

Whether you are brand new to the area, a seasonal visitor, or a local year-round, there’s never a good excuse to be bored when you live in a community like this one. We’re fortunate to have a thriving and inviting historic downtown that offers everything you are looking for. Visit downtown Fort Pierce and see why we are in the best community to live, work, and play!

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Main Street, I want to invite you to join our organization and be a part of the excitement of this organization. As we work to continue the efforts of historic preservation, economic development, and creation of a downtown with exciting things to do, we need your help. Our members, volunteers, sponsors and donors are at the heart of everything we do!
Friday, February 4: Friday Fest — Ossie Wright & the Groove Division Band: 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.; Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880, mainstreetfortpierce.org.

Wednesday, February 9: ARTWALK — 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Downtown Business Association, 461-0655, fortpiercedba.org.

Friday, February 18: Coffee with the Mayor — Sponsor: Treasure Coast Manatee Foundation; 8:00 a.m. at Historic City Hall; call Main Street Fort Pierce for more information, 466-3880, mainstreetfortpierce.org.

Friday, February 25: Classic Car Cruise-In — 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.; Downtown Business Association, 465-7080, fortpiercedba.org.

Friday, February 25: Great Southern Cracker Roadshow; Sunrise Theatre, Pre-party 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.; Show 5:00 p.m.; Main Street Fort Pierce & Sunrise Theater, 461-4775.

Sunday, February 27: 22nd Annual Hogg Wild Pre-Bike Week Bash & Poker Run; 1:00 to 6:00 p.m.; proceeds to Benefit Main Street Fort Pierce; archiesseabreeze.com 461-3352 or 460-3888.

Weekly Events

Art Mundo Open Studio — Wednesdays, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.; The ArtBank at 111 Orange Ave., artmundo.org@gmail.com or artmundo.org.

Fort Pierce Bike Night — Thursdays, 6:00 to 9:30 p.m.; 2nd Street, Downtown Fort Pierce; Yellow Tail Grille & Raw Bar, 468-7071.

Fl. 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, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; ½-mile north of downtown Fort Pierce Fort Pierce Library, Jazz & Blues Society, 460-5299, jazzsociety.org.

For information, please call 460-2787 or visit sf-lucie.lib.fl.us/

For information, please call 461-4775 or visit sunrisetheatre.com.

For information, please call 462-1891 or visit sluciecountyhistory.org.

For information, please call 462-3474 for more information or visit sluciefco.gov/marine_center

For information, please call 465-0630 or visit backusmuseum.com.

For information, please call 465-0630 or visit backusmuseum.com.

For information, please call 460-5299 or visit jazzsociety.org.

For more information, please call 370-6162, fortpiercepal.com.

Volunteers needed for Ft. Pierce Police Athletic League. Persons interested in teaching the fundamentals of sports, mentoring, and tutoring should contact Paul Pearson or Gabe Gonzales 460-0606.

For more information, please call 460-5299 or visit jazzsociety.org.

For more information, please call 336-3999 or visit artmundo.org
25 Years of Florida Main Street: Look How It Boosts the State's Economy

by Nancy Smith (reprinted with permission from Sunshine News, www.sunshinestatenews.com)

Take a good look at the Florida Main Street program. It's sneaky clever. It's all about preserving the character and vitality of decaying downtowns — and that would be reason enough to love it — but here's the big bonus: It pumps cash like a wildcat well into all 50 Main Street communities.

If you've never heard of Florida Main Street, don't beat yourself up over it. You're in good company. I know at least a dozen veteran legislators running around the Capitol, making decisions on the state's now $70 billion budget, who haven't a clue what it is or what it does.

It just so happens that Florida Main Street has been celebrating its 25th anniversary during 2010. For all those 25 years this program has provided a jaw-dropping return on taxpayers' total $5 million investment. Consider this:

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  - Since 1985, 90 communities have participated, yielding a return on their investment in excess of $2.1 billion. New construction and rehabilitation projects run to more than 13,700, including a bunch that involve historic buildings. Add in 5,500 business starts and expansions. Plus the creation of 17,800 new jobs. Oh, yes, one more related benefit — Florida citizens have donated 625,000 hours to their Main Street communities.
  - Allow me to explain a little about the Main Street Florida program — and in the interest of disclosure, I'm not a dispassionate observer. I am on the board of Friends of Florida Main Street, the support arm of the organization.
  - Florida Main Street is deceptive. It is seemingly buried beneath layers of state government. It's administered by the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State. It is, nevertheless, what Florida is all about, dealing as it does in dreams of past and present, giving technical assistance to transform those dreams into something concrete for tomorrow.

If you want to see the success that Main Street communities have achieved in the preservation and renewal of their historic downtowns, visit Arcadia, DeLand, Ocala, Panama City, Plant City, and dozens more. They're all across the state.

Florida Main Street is not unique. All 50 states have a Main Street program. But the birth of Florida's in 1985 coincided with the state's landmark Comprehensive Planning Act. By that time, sprawling development had scattered the population. Once-cohesive, busy town and city centers were emptying like a bathtub with a faulty plug. Malls and strip shopping centers were popping up in literally hundreds of new suburbs.

Floridaians were ready for a program like Florida Main Street, a program that stressed — and taught — the components of design, organization, promotion and economic restructuring, to restore and revitalize their dying downtowns.

During the 1980s I was living in Stuart, a city with a downtown given a dire prognosis and hooked up to life support. Along came its mayor, Joan Jefferson, and her architect husband Peter. They had a follow-our-lead idea that they could begin to revitalize downtown by purchasing and renovating one of the city's down-at-the-heels historic buildings, living in one part, working in the other.

I thought at the time that they were nuts. I thought the financial risk was too great. But they believed and took a chance.

I hope our new governor and legislative leaders realize what they've got in a program that makes money, creates jobs and advocates a return to community self-reliance.

With Joan Jefferson’s leadership — Joan and Peter brought in planner Andres Duany to help design a work-in-live-in, walkable city — Stuart was on its way. The city’s participation in Main Street Florida was the coup de grace. Block for block, Stuart became perhaps the hottest property in Martin County.

In appreciation, the city of Stuart named a street after its charismatic leader, Joan Jefferson Way. How fitting that today Joan is the coordinator of the Florida Main Street program. When asked what she considers her proudest moments during her seven years heading the program, she said, “I am proud of the buildings saved, the downtowns revitalized, and the positive economic impact provided by active Florida Main Street communities throughout the state.”

And who wouldn’t be? Florida Main Street is all about quality of life, about preserving and showcasing the best of Florida’s past — its small-town flavor and sense of community; its penchant for rebirth, its entrepreneurial spirit. It is altogether shivers-down-the-spine exciting stuff.

I hope our new governor and legislative leaders realize what they’ve got in a program that makes money, creates jobs and advocates a return to community self-reliance.

Reach Nancy Smith at nancydulemerlin@gmail.com, or at (850) 727-0859.
Great American Main Street Award

In December, Main Street Fort Pierce was selected as one of the top ten semifinalists for the 2011 Great American Main Street Awards® (GAMSA). The National Trust Main Street Center's annual GAMSA winners are recognized for their exceptional accomplishments in revitalizing the nation's historic and traditional Main Street commercial districts by using the proven Main Street Four-Point Approach®: organization, economic restructuring, promotion and design.

Main Street Fort Pierce is honored to be one of the semifinalists for the 2011 Great American Main Street Awards® (GAMSA). Main Street Fort Pierce was started in 1988 and over the past 22 years has been successful in creating an atmosphere where life is returning to downtown Fort Pierce. But we did not do this alone; it took many partners and friends to achieve the successes we have in Fort Pierce.

Main Street has formed many meaningful partnerships in the community. The partnerships are the foundation for these successes in Fort Pierce. By joining together with others, Main Street has been able to direct powerful resources to projects that are extremely important to the redevelopment of our downtown. One of the Main Street projects is the Platts/Backus House.

Art of Our Ancestors by Jeanne Johansen

Some say that artistic talent is in the genes. The Treasure Coast Art Association, Inc., 223 Avenue A, Fort Pierce, is currently exhibiting art of generations past and present. The show is entitled “Art of Our Ancestors.”

Barbara Fuller, René Laigo, Sandy Evoy, Harriet Brenner and Jeanne Johansen are five artists who have contributed to the exhibit with artwork done by their family going back as far as 104 years. The show continues through February.

Barbara Fuller exhibits a silhouette portrait of her father and has created a collage of her father full body silhouette, expressing his enthusiasm for books.

Sandy Evoy displays her great aunt's, Mary Ida Coclin, watercolor of Florida from 1945 along with her own and her son's, Christophe Evoy, paintings of the artists' shacks of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The difference in styles used by the mother and son delightfully demonstrate how even relatives express the same subject differently.

René Laigo is driven by her family's talent. Her father, John Dalpis, studied to be an artist at Cooper Union, NY, while her mother supported the family working at the US Patent office. Along with a pastel drawing of large flamingos completed by René's father, a second painting of a floral in oil paints created by her Greek grandfather, Harry Dalpis, will also be on exhibit. René hopes one day to reproduce her father's flamingos in her detailed master's style in oils.

Harriet Brenner and Jeanne Johansen, mother and daughter, are displaying art from different sides of their family. One of their contributions to the exhibit is a pencil drawing of a girl with geese drawn by Jeanne's grandmother, Helen Brenner. Helen Jackson Brenner, a native Floridian, born in 1898, was well known in Fort Pierce. Also on display is Helen Brenner's aunt, Francis Annette (Aunt Nettie) Jackson's 1907 pastel of coconuts along with five of “Aunt Nettie's art cards made with sea grass and shells from the Florida Coast.

The Treasure Coast Art Association will be exhibiting an additional show by local artists in February, titled “Art with a Heart.”
The Platts/Backus House is the home of the first doctor in Fort Pierce and the home of Florida landscape artist A.E. “Beanie” Backus. Due to unforeseen turns in the economy, Main Street had to stop the renovations at the Platts/Backus House. However, starting in February, Main Street Fort Pierce will be able to move forward with the help of the partners and friends who will kick off a series of events called the “Finish It” project.

Now the home of Main Street Fort Pierce, the Platts/Backus House is the entrance to the Edgartown community and connects the downtown to this historic area. It is important for the Main Street organization to complete this project to help connect the downtown area to the surrounding businesses in the Edgartown area which include: the Hill House Studios, Whimsy, and the Backus Museum. The completed Platts/Backus House will also hopefully encourage property owners to make improvements to their homes & businesses in Edgartown.

Main Street has worked hard over the past 22 years to make community improvements through streetscapes and restoration projects such as: Historic City Hall, the Sunrise Theatre and the Platts/Backus House. These renovations are key components to our success and the reason Main Street Fort Pierce is a semifinalist for the 2011 Great American Main Street Awards® (GAMSA). But we are not done yet and we can't finish the work alone. We need additional business partners, new members and sponsors for our events. We need you to support Main Street and the continued efforts to improve the community. Now is your chance to be part of the movement and the “Finish It” project.

Look for upcoming events like the Great Southern Cracker Roadshow, Hogg Wild, and the Sandy Shoes Festival.

Come see what Main Street Fort Pierce is all about. Come see what is happening in downtown Fort Pierce. We know you will love what you see. Now is your time to be a part Main Street Fort Pierce.

Clerk of the Circuit Court Presents “A Truly Sweet Deal” on Valentine’s Day
by Kara Hilson

Local lovebirds wishing to tie the knot on Valentine’s Day can seal the deal with a kiss at beautiful Historic City Hall in downtown Fort Pierce. On Monday, February 14th at 2:00 p.m., St. Lucie County Clerk of the Circuit Court Joe Smith will perform a group wedding ceremony for any couples interested in getting married on Cupid’s big day. Local vendors and partners will provide all the extra touches to make the day truly special for this second annual free ceremony. Interested couples must register for the ceremony at http://www.stlucieclerk.com/ and click on the event link to reserve their spot.

Potential brides and grooms will also need to visit the Marriage License Division at least 3 days in advance (“no later than Thursday, February 10, 2011”) to complete paperwork and obtain a marriage license, which will make them eligible to be married. The Marriage License Division is located on the 2nd floor of the Clerk’s main building in downtown Fort Pierce - 201 South Indian River Drive - on the southwest corner of Atlantic Avenue and Indian River Drive.

For additional information on the event, please call (772) 462-2345 or e-mail Kara Hilson at hilsonk@stlucieclerk.com.

**Announcement**

In an effort to better serve our customers, you may make your utility payment at the following locations. No additional fees charged for this service.

- **TD Bank**
  - Fort Pierce Locations
  - M-F: 8:00 am to 6:00 pm
  - Sat: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

- **Jackson Drugs**
  - 2301 Oleocheosee Road
  - M-F: 8:30 am to 6:00 pm
  - Sat: 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

- **Dixon Check Cashing**
  - 2410 Avenue D
  - M-F: 7:00 am to 7:00 pm
  - Sat: 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

**Our mission is to provide our customers with courteous, reliable, and friendly service as a continuos effort to enhance the quality of life in our community.**

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Keeping Florida History Alive On the Cracker Trail by Debra Magrann

Whether you’re a Florida or Georgia Cracker, you’re a descendant of those early frontiersmen whose primary tools were horses, dogs and bullwhips. Since her official dawn in 1845, Florida has seen many cowboys of different ethnicities — from English and Scotch-Irish to African slaves and Native Americans ranch the land and brave the rough landscapes. Over the centuries, the continual influx of retired northerners and South American workers has caused a great blending of cultures, giving way to many changes. But history lives on in the lives of the owners of our “Lands Remembered” on the ranches and ranges of the state.

Today, the phrase “Florida Cracker” is used informally to indicate that a family has lived here for many generations. Cracker pride is inherited from ancestors who flourished without the modern marvels of air conditioning, electricity, screen doors or mosquito sprays. Generally, ‘cracker’ refers to the sound of the whip that “cracked” to steer stray cattle out of scrub areas. Those early settlers whose lives are written in the pages of our history worked tirelessly and are the foundation of rural Florida.

In the words of today’s most notable Cracker historian, Dana Ste. Claire, “The Cracker culture that began in the 18th century with rogue white settlers has endured for over two centuries and today gives us grits, barbecue, summer-proof Cracker houses, cattle ranching, bull whips, down-home music and the salt of the earth.” Ste. Claire, author of Cracker: The Cracker Culture of Florida History praises these pioneers for their strength and determination: “These unenlightened peoples from the late 1700s until today were the Southern Crackers of Florida, lean, rough, unpredictable and independent people who have been maligned and misunderstood through the centuries.”

That determination is admired by many and emulated in the Florida Cracker Trail Association’s annual cross-state horseback ride, February 18-26, which begins at a site just east of Bradenton. The week-long trek that draws attention to our past ride, February 18-26, which begins at a site just east of Bradenton. The week-long trek that draws attention to our past

The Florida Cracker Trail is designated as a Community Millennium Trail by President Clinton as part of a network of nationwide trails for protection of the natural environment, compile histories of the communities along the Trail and enhance recreation, tourist and alternative transportation.

The Florida Cracker Trail Association is a non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to the mission of “Keeping History Alive.” Due to the rigorous and safety issues, the annual cross-state ride is strictly limited to members of Florida Cracker Trail Association, Inc. Respect for the land, sharing knowledge, and collectively experiencing the hardships of life on the open range unites these riders. As they travel across the state, they rest at local ranches. Nights sitting around campfires, sharing stories and hearing tales of old-timers are the best part of the experience. By trail’s end, as many as 250 riders may have joined for at least a portion of the trip that includes ranchers, cowboys, history buffs and nature lovers who come for the challenge, camaraderie and love of horses.

It all ends at the Adams Ranch on Friday, February 25, followed by a mounted parade through historic downtown Fort Pierce on Saturday, February 26.

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The Great Southern Cracker Roadshow

Get ready to stomp your feet and laugh until your sides hurt as the Great Southern Cracker Roadshow comes to the Sunrise Theatre on Friday February 25, 2011.

The following excerpt is from the Sunrise Theatre website, www.sunrisetheatre.com:

From the front porch of rural America comes this celebration of Cracker life, food, and music. The ways of the Cracker are brought live to the stage in an authentic traveling roadshow that features two homegrown Crackers — Dana Ste.Claire and Janis Owens, pure picking bluegrass music, traditional foods, homespun folklore, and a mess of surprises. It is a fun, entertaining Cracker sampler, a quilting of nearly all things Cracker from cowwhiper whip-crack demonstrations to back dancing dance-offs.

Dana Ste. Claire was born in central Florida, and raised every summer of his childhood deep in the Ocala National Forest near Scrambletown. His early immersion in the Cracker way of life led to his interest in Crackers as a culture. Dana Ste. Claire entertains with vignettes on what makes a Cracker a Cracker and the centuries-old history of this rogue and tenacious breed of Southern pioneer.

Noted Southern author Janis Owens delights the audience with her genuine stories. Janis Owens is the Author of the Cracker Kitchen cookbook. The cookbook is a celebration of Food, Family, and a Great American Tradition and from her cornbread kitchen; she navigates us through the down-home and sometimes unusual world of Cracker cuisine.

So often belittled and beleaguered, the Cracker culture is really nothing more than an ancient American fusion culture, rooted in colonial America and characterized by rugged individualism, love of family, lack of pretense, and really good cornbread.

Cracker cuisine and southern cooking are one of the things that make the south great and Main Street Fort Pierce is searching for the best Southern cook in the area. Before the Great Southern Cracker Roadshow

Karen Kane Interiors on Friday, February 25, Main Street Fort Pierce will hold a Cracker Cook-Off from 6:00 to 7:45 p.m. at the Sunrise Theatre Black Box.

The Cook-Off will be limited to the first 20 cooks that register and cooks must choose one of the recipes from The Cracker Kitchen cookbook. There is no registration fee but all cooks must have a ticket to the show. The judges will be Dana Ste.Claire and Janis Owens from the Great Southern Cracker Roadshow and there will be a people’s choice winner. The winners will be featured in the April issue of the Main Street Focus, receive 2 tickets to a future Sunrise Theatre show, gift certificate for dinner at Boomer’s BBQ photo with Dana and Janis, an autographed copy of The Cracker Kitchen cookbook, and an appearance in the Great Southern Cracker Roadshow. For more details on the cook-off, to register and choose a recipe, or buy tickets to the show go to www.sunrisetheatre.com.

If you are not a cook but love to eat, then drop by the Cracker Cook-Off on Friday, February 25, 2011. The Cracker Cook-Off will hold a Cracker Cook-Off from 6:00 to 7:45 p.m. and taste all the good Southern cooking. The cost of $5 with a ticket to the show or $10 without a ticket will admit you into a world of Southern cuisine, let you vote for your favorite recipe, and a special meet and greet with Dana and Janis at 6:30 p.m.

The Cracker Cook-Off and the Great Southern Cracker Roadshow are coming to Fort Pierce so call the box office today to get your front porch seats reserved. This popular two-hour show is a delightful journey through all things Cracker and then some. So, join us February 25, for a good ole’ Southern time.

Boomer’s BBQ is proud to sponsor the Cracker Cook-Off. Proceeds from the Cracker Cook-Off and a portion of the Great Southern Cracker Roadshow will benefit Main Street Fort Pierce, Inc.
St. Patrick’s Day Friday Fest – March 4, 2011 by Pam Gillette

Main Street Fort Pierce and Seacoast National Bank will put on their green and kick off Friday Fest with a little bit of Irish. Consider this a pre-party to the big day as we extend Friday Fest two hours starting at 3:00 p.m. and celebrate St. Patrick’s Day a wee bit early on March 4th. You may ask, “What makes a great St. Patrick’s Day?” The answer is green beer, music and dancers! Friday Fest will have all three.

Budweiser has promised the green beer will be flowing and a special Irish beer, Donnybrook Stout, will be available at the Specialty Tent. Donnybrook Stout is the most refreshing dark beer you could ever imagine this side of Dublin! Low alcohol and roasted barley keep it clean and flavorful. The subtle earthiness of European hops harmonizes with the roasted barley to offer a whiff of peat. Served with the classic nitrogen pour, Donnybrook delivers an impressive head and silky body of a classic stout. Donnybrook Stout is a product of Victory Brewing Company and distributed by Southern Eagle Distributing Company.

And for music, Main Street has a special treat, “Uproot Hootenanny.” “Uproot Hootenanny” is a collection of friends that bring a diversity of backgrounds together to showcase their unique style of acoustic roots music. With influences from Celtic, folk, rock, blues, jam, and jazz, the strings come together to create “Uproot Hootenanny.” Band members include: Brian Bolen, guitar, stand up bass, vocals; Brian Trew, fiddle, vocals; Rolando Willimann, stand up bass, mandolin, vocals; David Welch, banjo, guitar, vocals; and Billy Gilmore with his bluegrass influence. The music begins at 3:00 p.m. The Rondreau School of Irish Step Dance will perform two Irish Dance sets at 4:00 p.m. and at 6:00 p.m. at the north end of Marina Square. The Rondreau School of Irish Step Dance is co-directed by Chanda Rondreau Newman and Kathleen Rondreau, both certified Irish Dance instructors. They teach locally to students from age 5 and up. If you would like more information on classes or performances, please visit www.Rondreau-school.com.

Come on down for green beer, acoustic roots music, Irish Step Dancers, DJ Jeff Brown and a special St. Patrick’s Day Friday Fest sponsored by Seacoast National Bank.

Friday Fest — Friday, March 4. Extended hours 3:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. at Fort Pierce City Marina Square; NO PETS PLEASE! Experience the luck of the Irish at Friday Fest! Yearly sponsors of Friday Fest include: All in Fun, Budweiser, Clear Channel Communications, Coca-Cola, Ocean Chiropractic & Health, Park’s Rental, Reliable Poly Johns, and St. Lucie News Tribune.
The City of Fort Pierce Turns 110 Years Old on February 2nd by Anne Satterlee

Does anyone remember the date February 2, 1901? No, I'm not talking about Ground Hog Day, but another important date in Fort Pierce. The City of Fort Pierce was incorporated on February 2, 1901 and will be celebrating its 110th anniversary this year. You may recall Pierce. The City of Fort Pierce was incorporated on February 2, 1901

The big Centennial Celebration that was organized for the 100 year celebration of the City's 100th anniversary. Partnering with local media, local banks, St. Lucie County, East Coast Lumber & Supply, numerous volunteer groups and many others, the City of Fort Pierce began a Centennial Countdown leading up to the big day.

In February 2000, Coca-Cola unveiled their creation of a commemorative eight-ounce bottle for the City Centennial Celebration. A community photo was taken at the Downtown Roundabout with over 300 people holding up their small Coca-Cola bottle. Other Centennial activities included a 5K Bridge Run/Walk, Mural in a Day, a Centennial Quilt that was presented to the Mayor, and numerous historic buildings that have been renovated, such as the Hogg building along the Indian River Lagoon, hence the name Fort Pierce. Permanent settlement in this area began around 1870 with Captain and Annie Hogg building their trading post along Moore's Creek, which still stands today. The Cobb Trading Post provided all the necessities of early life in Florida for travelers along the river and for the Cracker cowboys driving cattle.

Many early settlers came to the area during the late 1800s, as Flagler's railroad brought people to this tropical paradise. Rail transportation afforded the area a growth with an agricultural economy of citrus, vegetables and fish. In 1901, with a growing local economy and population, fifty-three men of sixty-six qualified electors decided to incorporate Fort Pierce which grew from 300 pioneers to approximately 44,000 residents today and encompasses over 28 square miles.

Through careful planning, Fort Pierce preserved much of its natural beauty and its historic architecture over the years. In 1995, Fort Pierce residents and property owners played an important role in shaping the future of the city by preparing a detailed redevelopment plans for its historic core. Many projects were proposed, including streetscaping of all major arteries, a new public library, mixed-use buildings and major reconstruction of the waterfront, including a modernization of the City Marina, Sunrise Theatre and Indian Hills Golf Course over the past 15 years. Downtown Fort Pierce has regained its prominent historic role on the Treasure Coast. Fort Pierce has been rediscovered as one of the best towns in Florida. Fort Pierce is the site of the Florida League of Cities for overall excellence in a city government.

With both Mediterranean and Florida “Cracker-style” architecture, Fort Pierce has a varied and colorful history, including military activity during the Seminole War and World War II. Downtown has numerous historic buildings that have been renovated, such as the F.P. Cobb Building which was constructed in 1882, Historic City Hall and the Seven Gables House.

Richard K. Davis Construction Celebrates its 50th Year of Business

Richard K. Davis Construction has left its mark throughout the area in the form of structures that the firm has built over the past 50 years. Through the leadership of its founder, Richard K., and later his son and successor, Douglas Davis, the company has helped shape our community, particularly our downtown, by building some of our most notable buildings.

In 1958, a West Virginia mountaineer by the name of Richard K. Davis moved to the Fort Pierce area and began to set roots in the community. He formed a construction company in 1960 and was successful in his venture. Throughout the years as his business flourished, he and his company gave back to the community in the form of civic duty and philanthropy.

In 1972, Richard K. Davis Construction built the City's first Community Center, now known as the River Walk Center. It is located in one of the City's jewels, the Indian River Veteran's Memorial Park. The center added function to the beloved park which by that time already included an amphitheatre and yacht center. In 1991, the company also renovated and added on to the A. E. Backus Museum and Gallery which is in the vicinity of the amphitheatre and Veteran's Memorial Park. The Indian River Veteran's Memorial Park and the facilities in it are still used frequently for public and private events. It remains a favorite leisure spot on the Treasure Coast.

Richard K. Davis Construction (MSFP) worked with Richard K. Davis Construction on a couple of important projects in the early 1990s. Davis Tillman, MSFP Manager, needed a construction firm that would be sensitive to the historic preservation guidelines set for restoration projects funded by state and federal grant programs. "When Main Street started working on historic renovation projects, R.K. Davis was the first to jump in to support our efforts. When the City Hall was scheduled for demolition in 1991, a group formed to save the building. R.K. Davis came in with an offer that couldn't be refused and took on the renovation of the building along with Architect, Robert Terry," states Tillman.

In 1995 Richard K. Davis Construction again partnered with Main Street Fort Pierce to construct one of our area’s largest waterfront tourist attractions, the Manatee Education & Observation Center. This building proudly sits on the southern end of Indian River Veteran’s Memorial Park and attracts thousands of visitors from all over the country each year.
Richard K. Davis Construction also participated in developing many private buildings within Fort Pierce's Downtown. In 1981, the Neil Griffin, Jefiferes and Lloyd Building was constructed at the south end of Second Street. In 1997, the three-story Harbor Professional Center was constructed on the north end of Second Street. The company's latest downtown building accomplishment, the Citrus Avenue Professional Center, received the Mayor's Golden Hammer Award in 2008.

In addition to building quality structures, the Richard K. Davis leadership staff has participated in many civic and public functions throughout the years. Members have served on the boards of directors for Main Street Fort Pierce, the Fort Pierce Historic Preservation, the Sunrise Theater Advisory, the Economic Development Council, the Chamber of Commerce and many others. Richard K. Davis Construction has loaned equipment to many community projects and its employees have given hundreds of volunteer hours toward such projects as the Rotary Park playground and the P.P. Cobb playhouse raffle (building supplies were donated by East Coast Lumber) which benefited the Christmas Kids Program.

Richard K. Davis Construction is a local firm with a solid reputation and fifty years of doing something successfully is an accomplishment worth celebrating.

Over the years, Fort Pierce's educational opportunities have developed numerous modern educational and research facilities, like top-ranked Indian River State College, Florida Atlantic University Harbor Branch Institute, Smithsonian Marine Ecosystem Exhibit and the USDA Research Center and the Treasure Coast Research Park. This past decade in Fort Pierce, residents, businesses owners, elected officials and community volunteers continue to make our city a great place to live and work. Together we look ahead to preserving our past and investing in the future of Fort Pierce, the Sunrise City.

Archie’s HOGG WILD to benefit Main Street Fort Pierce

by Pam Gillette

Archie’s Seabreeze located at 401 S. Ocean Drive on South Hutchinson Island in Fort Pierce. The well known local restaurant & bar was established in 1947 as a military shack that served beer to soldiers stationed on South Beach. Purchased by Archie Summerlin in 1966 and sold to Patty McGee in 1994, Archie’s is a place to kick off your shoes, put your feet up, listen to live music, have good food, relax and enjoy the warm breezes off the Atlantic Ocean.

Twice a year, Patty McGee opens up her heart and Archie’s for a pre-bike week bash – HOGG WILD. Patty McGee along with a dedicated group of volunteers which include: Amy Cooper, Leonard Wheeley, Debbie Denning and many more, unite to put on the biggest party on the Treasure Coast and all the proceeds go to local charities. This year’s chosen charity is Main Street Fort Pierce and the Platts/Backus House.

Main Street Fort Pierce is a 501c3 organization that has encouraged and participated in the revitalization efforts of downtown Fort Pierce for the past 22 years. The efforts of many have paid off. Downtown Fort Pierce is now recognized as one of the most desirable locations to live and work on the Treasure Coast, in the state of Florida and now is recognized nationally as a semi-finalist in the 2011 Great American Main Street Award. The Platts/Backus House is Main Street’s latest project and was once owned by Patty McGee. This historic house and landmark is now the home of Main Street Fort Pierce and the entrance into the historic Edgartown district. Main Street is happy that Patty McGee and staff have chosen our organization to be the charity for this year’s HOGG WILD.

The 22nd Annual Hogg Wild Pre-Bike Week Bash and Poker Run is Sunday, February 27, from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. The charity Poker Run is open to public and for $10 per hand bikers will have a choice of north or south routes. At the pre-arranged stops bikers will play a hand of poker before completing their run at Archie’s by 3:00 p.m. Once at Archie’s, the party begins with live music, raffles, auction, biggest belly contest, best buns contest, tattoo contest and the much anticipated wet T-Shirt contest.

Come out and ride your bike for a great cause – Main Street Fort Pierce. For more information on the Poker Run stops, or Archie’s, please visit: www.archiesseabreeze.com or call Archie’s at 772-461-3352 or 772-460-3888.

Archie’s motto is: “No Shoes * No Shirt * No Problem”. What a way to spend the day riding bikes and having fun in the sun for charity! See you at HOGG WILD!
After much speculation, Congress finally passed the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Jobs Creation Act of 2010. The president signed it into law on December 17, 2010. The Act, in essence, is an extension of the 2001/2009 Bush-era tax cuts for two years. Also, the Act provides a payroll tax holiday for 2011 and a change in the exemption amount and maximum tax rate for estate taxation. The act extends and modifies many of the provisions first enacted in the 2009 American Recovery and Relief Act. Finally, the Act incorporates many extensions of the so-called annual extenders.

**Estate Taxes** – Congress has now eliminated the uncertainty for 2010 estates. It has repealed carryover basis rules and reinstated the estate tax for 2010, but with a $5 million exemption and a 35% tax rate that are also available in 2011 and 2012. The new law also provides that estates of persons dying in 2010 can elect out of the estate tax, provided that they accept the carryover basis regime rules.

**Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)** – Unlike 2009, when taxpayers were allowed to waive their required minimum distributions, for 2010, taxpayers must take their required minimum distributions from IRAs or defined benefit plans and defined contribution plans. Individuals who are active participants in an employer pension plan may make deductible contributions to an IRA. The annual deduction contribution limit for an IRA for 2010 is $5,000. For 2010, a $1,000 “catch up” contribution is allowed for taxpayers age 50 or older by the close of the taxable year, making the total limit $6,000 for these individuals.

**Traditional IRA** – Individuals who are not active participants in an employer pension plan may make deductible contributions to an IRA. The annual deduction contribution limit for an IRA for 2010 is $5,000. For 2010, a $1,000 “catch up” contribution is allowed for taxpayers age 50 or older by the close of the taxable year, making the total limit $6,000 for these individuals.

**Roth IRA Conversions** – Starting January 1, 2010, the modified adjusted gross income limits and the requirement that the taxpayers’ filing status not be “married filing separate” no longer apply to the conversion of a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA. Taxpayers making a conversion in 2010 are entitled to recognize the conversion amount ratably in income in 2011 and 2012, unless the taxpayer elects to recognize it all in 2010. For 2010, the 401(k) contribution limit is $16,500. For 2010, individuals are allowed to contribute 100% of the amount paid during the taxable year for insurance that constitutes medical care for themselves, their spouses and dependents as an above the line deduction, with regard to the 7.5% of AGI floor. New for 2010, the deduction can be taken into account in computing self-employment taxes.

**First Time Homebuyer Credit** – Congress has just extended and changed this benefit, making it more beneficial to many. The new rules took effect November 6, 2009. The provision is a true dollar for dollar credit of up to $8,000 or 10% of the purchase price. The credit is also refundable, meaning that even if the taxpayer doesn’t owe any tax, they can receive a refund. The new law also has more generous phase outs. The credit now has phase out rates starting with modified adjusted gross income of $125,000 and married couples at $250,000. This credit is available for purchase through July 1, 2010 if the buyer has a contact in place before May 1, 2010. Unlike the prior law, this credit is capped; those buying homes more than $800,000 get no credit at all. A first home buyer is someone who has not owned a principle residence within the last three years. The new law also authorizes a similar credit of $6,500 for buyers who own a home. It too is also a refundable credit for 10% of the purchase price of a house costing no more than $800,000. To qualify the buyer has to have owned and lived in the same home for five of the eight preceding years preceding the new home purchase, and the new home becomes the buyer’s principal residence.

**Residential Energy Credit** – The credit for non business energy property is extended to include expenditures for certain energy property placed in service in 2010. The credit amount increases from 10% to 30% of the sum of expenditures for qualified energy efficient improvements (building envelope components) and qualified energy property (furnaces and certain fans, central air conditioners, water heaters, certain heat pumps, biomass stoves, and certain asphalt roof) placed in service in 2009 and 2010. The credit is limited to a total of $1,500 over the 2009 and 2010 tax years. If the previous $500 lifetime maximum credit has already been used by an individua for qualifying cost in 2006 and or 2007, that person can now incur additional qualifying costs in 2009 and 2010.

**Annual Gift Tax Exclusion** – The most commonly used method for tax-free giving is the annual gift tax exclusion, which allows you to make a gift of up to $13,000 on an annual basis to each donee with no gift tax. In addition, if you are married you can double the amount of the exclusion to $26,000 per donee, because you and your spouse can combine your exemptions in a single gift from either of you.

**Equipment Purchases** – If you are in business and purchase equipment, you may make a “Section 179 Election” which allows you to expense currently otherwise depreciable property. For 2010 and 2011, under a new law just enacted, you may elect to expense up to $500,000 of equipment costs (with a phase out for purchases in excess of $2,000,000) if the asset was placed in service during 2010. Former law had the numbers at $250,000 for 2010 and $255,000 for 2011. Therefore, between now and the end of the year, if you previously maxed out the old $250,000 amount for 2010, you now have an additional $250,000 you can invest in your business and deduct.

**Bonus Depreciation** – Although originally not in effect for 2010, new legislation enacted in September, for 2010, taxpayers meeting certain criteria can claim a 50% bonus depreciation allowance. In order to claim the additional depreciation, the following criteria must be met: (1) the original use of the property must begin with the taxpayer after December 31, 2007, and before January 1, 2011; (2) the property must be acquired by the taxpayer in 2010.

**Business Credit for Retention of Certain Newly-Hired Indi- viduals in 2010** – For qualified employers in tax years ending after March 18, 2010, the current year general business credit is increased for each retained worker by the lesser of: (a) $1,000, or (b) 6.2% of the wages paid to the retained worker during the 52 consecutive week period for a “retained worker”.

With a little effort and some careful planning, it’s possible your state and local sales tax instead of state and local income taxes. The most commonly used method for tax-free giving is the annual gift tax exclusion, which allows you to make a gift of up to $13,000 on an annual basis to each donee with no gift tax. In addition, if you are married you can double the amount of the exclusion to $26,000 per donee, because you and your spouse can combine your exemptions in a single gift from either of you.

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This year marks a significant milestone for business law firm, Dean Mead. The firm is celebrating 30 years in business. Dean Mead celebrated the landmark achievement with 150 clients, business associates and community leaders at the Sunrise Theatre on November 7. Festivities included two receptions and a special performance by Spanish guitar phenomenon, Benise. Additional events have been held throughout the year across central Florida at each of the firm’s offices to commemorate the anniversary.

Established in 1980, the firm currently has three offices in Florida including Orlando, Viera and Fort Pierce, with a new office opening January 1, 2011 in Gainesville, Florida. The Treasure Coast office opened in 1987 when Michael D. Minton, president of Dean Mead, returned to his hometown of Fort Pierce. The office has expanded to represent a diverse client base throughout the Treasure Coast and across the state, and conducts business under the name Dean, Mead, Minton & Zwemer.

Today, there are nearly 50 attorneys practicing in multiple practice areas including: tax, estate and succession planning, corporate, general commercial litigation, employee benefits, bankruptcy and creditors’ rights, real estate, water law and health law. Eight attorneys are located in Dean Mead’s Fort Pierce office.

About Dean Mead: Dean Mead is a business law firm that provides full-service legal representation to businesses and individuals throughout Florida. Community service is a key element of Dean Mead’s core philosophy. Attorneys and staff have invested in the local community by fulfilling leadership roles throughout the Treasure Coast, including positions within the United Way of St. Lucie County, St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute (HBOI), Indian River State College Foundation, Treasure Coast Food Bank, Children’s Services Council of St. Lucie, St. Lucie Council on Aging, Economic Development Councils of St. Lucie and Okeechobee Counties, Sunrise Theatre, Main Street Fort Pierce, Inc. and Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Lucie, Indian River and Okeechobee Counties. For more information, please visit www.deanmead.com.
Nemschick Gallery Watercolors Dazzle with Bursts of Energy

Mike Nemschick, affectionately called “Mayor Mike” by Art Bank artists, is the stalwart of the Art Bank. A dedicated artist, Mike can be found every day of the week hard at work in his third floor loft studio. On weekends he is at the Farmer’s Market selling his work and spreading goodwill. A proprietor of sorts, Mike diligently manages studio suites and greets visitors in his personable style. His energy and vitality is infectious as he explains his style known as “Modular Mosaics.” “I let the color form on their own … and they can be enhanced. I developed a style that people said looked like stained glass and to that end I made laminated prints which often looked better. Then I cut modular shapes and left the edges showing to resemble leaded glass, melding to mediums – watercolor and stained glass which is unrequited beauty.”

The effect is stunning and truly unique. His range varies from intense to sublime; his color palette is bold. The abstractness of his landscapes ("I always do landscapes.") takes you to new worlds beyond a distant, dreamy horizon. Although his major theme is landscapes, the sky determines the scenery. Originality and hard work are qualities in his final pieces and they are expertly framed. “I never use ink. The colors are drawn to the edge.”

Nemschick’s one man show opened in a flash at the Art Bank in January and included over 20 original pieces. His line work is controlled in a way that evokes the delicate segments of a magnified leaf. Many of his naturescapes are of trees. “Trees have 360 degrees of character. You can walk around a tree and see 360 different versions of the same tree.” His trees come in many varieties but take on a representational form and are void of individual leaves.

Oddly, his vocation began watching his father work his trade as a map maker and surveyor. In frustration, his father would become upset when drops of water would spill on a map, but the result was magic in Mike’s view. The splotches appeared and formed beautiful shapes on the paper. Mike knew then that he wanted to be an artist. His first works were coffee stains as art and from there his designs evolved.

“Sundown Blues” did gain entry in the Backus Museum “Best of the Best” show. Nemschick Gallery Watercolors celebrates its 1-year anniversary this month, so stop by the third floor of the Art Bank and offer your congratulations to Mike. For commissions and pricing, contact Nemschick Gallery Watercolors at 954-547-1992.
February’s Fabulous Family Fun!

by Brandi Llanas

February is always a busy month on the Treasure Coast. Visitors and part-time residents flock south for warmer weather. During this month many fairs & festivals offer activities, food and fun for families.

On Saturday, February 26th, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., join the fun at the Manatee Center for the 15th Annual Nature Fest & Environmental Festival! Visitors & children of all ages are invited to this FREE and fun-filled event. Originally an Earth Day event, Nature Fest has grown each year with more exhibitors, activities, and visitors. This year, past Nature Fest favorites such as the Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital and the St. Lucie Co Sheriff’s Office – C.O.P. Marine Unit, will exhibit their birds of prey and the C.O.P. boat respectively. Manatee Center Volunteers will provide fresh-popped popcorn, fresh baked goods, and ice cold soft drinks. Apostles Faith Church will provide yummy southern favorites such as collard greens.

Throughout the day, “Moe the Manatee,” the Manatee Center’s loveable mascot, will be on hand for pictures and hugs. Children of all ages can stop and have their face painted, play games, meet our critters, and create their own works of art. Other exhibits at the Manatee Center include seven aquariums with live animals that are from various habitats such as reefs, sand flats, freshwater ecosystems, and an underwater dock display.

Visit the Vanishing Mermaid Gift Shop to find hundreds of nature-related items such as jewelry, books, tee shirts, toys, and home decorative accessories. Stop in and see the special gift shop deals just for Nature Fest. Enjoy the festivities and see all exhibitors, native plants, demonstrations, touch tanks, face painting, and more! With all of the fun activities planned, don’t miss this great and FREE family event.

For additional information about Nature Fest call Brandi at 466-1600, ext. 3071.

To find out more about upcoming events, camps, programs, and general information, visit www.manateecenter.com. You can also become a fan of the Manatee Center on Facebook and receive upcoming event information.

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Organic farming isn’t easy, but it’s worth it. Jim and Brenda Gibbons are the Downtown Farmers’ Market of Fort Pierce’s only organic farmers and they believe going through the extensive certification process to grow organically is worth the trouble and the expense. “Organic farming is healthy, but it’s not less expensive.” Brenda Gibbons says. “We grow our vegetables and fruits without synthetic chemical pesticides or fertilizers. We do this to produce healthy food and protect and nurture the environment.”

At their farm on Kings Highway in western Fort Pierce, the Gibbons farm about two acres intensely. Jim Gibbons works full-time at farming, but Brenda is both a career nurse and farms when she’s not nursing. Brenda Gibbons serves on the Downtown Farmers Market Board and she has been a vendor almost as long as the market has been open. Brenda has a passion to deliver fresh, locally-grown, healthy food to Fort Pierce residents and five years ago was the primary force behind the Market’s move from seasonal to year round. Brenda and Jim are faithful vendors. They cite the “fabulous venue” of Marina Square and close proximity to Historic Downtown as reasons they love the Market and Downtown Fort Pierce. “We mingle with lots of people at the Market. Our customers become our friends. When we’re working at the market we are helping the local economy,” says Brenda.

Both Jim and Brenda Gibbons say a market shopper should be able to ask a vendor where and how the produce is grown, and how to prepare it. Market shoppers quickly find out they can get these answers from Brenda. She provides directions on how to prepare vegetables and fruits, and she often has written recipes to hand to shoppers. Fifty-year residents of Fort Pierce, Jim and Brenda moved the farming operation from an off-shore location to Fort Pierce in 2000 and in the process, made the decision to farm organically. “It was the right thing to do,” says Jim.

Downtown Farmers’ Market of Fort Pierce is open every Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon at Marina Square in Downtown Fort Pierce. Call 772-940-1145 or find us on Facebook or on the web at www.ftpiercefarmersmarket.com.

Gibbons’ Organic Farm: Organic Farming is Worth It! by Linda Hudson

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Winter Weather Persists by Dan Dannahower

Our winter weather pattern continues. It has been cold for a while now and there seems to be no letting up. Palm trees, coconut plums, ground orchids, copper plants; the list goes on and on of our local trees and shrubs that are brown and maybe dead while others have ignored the cold and are green as ever. Records have been set with two or three major cold spells hitting us in the last few months. Many of the crops that supply the nation with vegetables and fruits have been wiped out. In short, we’ve seen some of the coldest winter yet to hit the Treasure Coast in years.

Despite the cold conditions we’ve seen here, I’ve been traveling around the country lately and everywhere I went was just as cold or colder. The good news is we will warm up sooner than all those other places. We are blessed with mild winters and although we get these occasional cold spells, they don’t last long. The temperatures will soon rise back to 70 degrees and we will be able to once again wear our shorts to the beach.

Fishing, boating, picnicking hiking are just some of the things that our local environment allows us to do whether it’s cold or not. Our local waters offer both inshore and offshore fishing that’s second to none. From pelagic game fish offshore like dolphin and sailfish to snappers and redfish inshore there is a huge palette for everyone from the offshore sport fisherman to the family catching bottom fish from a dock or beach. Numerous opportunities are available from picnicking to hiking to spending time on the beach. Get out and enjoy our wonderful natural resources.

Winter Weather Persists

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Gibbons’ Organic Farm: Organic Farming is Worth It! by Linda Hudson

Organic farmers, Brenda and Jim Gibbons, have been selling vegetables and fruits in their farm in western Fort Pierce. They use organic farming methods to grow healthy, fresh food. They believe going through the certification process is worth the trouble and the expense.

At their farm on Kings Highway in western Fort Pierce, the Gibbons farm about two acres intensely. Jim Gibbons works full-time at farming, but Brenda is both a career nurse and farms when she’s not nursing. Brenda Gibbons serves on the Downtown Farmers Market Board and she has been a vendor almost as long as the market has been open. Brenda has a passion to deliver fresh, locally-grown, healthy food to Fort Pierce residents and five years ago was the primary force behind the Market’s move from seasonal to year round. Brenda and Jim are faithful vendors. They cite the “fabulous venue” of Marina Square and close proximity to Historic Downtown as reasons they love the Market and Downtown Fort Pierce. “We mingle with lots of people at the Market. Our customers become our friends. When we’re working at the market we are helping the local economy,” says Brenda.

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