Highwaymen Heritage Trail Ribbon Cutting
see page 6

A.E. Backus Continues to Pass It On
see page 16
February is the month to get out and fall in love with Fort Pierce. There is so much to do, things to see — get out and get moving.

Art lovers can enjoy numerous art galleries such as the A.E. Backus Gallery & Museum, ArtMundo, the Orange Avenue Studios and the St. Lucie Art Association. Enjoy the Sunrise Theatre, the Manatee Observation & Education Center, Lisa’s Kayaks and so much more. The Fort Pierce Marina is home to the finest fishing charters on the east coast of Florida.

Not many cities have that special water view we take for granted or such a rich history that dates back to the turn of the century. There are several restaurants that offer waterfront dining. We also have the popular Sailfish Brewing Company for beer lovers and Uncle Carlo’s Gelato to satisfy your sweet tooth.

Our downtown offers clothing stores, jewelry shops, hair salons, spas and a first rate flower shop. March is an exciting month with our “Taste of the Sea Food & Sandy Shoes” Festival. Would you like to volunteer? We need help with the VIP room, Iron Chef Competition, Squeeze Off and much more. During the year we have many positions available both in the office and during our events. You can write for the Focus magazine or pour beer during Friday Fest. Call me today and I’ll sign you up!

I encourage YOU to become involved in our downtown by joining Main Street Fort Pierce as a member. Your membership dollars can be found hard at work — Main Street puts on more than 30 events yearly; most are free to the public. Call today at (772) 466-3880. I hope you are in love with Fort Pierce and please remember to shop local!

Falling in Love with Historic Downtown Fort Pierce

by Sue Dannahower

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**Calendar**

**Dine, Shop and Enjoy Beautiful, Historic, Downtown Fort Pierce!**

**MONTHLY EVENTS**

**February 19, Friday:** Coffee With the Mayor — 8:00 a.m. at Fort Pierce Yacht Club; sponsored by Waste Management of FL, Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; www.mainstreetfortpierce.org.

**February 19 & 20, Friday & Saturday:** Kyman Entertainment & Laur Enterprises Present: All-Star Doo-Wop Weekend South 4’l — 8:00 p.m.; Tickets $75/$69/$49/$39; call 461-4775 for more information or visit sunrisetheatre.com.

**February 20, Friday:** Highwaysmen Heritage Trail — Ribbon cutting at 10 a.m.; meet & greet, guided Trail tours, Art Show & Festival; see story on page 6; www.thehighwaysmentrail.com.

**February 21, Sunday:** Melissa Etheridge — This is M.E. Solo Tour — 7:00 p.m.; Tickets $79/$69; call 461-4775 for more information or visit sunrisetheatre.com.

**February 22, Monday:** Ellen DeGeneres — 8:00 p.m.; tickets $89/$85; call 461-4775 for more information or visit sunrisetheatre.com.

**February 23, Tuesday:** David Feherty — Live Off Tour — 7:00 p.m.; Tickets $59 VIP/$55; call 461-4775 for more information or visit sunrisetheatre.com.

**February 24, Wednesday:** Hotel California — A Salute to the Eagles — 7:00 p.m.; Tickets $45/$39; call 461-4775 for more information or visit sunrisetheatre.com.

**February 25, Thursday:** Mickey & The Mouse Factory — 7:00 p.m.; Tickets $55/$45; call 461-4775 for more information or visit sunrisetheatre.com.

**February 26, Friday:** An Evening with Grammy Nominated Vocalist Gema Pearl — 8:00 p.m. at Sunrise Black Box Theatre; Tickets $20; call 461-4775 for more information or visit sunrisetheatre.com.

**February 27, Saturday:** The Australian Bee Gees Show — 8:00 p.m. Tickets $45/$39; call 461-4775 for more information or visit sunrisetheatre.com.

**February 28, Sunday:** The Beach Boys — 7:00 p.m., Tickets $75/$69; call 461-4775 for more information or visit sunrisetheatre.com.

**WEEKLY EVENTS**

**Tuesdays:** Jazz Jam at the Sunrise Black Box Theatre — 7:00 – 10:00 p.m.; 460-5299.

**Wednesdays:** Wednesday Green Market — 8:00 a.m. at Sunrise Black Box Square; 971-8480.

**Thursdays:** Live music every Thursday of every month; Located at the Fort Pierce Riverwalk Center; is located at 600 North Indian River Drive in Fort Pierce.

**Saturdays:** Saturdays: The Jazz Market — 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Sunrise Black Box; 460-5299; www.sunrisetheatre.com. The event is hosted by the Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society 772-460-5299; www.jazzsociety.org.

**Sundays:** Sundays: Fort Pierce Farmer’s Market — 8:00 a.m. to Noon; Marina Square on Melody Lane; Market Manager, 940-1145.

**FEBRUARY 2016**

**NEW WEBSITE FOR FORT PIERCE HERITAGE TRAILS**

The official website for the City of Fort Pierce’s Zora Neale Hurston Dust Tracks Heritage Trail is now up and running.

The City finalized an inter-local agreement with St. Lucie County in July to assume responsibility for the trail, which chronologically represents Ms. Hurston’s life in Fort Pierce. The new website, located at www.cityoffortpierce.com/386/Zora-Neale-Hurston has been under construction since that time.

The Trail was originally funded through a grant from the Florida Humanities Council and constructed in collaboration with the City of Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County School District, St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners, St. Lucie County Historical Commission, the St. Lucie County Cultural Affairs Department and the St. Lucie Historical Society. St. Lucie County and the City of Fort Pierce were awarded a 2004 Roy F. Kenzie Award by the Florida Redevelopment Association, naming the Trail the “Outstanding Cultural Enhancement” for the year.

“We are honored to provide the Zora Neale Hurston Dust Tracks Heritage Trail and accompanying website for our citizens and visitors,” explained Fort Pierce City Mayor Linda Hudson. “Ms. Hurston is an integral part of Fort Pierce’s cultural history, and we are very proud to commemorate her life and accomplishments.”

Questions regarding the Zora Neale Hurston Dust Tracks Heritage Trail and accompanying website can be directed to 772-467-3169 or via email eowoodruff@city.fpierce.com.

**Treasure Coast Pirate Fest Fort Pierce: February 5th – 7th**

The 2016 Treasure Coast Pirate Fest Fort Pierce will take place February 5th to February 7th at Veterans Memorial Park/Riverwalk Center for three fun-filled days of family-friendly piracy.

The event will feature pirate-themed attractions such as a Living History Pirate Encampment, Blackbeard’s Pirate Ship, Costume Contests, Pirate Weapon Demonstrations and a Pirate’s Ball on Friday night for people 18 and older.

Shop the arts and crafts vendors, enjoy some great food and drink, and listen to live music as you spend your day among pirates and wenches.

**Admission**

The event hours are Friday from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Veterans Memorial Park/ Riverwalk Center is located at 600 North Indian River Drive in Fort Pierce.

**Admission to the festival is a Buck-N-Ear, that be $2 for ye landlubbers.**

For more information please visit www.TreasureCoastPirateFest.com, call 561-792-0960 or e-mail info@portevent.com.
**Highwaymen Heritage Trail Ribbon Cutting Set For February 20**

*by Libby Woodruff*

If you traveled Florida Route 1 in the 1960s, you may have encountered young African American artists selling lushly-painted Florida landscapes from the trunks of their cars. Jim Crow segregation prevented the painters from entering galleries — so they sold their works at motels, businesses and to tourists for $15 to $25 a piece. It is estimated that they created and sold more than 200,000 paintings by the end of the 20th Century.

Many of the blossoming painters were inspired and mentored by Fort Pierce’s world-renowned landscape artist Albert Earnest “Bean” Backus, creator of richly-detailed depictions of “Old Florida” scenery. Along with Backus, Lincoln Park Academy art teacher, Zanobia Jefferson, helped propel the young entrepreneurs to paint their way out of picking citrus and tomatoes, using wall-board as their canvas and crown molding for frames.

This loosely associated group of twenty-five men and one woman came to be known as The Highwaymen. Mostly from Fort Pierce, the artists were inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame in 2004. Their paintings now sell for thousands of dollars and are sought after by collectors throughout the world.

A guided trail tour will begin immediately following the ribbon cutting. The First Annual Highwaymen Art Show featuring many of the original Highwaymen artists, and a family-friendly festival, will continue along beautiful Moore’s Creek Linear Park until 5:00 p.m. People wishing to participate in the guided trail tour are asked to RSVP by February 10th to 772-467-3169 or email ewoodruff@city-ftpierce.com.

The Highwaymen Heritage Trail and accompanying website (TheHighwaymenTrail.com) is a four-year project underwritten by two grants from the Florida Humanities Council (FHC) and the City of Fort Pierce. Scholarly research, videographers, website and graphic art designers, area schools, teachers, students, local citizens and many of the original Highwaymen artists contributed to the project’s design and content.

While you are here, be sure to experience A Tribute to the Humanitarian Legacy of A.E. Backus, an exhibit at the A.E. Backus Museum and Gallery that will feature vintage paintings by The Highwaymen (1950 – 1995). The exhibit will run from February 19 through March 11. The Backus Museum will also hold a Vintage Highwaymen Tent Sale from February 19 to 21 and is offering free admission to the museum during the Highwaymen Trail festivities. The A.E. Backus Museum and Gallery is located at 500 South Indian River Drive.

Please call Fort Pierce City Hall 772-467-3169 or email ewoodruff@city-ftpierce.com for more information or if you would like your business or nonprofit to participate in the First Annual Highwaymen Art Show and Festival.

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Paid for by Re-Elect Mayor Linda Hudson, Mayor, Fort Pierce, Rev-Partisan
How to Choose Your Style of Wedding Cake
by Staci Dunn

Here comes the bride! A great deal of effort goes into planning a wedding before a blushing bride can hear that magical tune. Weeks and months of planning every little detail, from the table settings to the honeymoon and everything in-between, including choosing the perfect wedding cake.

With the infinite amount of choices, how’s does a couple choose the right cake for their special day? How do they choose a cake that represents their personalities, their style, and their future life together? The cake should be everything they dreamed about — beautiful, delicious and affordable.

A professional cake artist can answer these and many other questions. At The Cake Lady Custom Cakes, in downtown Fort Pierce, we try to educate our clients on the best way to make those decisions, and meet all of their needs without buying more than they need or really want.

The wedding cake is a very important focal point of your reception. It is the one thing that should pull your wedding theme, colors, centerpieces, flowers, dress and venue all together. When considering your wedding cake, it

NatureFest 2016

Take a walk on the wild side at the Manatee Observation & Education Center’s NatureFest 2016, celebrating our twentieth year of environmental stewardship. NatureFest 2016 will be held on Saturday, February 27th from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This day-long environmental festival features over 25 exhibitors showcasing the Treasure Coast’s wildlife, natural resources and Florida’s great outdoors!

This family-friendly event is free to the public and features non-stop activities! Hands-on environmentally focused entertainment is planned throughout the day to include wildlife exhibits, touch tank demonstrations, mural painting, and special appearances by MOEC mascot, “Moe the Manatee.” Learn about eco-gardening, fishing, and boating safety. The fun and festivities are free; multiple food concessions will be available and boat tours may be purchased in the gift shop.

For exhibitor information, please contact Tressa at 466-1600, ext. 3334. Sponsorships are available for as little as $100 and available by calling 772.429.8597 or emailing donate@ManateeEducationCenter.org.

The Manatee Observation and Education Center is located at 480 N. Indian River Drive, along the waterfront in historic downtown Fort Pierce. Come join us!
is ultimately important that you trust your cake artist, that you communicate well together, and that you know they can create a custom cake that will add a special touch to this very special occasion.

WeddingWire, BridalFantasyShow.com and many other wedding referral sites, strongly suggest using a professional, licensed and insured bakery. There are many talented home bakers, but a licensed bakery must adhere to strict sanitation and food safety codes to get a license as well as offer a quality product at a fair price.

Once you have chosen a bakery the next step would be to determine your wedding cake budget. One publication, “The Knot,” points out that custom wedding cakes can cost anywhere between $3 and $30 per serving, depending on the choices of design, flavor, accents, shape and overall work involved.

At our shop, we have a very affordable per serving price regardless of the size, design, shape or flavor. We also offer a few economical alternatives such as cupcake towers or a simple sheet cake, out of the eye of the guests. Using fresh flowers or silk flowers can also be much less expensive than using handmade sugar flowers. While handmade sugar flowers are unique and beautiful, they can be expensive.

We also ask a few simple, telltale questions. Have you chosen a venue? A venue can tell a cake artist a lot about who you are as a person’s style. For example, if you’re getting married in a church, you are probably more traditional and would prefer a more traditional design/style of wedding cake.

Another important factor to consider is where the cake is going to be displayed. Is it going to be outdoors or indoors? Determining this can help make the important decision of buttercream icing or fondant. Although slightly more expensive, a fondant cake can last a bit longer than buttercream icing cakes if it is being displayed outside.

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What’s your favorite color? That’s the next question we ask. Wedding cake colors can be as broad as the color spectrum. All white wedding cakes are beautiful and elegant, but in these modern times, cakes can also be bold colors and still be extraordinarily beautiful, so don’t be afraid of color.

Lastly, we talk about flavor. Wedding cake flavors have come a long way from being the traditional, all white cake. One of our most popular flavors is our signature flavor; lavender and lemon. It’s a delicious, light, moist and unique flavor that your guests will be talking about for months after the rings have been exchanged.

It is important to remember when choosing a wedding cake flavor that it is impossible to please everyone. Known allergies should be considered, but outside of that, your wedding cake should be a flavor(s) that you enjoy. What’s your favorite fruit? What’s your favorite ice cream flavor? Are you a salty or sweet treat eater? Consider those things when choosing the flavor(s) that is right for you. At our custom cake shop we offer over 80 delicious flavors, so we are confident we can accommodate all taste preferences.

Whether you choose a traditional, whimsical or theme cake, a vanilla cake or a luscious lavender cake, cupcakes or a five-tier edible work of art, remember that after the tables have been cleared, the doors to the venue have been locked and your beautiful wedding gown has been packed away, you have the rest of your lives together and we wish you many more best days of your lives. So relax, enjoy and remember you can have your cake, and eat it too.

The same can be true if you were getting married on the beach or at a botanical garden. Those couples are usually most happy with a less traditional or theme-styled wedding cake with seashells or a variety of flowers. Considering the wedding venue is a good next step when choosing your wedding cake style.

Another important factor to consider is where the cake is going to be displayed. Is it going to be outdoors or indoors? Determining this can help make the important decision of buttercream icing or fondant. Although slightly more expensive, a fondant cake can last a bit longer than buttercream icing cakes if it is being displayed outside.

CAKE ... continued from page 9

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The Sunrise Theatre Foundation is proud to host the Second Annual Cattlemen’s Dance on Saturday, February 20th from 6 to 11 p.m. at Adams Ranch. The Foundation is excited to organize this dance for the community again. Last year’s event was very successful with over 350 people choosing a “western” good time. All proceeds will benefit the Sunrise Theatre Foundation which brings the performing arts and cultural enrichment to our local children and the Treasure Coast community.

The Sunrise Theatre Foundation is pleased to announce Bev Smith Automotive Group as the event’s Premier Sponsor for the second year. Carter’s Grocery is providing a delicious BBQ meal, packed with true country cooking!

After eating his hearty meal, guests can enjoy the music of Tom Jackson, Nashville recording artist, and his band. They will provide a variety of country dance and toe-tapping music and the Wild Rides Country Dance Group will teach the guests line dancing and couples’ dancing.

Dust off your western boots and hat and join us for an evening of entertainment, food and just plain fun under the stars. Tickets are $50 per person and each ticket includes one complimentary drink.

Tickets are available through the Sunrise Theater box office on Second Street, Carter’s Grocery on Orange Avenue, Eli’s Western Wear in Okeechobee, Big John’s in Fort Pierce, and REMAX – Masterpiece Realty on Gatlin Blvd. in Port St. Lucie or call (772) 359-8198 for other locations.

For more information about this event, to become a sponsor, or to learn more about the Sunrise Theatre Foundation’s role in the community, please call (772) 359-8198.

Disclaimer: This event is not tied to or endorsed by the St. Lucie County Cattlemen’s Association.

❖
Love, Jazz Community: Twenty Years of Jazz

by Don Bestor, President, Fort Pierce Jazz Society

Twenty years ago, Darryl Bey, Larry Lee, Jr., and a group of individuals who loved music — particularly jazz — got together to create the Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society. For twenty years, we've been providing great music performed by terrific musicians, and helping to spread the music throughout the Treasure Coast. Along the way, we've provided over $100,000 in scholarships for aspiring young musicians from St. Lucie, Indian River, and Martin Counties through annual scholarship programs. You can surely understand why we're so excited to be celebrating our 20th birthday, and we'd like to invite you to share in our year of fun and festivities.

In addition to our usual Tuesday Night Jazz Jams at the Sunrise Black Box Theatre in historic downtown Fort Pierce and our twice-monthly Wednesday Evening Jazz Jams at the Port St. Lucie Botanical Gardens, the Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society is long-known for the incredible talent and variety we bring each year to our Jazz Week celebration. To help celebrate our 20th birthday, we've stepped up our Jazz Week festivities another notch — if that's possible — and the entire community is invited to enjoy free concerts featuring some of the finest music you've ever heard, performed by seasoned professionals whose credits include sharing the stage with some of the world's most highly-respected musicians.

This year's Jazz Week will start on Saturday, March 26th, as we provide an assist to our wonderful friends at Main Street Fort Pierce through the fabulous Sandy Shoes Festival, and we'll keep your toes tapping and your fingers snapping for a full week of fun with our official Jazz Week Celebration starting on Sunday, March 27th, with the triumphant return of Waterside Blues, featuring the inimitable Otis Cadillac and the Sublime Seville Sisters. You bring a lawn chair and a smile, and we'll take care of everything else to make your Sunday afternoon at Waterside Blues one of the most memorable concerts ever.

But it doesn't stop there! Every single day of Jazz Week, we'll feature a Brown Bag Lunch Concert, free and open to the public, hosted waterside on Melody Lane in Fort Pierce right near the Fort Pierce Library and the beautiful Indian River. In addition to the daily free concerts, we'll host our regular Tuesday evening Jazz Jam at the Sunrise Black Box with very special entertainment to commemorate Jazz Week. On Wednesday evening, you'll be Dancing in the Streets with the fabulous FDO — the 17-piece Swingin' Big Band designed For Dancing Only. Wear your dancing shoes and be ready for big fun all evening long.

Free daily concerts, a special evening of dancing, an opportunity to hear live, local, professional music performed by some of the world's finest musicians, and an opportunity to help pave the way for future generations of musicians through our scholarship programs, master classes, school performances, and a variety of contributions to the community through events and activities — it's no wonder the Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society has been growing and glowing throughout the Treasure Coast for twenty years! And it's no wonder we're so excited to invite you to our very special twentieth birthday party.

Mark your calendar now, and grab your party hat and noisemaker because we're going to turn the entire year into a birthday bash you'll never forget! We're pulling out all the stops, so don't be surprised to see us pull a few more fun surprises out of our sleeves as we celebrate twenty years of music, fun, and community. If you'd like to learn more about Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society, become a member, or volunteer, please visit us at www.jazzsociety.org, or call us today at 772-460-JAZZ.

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Fish, Oysters, and Then There was Pineapple

The first settlement in St. Lucie County was Edgartown, established in the mid 1800s. The area that is presently downtown Fort Pierce was called “Can Town” because of the oyster cannery located there. Eventually Fort Pierce was incorporated in 1901. It is one of the oldest communities on the east coast of Florida and was known for its fishing, canning of fish and pineapple.

Madison Estate Gallery & Boutique

by Pam Gillette

Rosie Wright and Carol Mazza are cousins from New Jersey who turned their passion of lovely living into a thriving business. Rosie and Carol started their business 6 years ago in a warehouse. Soon the space became too small and they moved to Oleander and Midway occupying 5 store fronts and about 3,000 square feet. At the end of 2015 they decided to expand some more by moving their growing business to Historic Downtown Fort Pierce.

Madison Estate Gallery & Boutique is now located at the historic Butterfield Building at the corner of US 1 and Avenue A. The shop is a 6,000-square-foot gallery of affordable furnishings and décor, along with Carol’s Boutique of clothing, jewelry and accessories and is truly the next level shopping experience for the adventurous spirit.

Madison Estate Gallery is the passion of Rosie Wight. Rosie says “Our store is your playground to find one-of-a-kind gems!” She hand picks everything that comes into the shop and along with her fiancé, Kenny (who makes furniture), they have collected an eclectic array of items for your shopping experience. The shop has been set up with different areas focusing on Asian, Coastal, Garden, Local Art including Highwayman paintings, Safari and Tuscani pieces.

Madison Estate Gallery & Boutique carries Swan Creek 100% Soybean Wax and Republic of Tea products, tea cups and pots. In February, the shop will feature a tea demonstration with other special events to follow in upcoming months.

Madison Estate Gallery also holds off-site estate sales.

Carol’s Boutique is located within Madison Estate Gallery & Boutique. The boutique has jewelry, a variety of accessories including hats, scarves, hairclips, purses, watches, and clothing. Carol says if you buy a watch from her she will replace your watch battery for free for the life of your watch. Now that is a great deal.

Rosie Wright and Carol Mazza invite you to stop by and visit Madison Estate Gallery & Boutique. They would like you to meet Louie, their 14-year-old Chihuahua who is there every day to welcome people and inspires them to hold special events for their favorite charity, Dogs and Cat Forever. Rosie and Carol are proud of their new location and the merchandise they collected, so come and see them today for affordable furnishings, home décor, the boutique and much more!

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Ft. Pierce, FL 34950
A.E. Backus Continues to Pass It On

by Kathleen Fredrick

If Florida’s seminal landscape painter, Albert Ernest “Bean” Backus, was alive today he would rather be known as a great humanitarian than as a great painter. Backus, who died in 1990 at the age of 84, felt that his artistic talent was a gift he utilized and developed, while his lifetime of unassuming generosity and quiet social activism was a choice he made. Backus’ artistic and humanitarian legacies, inextricably linked through the American art phenomenon known as the Florida Highwaymen, will be celebrated by the A.E. Backus Museum during their annual Tribute to Backus Exhibition. It will be the first time this exhibit will not feature paintings by Backus but by his uniquely protégés, the Treasure Coast’s African American outsider artists known as the Florida Highwaymen. In February the A.E. Backus Museum will celebrate Backus’ artistic influence and unprecedented generosity with its exhibit Pass It On – Vintage Paintings by the Original Florida Highwaymen.

Pass It On will be on display February 17 to March 11. Curated by Highwaymen collector Roger Lightle of Vero Beach, the exhibit will showcase the very finest of early Florida Highwaymen paintings, focusing on the stellar works of Harold Newton. The public is invited to the opening reception Friday, February 19th from 6 to 8 p.m., which kicks off a citywide Highwaymen celebration. During the exhibitions opening weekend, Friday, February 19 to 21, the museum will host a weekend tent sale of vintage Highwaymen paintings available for purchase. On Saturday the 20th, the museum will feature lectures and tours of the exhibit while the City of Fort Pierce will be launching their new Florida Highwaymen Heritage Trail with a ribbon cutting, guided tours of their newest historical attraction, a festival and art exhibition featuring the surviving Highwaymen and their newest paintings available for purchase. All the events surrounding the Pass It On exhibit and the Florida Highwaymen are free to the public. The weekend will celebrate the seminal art history of Fort Pierce, the humanitarian and artistic influence of A.E. Backus and offer visitors an opportunity to discover why St. Lucie County is where Florida art began.

People often wonder why the Highwaymen started in and revolved around Fort Pierce. The answer to that question inevitably leads to the life and work of A.E. Backus. Born in 1906 along the banks of the Indian River Lagoon in Fort Pierce, Backus was primarily a self-taught artist. His only formal art training, paid for by his beloved Uncle Reg, consisted of two semesters spent studying graphic design in New York City. Upon his return, Backus attempted to repay his Uncle’s generosity. Declining money, Uncle Reg told his nephew to pay him back by “passing it on.” As his Uncle Reg instructed him to do, Backus passed it on to the Highwaymen and countless other aspiring artists. A.E. Backus, a successful white artist, was the teacher of the Florida Highwaymen’s founder, Alfred Hair, as well as mentor, art critic and benefactor to the original group of painters. Backus’ influence upon the Highwaymen is undeniable. If there was no Backus, there would be no Highwaymen.

Well known for his Bohemian lifestyle and open-minded attitudes, Backus’ studio-home was a gathering place for friends as commissioned salesmen who set up along the sides of the State’s highways; hence the name Florida Highwaymen. While Alfred Hair was the catalyst of the loosely associated group of 26 painters — give or take a few depending upon whom you ask — Harold Newton was widely regarded as the most talented and painterly. The more reclusive Newton was not driven for financial success like Hair. Instead he embarked on a life-long effort to emulate the successful compositions and techniques employed by A.E. Backus. Many of Newton’s paintings are near replicas of Backus’ paintings.

While other Highwaymen painters created generic glimpses of Florida’s landscapes, much like the view from the window of a passing car, Newton’s paintings felt more like his mentor’s, transporting the viewer to an idyllic location and a specific moment in time. You can almost feel the breeze and hear the mosquitos in a Newton painting. Emulating Backus, who was deeply inspired by the paintings of Claude Monet, Newton explored the effects of light upon a specific scene, painting variations of them repeatedly. Newton’s paintings differed greatly from the “fast grass,” hastily rendered paintings of Alfred Hair and the charmingly naive paintings of many of the other Highwaymen. For the Florida Highwaymen, painting like Backus was the ultimate goal. By all accounts, Harold Newton most successfully achieved that goal.

The majority of scenes depicted in Highwaymen paintings were templated upon Backus’ paintings. Frequent visitors to Backus’ studio, the aspiring painters employed a keen sense of observation. If a particular landscape was selling for Backus they copied it. Brilliant Royal Poinciana trees burst forth, wading birds in wetlands and ranchlands, rolling breakers on the beach, gaudy sunsets and quiet sunrises are all images garnered from Backus. Access to Backus’ paintings was essential to the Highwaymen’s development. Due to racial bigotry, many locations shown in Highwaymen paintings, such as ranches or beaches, were not accessible to the black artists. They saw them in Backus’ paintings and went home to paint variations of them.

Author Catherine Enns notes, “You can’t look at a Highwaymen and not think of a Backus.” Highwaymen paintings followed a formula which dictated an emphasis on economy of scale, predictable compositions, a limited palette and the repetitive creation of their most successful scenes. What the Highwaymen may have lacked in original themes, they made up for in originality of merchandising. Their shadowing of Backus’ theme and technique, especially through the exhibits. Continued on page 18...
outsider art movement is unique in American art history and has captured the imagination of virtually all who hear of it.

Always intent upon helping and encouraging the Highwaymen in their commercial endeavors, Backus was generous with his time, suggestions and supplies. In an effort to save on costly supplies, Backus counseled the Highwaymen to use the same cost-cutting tricks he had employed in his early career. He showed them how to paint on Upson board panels rather than canvas and to frame their paintings using molding available at the local lumber yard. Utilizing Backus’ suggestions, the Highwaymen were able to mass produce inexpensive, sturdy paintings, capable of withstanding the rigors of stacking — still wet in the trunk of a car — and affordable enough for an average working man to buy several. It was a brilliant production and marketing plan which yielded an estimated 100,000 or more paintings.

Those interested in learning more about A.E. Backus and the Florida Highwaymen are encouraged to attend the events sponsored by the A.E. Backus Museum and the City of Fort Pierce. For a schedule of events and more information visit the Museum’s website, BackusMuseum.com, call 772-465-0630 or follow the Museum on Facebook. The A.E. Backus Museum, founded in 1960, is located at 500 N. Indian River Drive, along the waterfront in historic downtown Fort Pierce. Regular hours: Wednesday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. Closed on Monday and Tuesday.

Historic Districts & Sites

Fort Pierce’s Office of Historic Preservation has designated six historic districts: Downtown, Avenue D, Edgartown, Oakland Park, River’s Edge and Sample Oaks. Within these districts are a large number of buildings that form the Fort Pierce Register of Historic Places. Several structures also have been individually named to the National Register of Historic Places, including the Old Fort Pierce Post Office on Orange Avenue, the original site of Fort Pierce on Indian River Drive and private residences such as Casa Caprona on Airport Boulevard.
Fort Pierce’s Own Cake Lady Custom Cake shop Wins a WeddingWire Couples’ Choice Award® 2016

WeddingWire, the leading global online wedding marketplace, named The Cake Lady Custom Cakes as a winner of the prestigious WeddingWire Couples’ Choice Awards® 2016 for wedding cakes on the Treasure Coast.

The WeddingWire Couples’ Choice Awards® 2016 recognizes the top five percent of wedding professionals in the WeddingWire network who demonstrate excellence in quality, service, responsiveness and professionalism. The esteemed awards are given to the top local wedding vendors in more than 20 service categories, from wedding venues to wedding florists, based on their professional achievements from the previous year.

While many industry award winners are selected by the host organization, the WeddingWire Couples’ Choice Awards® winners are determined solely based on reviews from real newlyweds and their experiences working with The Cake Lady. Award-winning vendors are distinguished for the quality, quantity, consistency and timeliness of the reviews they have received from their past clients.

“We are thrilled to celebrate such a high-caliber, committed group of professionals for the Couples’ Choice Awards® eighth year,” said Timothy Chi, CEO, WeddingWire. “We are proud to continue to serve as the industry leader, with over 2.5 million consumer and peer reviews, and feature award-winning merchants such as The Cake Lady Custom Cakes who understands the impact reviews have on their successful businesses.”

As a Couples’ Choice Awards® winner, The Cake Lady Custom Cakes is highlighted within the WeddingWire network, which is comprised of more than 400,000 wedding professionals globally.

The Cake Lady Custom Cake shop is proud to be one of the top wedding cake bakeries on the Treasure Coast in the WeddingWire network. We would like to thank our past clients for taking the time to review our business on WeddingWire. We value all of our clients and truly appreciate the positive feedback that helped us earn the WeddingWire Couples’ Choice Award® 2016.

For more information about The Cake Lady Custom Cakes, please visit our WeddingWire storefront today at www.weddingwire.com/thecakeladycustomcakes.

To learn more about the Couples’ Choice Awards®, please visit www.weddingwire.com/couples-choice-awards.
Jill and Dennis Licata had no idea that while driving through Historic Downtown Fort Pierce they would fall in love with this quaint little town and buy a business, but that’s just what they did. Fort Pierce is fortunate they made this decision and will benefit from the opening of Rizzo’s Tobacco Emporium and Side Door Lounge.

Jill and Dennis have a love for the sounds and era of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, Joey Bishop, and Tony Bennett. They are bringing that love to Rizzo’s Tobacco Emporium with a nostalgic throwback theme and the crooner’s sounds playing in the background. Dennis says “We want Rizzo’s to be a place where people can come in, relax, and enjoy with friends and family.”

Rizzo’s Tobacco Emporium will feature a new and improved humidor, cigars, fine cigarettes and tobacco products. Rizzo’s Side Door Lounge (located behind the tobacco shop) will also feature a makeover with new tables, a flat screen TV, and updated bar area. Rizzo’s Side Bar Lounge will serve 11 different wines, domestic, craft, and imported beers, and a gourmet coffee bar.

Rizzo’s Side Door Lounge will be holding special monthly events, including wine and cigar tastings. Live music in the courtyard is also coming soon. If you are having a special get together and are looking for a small place to host your party, the courtyard is available for rental.

Dennis and Jill would like to cordially invite the public to the grand opening of Rizzo’s Tobacco Emporium and Side Door Lounge on Thursday, February 11, in honor of Tony Bennett’s performance at the Sunrise Theatre that evening. Stop by and check out Rizzo’s Tobacco Emporium and Side Door Lounge located at 223 Orange Avenue, in historic downtown Fort Pierce. The hours are Tuesday through Thursday 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. or later, depending on the crowd, and closed on Sundays.

Rizzo’s Tobacco Emporium
by Pam Gillette
Pies in the Square: Happy Pies at Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers’ Market

by Eric Seibenick, Market Manager, Downtown Fort Pierce Farmer’s Market

Happy Pies was founded on Pi Day, of course, 3.14 in 2015, and named by 10-year-old Isabella, daughter of Ken and Jessica Mendez. Bringing back traditional pies from great grandma’s recipe, the family has stayed true to the homemade pie we’ve all crave, but with a focus on health, freshness and simple ingredients.

Florida natives and St. Lucie County residents, Ken and Jessica have embraced the Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers’ Market, bringing their unique southern country charm to help preserve the allure of the already happening downtown Fort Pierce area. With a background in medical care, focusing on preventing rather than treating diseases, they are driven to provide healthy and happy pies to folks each Saturday morning, rain or shine.

The Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers’ Market provides the setting for the entre-PIE-neurial spirit that keeps Happy Pies regulars coming back for the 4-inch mini personal pies or the 9-inch traditional size to share. Folks are encouraged to consume within several days as no preservatives are used but most are gone within minutes! Happy Pies uses unbleached whole-wheat flour, unrefined sugarcane and plant-based butter for the hand-rolled-from-scratch crusts that encase the fresh fruit fillings. Taking advantage of the abundant produce grown locally, there is a flavor to satisfy anyone — apple, peach, blueberry, strawberry, and mango as well as seasonal specials of nectarine, pineapple, and strawberry-rhubarb. Custom pies and masterPIEces can be made with just a call 24 hours in advance with names, numbers, 3-D, or multi-fruit combos — all piping hot and ready to go.

Homemade pie will not become a lost art with Happy Pies keeping it alive at the Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers’ Market every Saturday. Every day is a good day for pie, as well as the other great foods, produce and specialty products, a beautiful view and great music at the Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers’ Market each Saturday, rain or shine, from 8 a.m. until noon at Marina Square. It’s a Saturday morning tradition. ❖
Tech ByteS: Music Streaming Services
by Michael Lewis, Mike's Downtown Computer Repair

Streaming music to your computer or device is easy and inexpensive. These websites are just a few of online music streaming services that you can use for free with commercials: www.pandora.com, www.spotify.com, www.npr.org/music/radio, and www.youtube.com/red. Most of the sites offer commercial free music for a very small fee. You can also listen to music videos using online services like YouTube and Hulu online for free. These will also have commercials however it is an alternative to the full time streaming sites. All of the sites work with phones and tablets, so streaming music anywhere at almost anytime is now possible. Good luck and safe computing!

Mike's Downtown Computer Repair is located at 207 Orange Ave. Suite E in Fort Pierce; phone (772) 448-8153, cell (772) 480-3427.

Gifts From Your Freezer
This winter, warm up and fill up with big-batch soups, stews, and chowders from your freezer. Leftover soup will last up to 3 days in the fridge and several months in the freezer. Follow these steps on how to freeze and store soup and you’ll be set all winter long!

1. Cool. Refrigerators and freezers cannot cool soups quickly enough to be food safe. Speed up the cooling process by placing the pot of soup in a bath of ice water in the sink. Stir soup often to help release the heat.

2. Package. Label and date gallon- or quart-size zip-top plastic freezer bags. Ladle soup into each bag, then let out any excess air and seal.

3. Freeze. Lay bags flat in a single layer in the freezer; when frozen, stack bags to save space.


Have a Heart
by Kristen Batchers

February is a month of love, and with Valentine’s Day approaching, I want to talk about hearts. Not the candy kind or the kind teenage girls doodle on their notebooks in algebra class. Nope, I’m talking about that muscle in your chest that beats 100,000 times a day to keep blood pumping through your veins. Heart disease is the number one health threat to humans, but luckily it’s also one of the best understood. Diet, exercise and stress levels are the three biggest contributors to heart disease and can all be controlled with the right knowledge and application. The media and conflicting news reports can make it difficult to keep track of which foods are heart-healthy and just how much exercise you need. Keep reading for an update on ways to keep your ticker ticking.

Diet: According to the American Heart Association (AHA), the best heart-healthy diet is plant-based and rich in a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and legumes, with limited amounts of quality lean poultry and fish. Saturated fats, trans fats, red meat and sugar-sweetened foods should be avoided. Alcohol should be consumed in moderation, meaning no more than one drink a day for women and two a day for men. Because extra body fat stresses the heart, overall caloric intake should be controlled to maintain a healthy weight.

Exercise: Regular physical activity helps you maintain your weight and cardiovascular fitness. The AHA recommends we get at least 40 minutes of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise three or four times a week to lower the risk of heart attack and stroke. To increase activity, try working movement into your daily routine by parking in the back of the parking lot so you have to walk farther, taking the stairs whenever possible, using a standing desk at work or working from a standing height table at home, and going for walks during your lunch break or during visits with friends.

Stress: Stress affects your heart in two ways: 1) Directly — stress causes an increase in blood pressure and cortisol levels causing inflammation, arterial damage and plaque buildup, and; 2) Indirectly — increased cortisol levels can lead to overeating, smoking and drinking as self-soothing methods and, during times of high stress, healthy habits like exercise and socializing might get deprioritized. Exercise is one of the most effective methods of controlling stress, acting on both our bodies and minds to increase heart health. Engaging in social activities is a close second. Research shows that frequent social contact is correlated with lower rates of heart disease, while low levels of social contact and a perception of lack of social support is correlated with higher rates of heart disease.

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Winter Fishing
by Joe Payne

So the cold fronts are finally making their way down to us. These fronts create frequent weather patterns that affect the feeding patterns of many local fish species. Those windy white-capped days on the river can provide some great trout fishing. So be prepared for some wet weather with rain gear or dry warm clothing. Weather forecast is a method of predicting weather through the use of high-speed computers, specifically by the time integration of the fundamental equations of hydrodynamics in a mathematically modeled atmosphere. WOW! Let’s just stick with — it’s a prediction on what our weather will be like for the day. There are many apps and websites that are available to check on the weather and water before your fishing trip. I recommend trying www.wunderground.com or www.noaa.gov before your next fishing adventure. These websites give tides, wind, seas and rain prediction. Or for the native fisherman it only takes stepping outside and loading up to head out and fish in any weather that may occur.

Offshore weather can change fast with rough and choppy seas. The larger boats that do make it out are catching dolphin and kingfish. The schools of dolphin are out in deeper waters. A few large wahoo and cobia have also been caught.

Inshore early morning and late evening are usually best in the lagoon. The grass flats and around spoil islands work well when the water is warm. When cooler temperatures prevail try along cuts and channel edges where fish tend to hang deeper when it’s cold. In the lagoon, redfish and trout have been good. Catch and release snook are being caught.

Go out and catch a big one! ♥

Recipe Corner

By Sue Dannahower

Cajun Corn and Crab Bisque

We had this wonderful bisque on a trip to Nola’s in New Orleans. This is one of Emeril’s restaurants dishes. I’ve made it several times — always with wonderful reviews.

Roux

- 2 Tablespoons butter
- ¼ cup flour

Bisque

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup minced onions
- 1 cup uncooked corn, scraped from 3 ears
- 1 Tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 Tablespoons minced celery
- 1 cup crab, fish or clam stock
- 2 teaspoons salt
- ½ teaspoon white pepper
- 2 cups milk
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 teaspoon crab boil
- ½ pound lump crab, picked

½ cup chopped green onions
½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

Roux: Melt butter in a sauce pan over medium heat. Whisk in flour 1 tablespoon at a time. Whisk constantly until roux is thick and forms a ball, about 5 minutes. Do not burn. Set aside.

Bisque: Heat oil in a large pot over high heat. When oil is hot, add onions and corn. Sauté for 1 minute. Stir in garlic and celery. Sauté 30 seconds. Add the stock, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil. Stir in milk, cream and crab boil. Bring back to a boil, then reduce to simmer for 5 – 7 minutes. Whisk in roux, 1 tablespoon at a time. Reduce the heat to low and whisk until mixture thickens. Stir in crabmeat, green onions and Worcestershire. Simmer for 6 – 8 minutes. To serve, ladle 1 cup of bisque into 6 soup dishes. Serves 6.
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