TREASURE COAST HISTORY FESTIVAL
A one-day celebration of historical events in St. Lucie, Martin and Indian River counties

“Adams Ranch — Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow”
Presentation January 13, 10:30 a.m. at the Sunrise Theatre Black Box

See page 5
Happy New Year to all our volunteers, members, supporters and loyal Focus readers. We look forward our 30th year supporting historic downtown Fort Pierce. Our loyal members are an important part of the organization. If you are not a member I urge you to join today. There’s much to be done planning, designing and implementing projects and we can’t do it without you! Your personal involvement and membership commitment will help Main Street Fort Pierce accomplish goals, set new ones, and support downtown’s economic well-being, revitalization and cultural vibrancy in the very heart and soul of our downtown community.

Our volunteers are awesome. We are working on the Sandy Shoes Seafood & Brew to be held on Saturday, March 24, 2018. Numerous chairpersons and volunteers are needed. Please call the Main Street office (772) 466-3880 to volunteer for this event. Share your passion, ask a friend to volunteer! Main Street has over 30 events each year that are designed to bring people to downtown Fort Pierce. We couldn’t accomplish this without our volunteers. I wish all of you a healthy and prosperous 2018!

❖

by Sue Dannahower

Mayor Linda Hudson invites you to join her for Community News, Special Announcements, Complementary Coffee, Orchard Island Juice, Breakfast Treats, and more!

Friday, January 19, at 8:00 a.m.
at Fort Pierce Yacht Club
700 N. Indian River Drive, Fort Pierce

Sponsored by New Horizons

HOSTED BY Fort Pierce Yacht Club, Main Street Fort Pierce, Orchard Island Juice Company, and The City of Fort Pierce. Call Main Street Fort Pierce for more information at 772-466-3880.

January’s Fort Pierce Trolley Tours

NEW this year! January’s tours will relay stories from The Wild East – Tales from a Florida Frontier Town. The Wild East tours include accounts of frontier crimes and justice along the east coast of Florida and specifically Fort Pierce.

J A N U A R Y T O U R S
The Wild East – Life in a Florida Frontier Town
Tuesday, January 9 at 9:30 a.m. & 11 a.m.
Saturday, January 13 (during Treasure Coast History Festival) at 1:00 p.m. & 2:30 p.m.
Thursday, January 25 at 9:30 & 11 a.m.

Looking Forward to the Upcoming New Year in Historic Downtown

by Sue Dannahower

for this event. Share your passion, ask a friend to volunteer! Main Street has over 30 events each year that are designed to bring people to downtown Fort Pierce. We couldn’t accomplish this without our volunteers.

I wish all of you a healthy and prosperous 2018!
January 6 & 7, Saturday & Sunday: PARTNERS IN COMMAND BOATING COURSE by St. Lucie Power Squadron — 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; Education Seminar Program hosted by the Fort Pierce Yacht Club, 700 North Indian River Drive, Fort Pierce; register at www.fortpiercesailingclub.com; $40 per person.

January 9, Tuesday: HISTORIC TROLLEY TOUR, The Wild East: Life in a Florida Frontier Town — 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.; Tours begin at Seven Gables House; $10 per person; Reservations required; Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; www.mainstreetfortpierce.org.

January 9, Wednesday: HISTORIC TROLLEY TOUR, The Wild East: Life in a Florida Frontier Town — 12:00 p.m.; Town Hall; $10 per person; Reservations required; Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; www.mainstreetfortpierce.org.

January 9, Thursday: HISTORIC TROLLEY TOUR, The Wild East: Life in a Florida Frontier Town — 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.; Tours begin at Seven Gables House; $10 per person; Reservations required; Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; www.mainstreetfortpierce.org.

January 10, Friday: FRIDAY FEST — 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Marina Square & Melody Lane; Live music by Anderson Council: Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; www.mainstreetfortpierce.org.

January 11, Saturday: St. Lucie County Regional History Center, 772-462-1795 • www.stlucieco.gov/history, and the A.E. Backus Museum, 772-465-0630 • www.backusmuseum.com, are pleased to announce that Larry Lawson will also be held throughout the day. Registration for those tours are taken on the day of the festival. Additional outdoor exhibitions feature a history of treasure hunting on the Treasure Coast, local railway history, a history of the St. Lucie County Fair, a history of the architecture of William Hatcher, and a display on the Florida Heritage Trail, which highlights significant historical sites in the state. An "Authors Alley" will also be set up, featuring local authors Allen Balough, Rick Crary, Terry Howard, Erin Lomax, O.C. Peterson, Dana Philips and Jean Ellen Wilson. Books on Treasure Coast history will also be available from the Florida Classics Library and books on A.E. Backus and the Highwaysmen will be available from the A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery.

In addition to the all-day celebration in Fort Pierce, the Treasure Coast History Festival has also expanded to an An all-day festival featuring historical re-enactors, ghost tours, historical trolley rides and sessions on historical topics, will highlight this year's Treasure Coast History Festival in downtown Fort Pierce on Saturday, January 13. The free festival will also feature historical presentations in the Sunrise Theatre Black Box. The first session, on the history of the Adams Ranch, begins at 10:30 a.m. and features brothers Lee, Mike and Robbie Adams. They will talk about the ranch, beginning with its purchase by their grandfather in 1937, leading up to present day.

At 12:30 p.m., students from Indian River Charter High School will present excerpts from "American Jazz," a musical based on the discovery of recent letters between Waldo Sexton and author Zora Neale Hurston. A session at 1:30 p.m. features experts who will address the establishment of Fort Pierce as a military base in 1838, during the Second Seminole War.

Trolley tours that take participants to significantly important historical sites in Fort Pierce are scheduled for 1 and 2:30 p.m. For required reservations for the trolley tours, call 772.466.3880.

Free historical ghost tours led by paranormal investigator Larry Lawson will also be held throughout the day. Registration for those tours are taken on the day of the festival.

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evening session in Vero Beach on Thursday, January 11. That session, free and open to the public, begins at 7 p.m. at the Emerson Center, 1596 27th Ave., and will focus on the legacy of Vero Beach visionary Waldo Sexton, who created Vero Beach landmarks, including the McKee Botanical Gardens, the Driftwood Inn, the Ocean Grill, Patio Restaurant and Szechuan Palace Restaurant.

Feasted for the evening, will be Sexton grandchildren Sean Sexton, Mark Tripson, Jen Tripson, Bonnie Schwey, Randy Sexton, and many others. The evening promises a fast-paced discussion sharing up-close insights of their legendary grandfather. The presentation will also reveal the many and creative entrepreneurial paths the Sexton family has taken in art, agriculture, real estate, and historical preservation.

Both the presentation at the Emerson Center and festival in downtown Fort Pierce are free and open to the public as part of an annual celebration of Treasure Coast history produced by Fort Pierce-based Indian River Magazine Inc. The festival is cosponsored by CenterState Bank, Southern Eagle Distributing, East Coast Lumber & Supply Co., Main Street Fort Pierce, the Sunrise Theatre and the Emerson Center.

“The History Festival is intended to highlight significant events and personalities along the Treasure Coast,” said Indian River Magazine Publisher Gregory Enns, who is also chairman of the festival. “We want newcomers to learn more about their community and old-timers to help us reconnect with the past.”

During the January 13th celebration, Enns promises to announce a new project to help preserve history along the Treasure Coast. Last year, the magazine purchased a monument to announce a new project to help preserve history along the Treasure Coast. Last year, the magazine purchased a monument to mark the unmarked grave at Riverview Memorial Park of Treasure Coast. Last year, the magazine purchased a monument to mark the unmarked grave at Riverview Memorial Park of Treasure Coast. Last year, the magazine purchased a monument to mark the unmarked grave at Riverview Memorial Park of Treasure Coast. Last year, the magazine purchased a monument to mark the unmarked grave at Riverview Memorial Park of Treasure Coast.

Cynthia Barnett
Dr. Kitty Oliver

March 13 at the Sunrise Black Box
Dr. Gary Mormino
Florida and WWII
March 27 at the Backus Museum
Peggy MacDonald
Marjory Harris Carr: Defender of Florida’s Environment
April 10 at the Sunrise Black Box
Carrie Sue Ayvar
Doc Anna: Swamp Doctor of Florida

For more information on any of the lectures or to reserve a seat, you can call Main Street Fort Pierce at 772-466-3880 or e-mail mainstreet15@aol.com; or call the A.E. Backus Museum at 772-465-0630 or e-mail info@backusmuseum.com. You can also visit each organization’s website for more information on the lecture series and other events going on in Historic Downtown Fort Pierce: MainStreetFortPierce.org or BackusMuseum.com.

“Love Shack Pineapple” Colleen Hayes (pictured below on right) was the winner of the original watercolor “Love Shack Pineapple” painted by Colleen Nash Becht (left). The raffle was drawn on Thursday, December 7, at the Holiday Art Show at the Platts/Backus House in Fort Pierce.
The PERFECT place for unique and original gifts!

Gateway to the Peacock Arts District
101 N. U.S. 1, Suite 124
in the Arcade Building
At the corner of Orange Avenue and U.S. 1

35 Local Artists | Working Art Studios
Fine Art and Fine Crafts

Open Tuesday to Thursday 10 – 4, Friday 10 – 6, Saturday 8 – 3
Also Open for Artwalk Jan 19th, 5 – 8pm

artconnectionfp.com | artconnectionfp@gmail.com
772-801-5700
Backus’ Legacy Continues with Art Instruction Through the A.E. Backus Museum

by Holly Theuns

“Bean” Backus taught Alfred Hair to paint, and mentored and critiqued many of the other Highwaymen artists. He gave art lessons to many young people in Fort Pierce, so many in fact they were known as the “Backus Brats.” Backus’ love of art education is going to continue with a series of art classes and workshops, in a variety of mediums, taught by area artists offered through the A.E. Backus Museum beginning in January, 2018.

The instructors are all experienced artists themselves and the classes will be kept small to offer each student a lot of instructor attention. Joe Miller will be offering woodcarving; Gerald O’Sullivan is teaching both acrylic painting and drawing 101; Jewelry classes include workshops in fused glass by Barbara Warren and beaded jewelry by Jenny Shibona. Examples of Shibona’s beaded jewelry are for sale in the Museum store.

Classes begin in January, class sizes are limited and advanced registration is required. To register or get information on class details, costs and locations please call the A.E. Backus Museum at 772-465-0630 or visit the website, BackusMuseum.com, and look for classes under the Programs tab.

The Museum is pleased to continue Backus’ legacy as a teacher by offering art education in Fort Pierce. Please expand your horizons and take an art class. You will be glad you did.

Regular A.E. Backus Museum hours are Wednesday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, Noon to 4 p.m.; closed on Monday and Tuesday. The Museum is closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day. Admission is $5 per person; AARP, AAA, and Veterans with appropriate ID receive a $2 discount. Students with school ID, children under 18 and active duty military are always free. The first Sunday of the month is Family Day and admission is free.

P.P. Cobb General Store and Eatery has New Owners

by Britt Andersen

Annie Hogg’s picture hangs on the wall at the P.P. Cobb General Store. She is the first owner and reported resident ghost of the P.P. Cobb building. Danae Torre, new owner of the P.P. Cobb General Store, thanks her and bids her good night each evening at closing. P.P. Cobb was Annie’s assistant in the late 1800s and eventually bought the building. Annie, in her day, ran and protected her family’s business and recently her ghost saved Danae from a fire. A good ghost is nice to have around.

Danae loves the small feel of Fort Pierce and the people who live here. She and her 14-year-old son, Costa, have made this their home along with Danae’s mother and father. She bought a small farm west of town and raises turkeys, peacocks, ducks, goats, etc. She’s involved with wholesome, healthy foods without preservatives and her menu reflects that approach.

Speaking of food, the P.P. Cobb General Store & Eatery is open seven days a week from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m., Monday to Saturday, and 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. on Sunday. Danae lays claim to Sunday evening as family time. While Costa goes to school nearby you can find him every afternoon helping out and doing his homework. Danae’s father is a regular for lunch, chatting with the staff and customers.

Danae has been in the restaurant business since she was 13 and married to a French pastry chef. While now divorced, he still helps weekly, and Danae starts the day at 4 p.m. baking fresh croissants, almond croissants, apple turnovers, muffins, cookies, and fruit tarts. This is a good place to both start and finish the day. The menu includes breakfast platters, omelets, sandwiches on fresh rolls, soups and salads, and all the trimmings. P.P. Cobb’s is located at 100 Avenue A. Just head for the Fort Pierce City Marina and you’ll see P.P. Cobb painted in large letter on the original building by the roundabout.

Danae has kept all the signature craft beers for which the P.P. Cobb General Store has been know for. Several hundred are available for your tasting pleasure. The price per 6-pack ranges from $11 to $13, but Danae has a sample 6-pack for $11.50 where you can choose a variety of beers or soft drinks to sample. Of course you can sip while you eat and just watch the world go by on their fabulous porch. There is also wine on tap along with soda, water, and coffee.

Danae’s expansion plans for the P.P. Cobb General Store & Eatery are in the works. This is not only a down home place to pull up a chair and “chat” but one which reflects quiet country charm and great food. Stop in, breakfast, lunch, or dinner, dine in or take out, ask for a picnic. This is a keeper for Fort Pierce and I think “Annie” is smiling down in agreement.
Fort Pierce – The Heart of Art

by CheryLynn Ferrari

Happy New Year! We made it to 2018 but it’s hard to believe that 2017 flew by so quickly. November and December were wonderful retail months for the art businesses here in our beautiful and historic downtown Fort Pierce. Thank you to our locals, our visitors and part-timers who arrived early and are loving the changes since you were here last year.

Although we have fliers with maps available for our monthly ArtWalk (which is now the 3rd Friday of each month, so mark your calendars), I’m going to take this opportunity to impart myself as your mini-tour guide. A brief description of the places where you can find our local artists and their creations for sale in our artsy downtown and in the newly-opened Peacock Arts District will assist you in making sure you don’t miss a thing!

Starting at the top of 2nd Avenue, you’ll find the open-door studio of Christopher Gankel. This quirky little place often gets missed because it’s located in the northernmost residential-looking structure before you get to Tickle Tummy bridge. For a full introduction to Chris’ art and working studio, be sure to read the feature article on him in this issue.

Right next door is the home studio of Colleen Becht. Colleen’s style is fluid and vibrant. She’s well known for her sea turtles. You can visit on ArtWalk evenings or by appointment.

Peacock Clay Collaborative is a few doors south on your art journey. A group of talented clay artists formed this co-op where the most unusual clay creations and pottery can be found. You might even visit while some of the artists are in the process of making their art.

Crossing Avenue A and continuing down the west side of 2nd Street, you come to Galleria Paradise. This is a working studio and gallery where you’ll find paintings, sculptures, and mosaics in a variety of themes and styles.

Just a couple of steps south, accessible via the little alley on your right, is Woodcarver’s Den. It’s open Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday mornings from 9 to 12 (when the sign is on the sidewalk) for adult woodcarving and wood burning classes taught by Joe Miller.

Now, step to the east side of 2nd Street and a few more yards south, to enter Notions and Potions. Here you’ll find a combination of items, many created by local artists and artisans. Lovely paintings and hand-crafted décor items fill the walls and shelves. There are also paint-and-sip classes available for those who want to have some fun.

Finally, you’ll reach the intersection of Orange Avenue, another main artery for local art here in Fort Pierce. Fortunately, the blocks are short and the weather this time of year is gorgeous, so you’ll love the opportunity to meander. Head toward the river, and when you get there, cross Orange Avenue and proceed to the second storefront which is the studio and gallery of Lisa Jill Allison. Lisa paints big and bold. Her art ranges from mild to dramatic abstract and she works with interior designers around the state who use her work to adorn the homes of their clients.

When you exit, go back to Orange Avenue and turn left, cross Indian River Drive, and stop at the big building with the red “ART” on the side. This is the 111 Building and you’ll find a dozen artists located on the 2nd floor Mezzanine level, which is accessible via elevator.

Your next stop along Orange Avenue is on the corner of 2nd Street at the Galleria Shops. The Art Collector’s Gallery, upstairs, offers the work of three local artists including Anita Prentice. You can also sign up for painting classes with Debra Terrico.

Now, back on street level, cross 2nd Street going west, go down a few doors on Orange Avenue, and enter Seriously Mixed Media. This is a gallery of five co-op members who are beautifully diverse in their talents. I’ll bet you’ll see things you never imagined, so please don’t miss this wonderful shop.

Ashley DeWitt’s studio is upstairs, over Seriously Mixed Media. She is a collage artist and has just opened in this location. Take a moment to go up to check out the new space.

Next door is Mike’s Computer Repair which has recently become an internet café and art gallery featuring the works of local artists. The art is for sale and worth stopping in to see.

Continue west on Orange Avenue, across the railroad tracks, and you should see a sign on the side of the building directing you to go around back to the studio of Leslie Stokes.

Last stop on the tour is Art Connection in the historic landmark Arcade Building. Cross Orange Avenue at the corner of U.S. Highway 1 to the City Hall corner (north) and then cross U.S. 1 to the west and enter the arched gate. You can also drive to this location. There is a private parking lot on the west side specifically for this building.

Art Connection is the first gallery to reside in the new Peacock Arts District which runs the corridor from U.S. 1 to 7th Street along Orange Avenue. That’s where you’ll see the painted pots lining the street and the new banners mounted on the light posts. This is a five-member co-op with additional spaces rented to 40 local artists, so the variety of art you’ll find here is unmatched: from woodworking to blown glass, to paintings of every medium, to handcrafted jewelry, to copper sculptures, toile mosaics, original hand-painted greeting cards, and more. Some of the members are working in their studios enabling you to see the art happen at their fingertips.

That completes the tour of locations of our local artists. There are additional shops which participate in ArtWalk because they feature artistic décor. All participating businesses are on the ArtWalk map.

Coming soon — by the winter of 2018, we’re likely to have several more art locations here as the Peacock Arts District develops. The building directly west of the Arcade building, on the corner of 5th Street and Orange, is an old post office. It’s being renovated as a coffee shop with artistic décor. All participating businesses are specifically for this building.

And don’t forget the Backus Gallery down by the river, art showplace of our legendary first artist. The gallery not only shows the work of Beanie Backus but also hosts a variety of exhibits throughout the year. I hope the tour has inspired you to get out and explore. A lot is happening, the art presence is growing, and Fort Pierce is, without a doubt, the Heart of Art in St. Lucie County.
Located diagonally across from the Historic City Hall building, on the northwest corner of U.S. 1 and Avenue A, and just north of the restored Arcade Building, there is a Catholic Mission Church built during the 1950s. It was originally called “the first Christian Church of Fort Pierce,” and after its closing, the building remained unoccupied for several years.

In 1995, the Palm Beach Diocese purchased the building and, following renovations, it became the Notre Dame Catholic Mission of Fort Pierce. The Mission serves both English and Creole speaking parishioners with a current congregation of over 300 members. This number dramatically increases during the winter season when Notre Dame welcomes residents and seasonal visitors while offering spiritual, social, and volunteer opportunities.

Much of the building remains in its original state but in recent years, beautiful stained-glass windows have been provided through the benevolence of some of its members. It’s worth the visit just to view these lovely works of art.

In addition to weekly masses, the building also houses “Sarah’s Kitchen,” an organization which provides well-prepared, weekly sit-down dinners for the homeless, financially challenged and the elderly.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, an international Catholic charitable organization, also maintains its Fort Pierce office in this building. It is staffed by volunteers and serves the disadvantaged of Fort Pierce regardless of ethnicity, race, or creed. Because many clients are without transportation, bikes are in great demand. SVDP depends on donations of used bikes, and volunteers repair them for operational use.

One of the many outreach programs is a children’s summer camp, and this year, 75 children were provided with seven weeks of supervised activities, three daily meals, and field trips (all of which emphasized learning, socialization, and spiritual guidance).

The many social activities include the “Night of Joy,” an annual fund raiser held at the Pelican Yacht Club in Fort Pierce, for the purpose of bringing together seasonal and year-round members. The Notre Dame Mission provides religious and human services to all in need and a family congregation rooted in faith, hope and love. Following the Lord’s example of true Christian stewardship, Notre Dame extends a welcome to all.

English Masses are held on Saturdays at 5:00 p.m., Sundays at 8:00 a.m., and Sundays at 9:30 a.m. (Dec. – April). Creole Masses are held on Sundays at 11:00 a.m.
2017 Sights & Sounds on Second Festival & Parade, December 3, 2017

Downtown Fort Pierce came alive on Sunday, December 3, 2017 as thousands of people joined the City of Fort Pierce, Fort Pierce Sunrise Kiwanis and Main Street Fort Pierce for the 29th Annual Sights and Sounds on Second Festival and Parade. Common Ground Vineyard Church started the day with an outdoor service, Santa arrived at the festival at 1:30 and local dance groups performed for the crowd as excitement built for the main event the Holiday Parade. This year’s parade was the biggest yet with 100 entries, 2,600 participants and 62 horses. Immediately following the parade Mayor Linda Hudson, and Santa lit the Christmas tree and the Holiday Lights at Marina Square. Holiday Lights will run through January 4, 2018.

Thank you, City of Fort Pierce, Fort Pierce Police Department, Fort Pierce Public Works Department, Santa, Tom Kindred, and Gene Sereg, for a great job at the Parade!

Parade Winners
1st Place Float – San Juan Diego Hispanic Mission
2nd Place Float – Fraternal Order of the Eagles #3582
3rd Place Float – Fort Pierce Elks Lodge #520
1st Place Equestrian Group – Midnight Riders 4-H Club
2nd Place Equestrian Group – C.R. Legacy 4-H Club
3rd Place Equestrian Group – Tarn & Burn 4-H Club
1st Place Girl Scout/Boy Scout Group – Gemini Girl Scouts of St. Lucie County
2nd Place Girl Scout/Boy Scout Group – Girl Scouts Troup 42007 & 40718
3rd Place Girl Scout/Boy Scout Group – Cub Scout Pack 479
1st Place Best Dance / Cheer Group – True Crew Dance Company
2nd Place Best Dance / Cheer Group – St. Lucie Ballet
3rd Place Best Dance / Cheer Group – Dynamic Dancing Divas
3rd Place Best Dance/ Cheer Group – Royal Elite Gems
1st Place Best Commercial Entry – Summerlin’s Marine Construction
2nd Place Best Commercial Entry – Seacoast Bank
3rd Place Best Commercial Entry – A.E. Family Farms
3rd Place Best Commercial Entry – St. Lucie Battery & Tire
1st Place Best Decorated Vehicle (Non-Float) – Sunrise City Boxing
2nd Place Best Decorated Vehicle (Non-Float) – Treasure Coast Vintage Car Club
2nd Place Best Decorated Vehicle (Non-Float) – Vdub Addiction Club
3rd Place Best Decorated Vehicle (Non-Float) – Mustang Seed Ministries
1st Place Best Music Performance/Marching Band – St. Lucie West Centennial Eagle Regiment
2nd Place Best Music Performance/Marching Band – St. Anastasia Royal Ram Band
3rd Place Best Music Performance/Marching Band – Fort Pierce Central Marching Cobra Band
1st Place Best 4H or Youth Club Group – Lasala’s Dope Christ Centered Martial Arts
2nd Place Best 4H or Youth Club Group – Spurs & Stuff 4-H Club
3rd Place Best 4H or Youth Club Group – Rocking Horse 4H

Thank you sponsors: City of Fort Pierce, Fort Pierce Sunrise Kiwanis, iHeartMedia’s WAVW 92.7 and OLDIES 103.7, Fort Pierce Utilities Authority, Gotta Go Green, Ocean Chiropractic & Health Centers, and Waste Management of FL, Inc.

Main Street Fort Pierce would like to thank the community for participating in the 29th Annual Sights & Sounds on Second Festival & Parade. Thank you to all of the entries in the parade for making this the biggest and best parade ever! Congratulations to the winners!

Save the Date for next year! 30th Anniversary of the Sights & Sounds Festival & Parade, Sunday, December 2, 2018.

MORE PHOTOS … Continued on next page
Chris Gunkel – Artist Hiding in Plain Sight

by Cheryl Lynn Ferrari

I recently had the pleasure of spending time with one of our least noticed and most laid back local artists in his open-door studio. Chris Gunkel lives and works right on 2nd Street in the northernmost house before you get to Tickle Tummy Bridge and Avenue A. Most people just think it’s a funky old residence, but this lovely vintage structure with its wide and breezy porch is hiding a Fort Pierce treasure. If you take him up on his offer to drop in anytime, you’ll be greeted by such a variety of artistic styles and mediums adorning the walls, it’s hard to believe it all comes from one man. He’s well known for his precisely defined pencil drawings, some of his earliest artworks. I was particularly drawn to a seascape that just speaks to you when you look at it. But Chris also knows how to make acrylics and oils sing on a canvas and in a mural. Art is his passion and he brings to every piece he creates a sense of his heartfelt compassion as well. As much emotion as his work can evoke, he started his professional career in something less romantic — commercial graphic art studios and retail advertising. Chris comes from a family rooted in commercial printing, advertising, and fine arts, so it wasn’t much of a surprise that he chose a branch of art to pursue for himself.

With a fine art education from some impressive institutions, he proceeded into the corporate world where his job became the melding of creativity into business advertising. His great task was to prove to the business-minded executives how art in advertising reaches out to the public to create a bond, a relationship, which successfully sells product. Now with forty years of experience in commercial graphics and his fine art painting which has been exhibited and sold in major art galleries of the U.S. and Canada, Chris enjoys the easy ambience of downtown Fort Pierce, a relaxed environment for a gentle non-conformist. The view from his front window catches the serene waters of the river. An abundance of flora and fauna inhabit the small patch of ground in front of the wide veranda. And inside his first-floor studio, he creates.

Finished paintings hang on the walls, unfinished canvases stack up against baseboards and furniture. The trappings of an artist clutter the desks and tables. But as a visitor and a fellow artist, I looked upon these things with understanding. Being an artist is not a neat and orderly way of life. It’s a lifestyle that chooses you, rather than the other way around. The mind is always envisioning the next piece of work or how to improve the one currently on the easel. The enticement of new mediums, new styles, new techniques is always looming right there on the horizon. The challenge of capturing the passion and conveying feelings and thoughts onto canvas with color and brush strokes is the essence of an artist, and Chris is such a person. He has the gift. Any artist will tell you that when the muse is with you, you feel compelled to shut the door and go with it. And yet, Chris will set aside his current project and welcome you into his world to chat with you about what he does. Because it is his passion. It sustains him. His work is a treasure. And it is my happy task to put him in the spotlight and share him with you.

Now that you know where he is, stop by when you are meandering 2nd Street. Take a few minutes to enjoy his work. Join the other collectors, which make up his large following and take home a piece for yourself. It will become a family heirloom.
Love, JAZZ Community: Dollars for Scholars

by Don Bestor

One of the things Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society is known for besides our tremendous musicians, fabulous Saturday morning Jazz Market, master classes, scholarships for talented students, awesome free Waterside Blues concerts, and of course our annual Jazz Week in historic downtown Fort Pierce, is our willingness to collaborate with other nonprofit organizations and support of the many good things going on in the community. Whenever a call comes in asking for our assistance with a local, charitable cause, we do our best to participate with enthusiasm and style.

We love working with other organizations, and that’s why we were so excited to have an opportunity to partner with the Fort Pierce Yacht Club on something we’re calling Dollars for Scholars. It’s an evening of cocktails, professional music, heavy hors d’oeuvres, and scrumptious desserts to help provide scholarships for talented young music students on the Treasure Coast. It’s an exclusive event limited to a very small number of participants, and it’s scheduled for Sunday, January 28th, at the Fort Pierce Yacht Club, tucked away just by the bridge on Indian River Drive.

It’s a time to put on your best cocktail party attire, enjoy music and dancing courtesy of the Sunrise Party Band (and yes, it’s the kind of music that everyone loves to dance to), and there will be prizes and surprises, too. But like we said, it’s an exclusive and intimate evening, so if you want to join the fun, you’ll have to get your ticket early. Just $45 admits two adults for a fabulous evening, and all funds collected will be distributed to Treasure Coast students for music scholarships through the Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society.

We admit it. We’ve never done anything quite like this before, but there’s a first time for everything, and we’re hoping you’ll want to try something new and fun, too, so why not call us right now at 772.460.4437 (JAZZ) to make your reservations, or visit us online at www.jazzsociety.org. Your evening of fun, dining, and dancing will help provide much-needed Dollars for Scholars and will help ensure that jazz, blues, and musical creativity and culture continue for generations to come.

The Perfect Grilled Cheese Sandwich

by Sue Dannahower

Making Grilled Cheese? Make sure all ingredients in your sandwich are at room temperature before cooking. Butter your bread with softened butter so it’s easier to spread on the bread before cooking. Then use room-temperature cheese because it’ll melt more evenly and you won’t run into the problem of burning your bread.

Fun Fact: Grilled Cheese did not start out a sandwich. During World War II, it was just one piece of bread with a slice of cheese on top. The 1960s was when the top-
Join the 21st Anniversary Celebration of the Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers’ Market on Saturday, January 27

Festive live music by “Big Coque,” anniversary cakes from Importico’s Bakery, and the sale of beautiful beach-themed tote bags created by local artist Julie Lounibos will highlight the Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers’ Market’s 21st anniversary celebration Saturday, January 27th.

Come join the celebration from 8 a.m. until noon at Marina Square and stock up on fresh, healthy selections to stock your pantry. Sixty-five vendors will be selling their finest selections of locally grown produce, plants, fresh and ready-to-eat foods. Other items available include breads and pastries, jams and jellies, pickles, kettle corn, olives and tapenade, crab cakes, fish, poultry, spice blends, body care products, fruit smoothies, coffees and specialty teas, and more.

The Market’s vibrant venue on Melody Lane offers beautiful waterfront views, plentiful seating, and enjoyable entertainment which delight visitors each Saturday throughout the year. Since 1977, the Market has grown into a year-round “Saturday Morning Tradition,” and is ranked as one of Florida’s favorite farmers’ markets.

Throughout its 21 years of business, the Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers’ Market has promoted healthy shopping choices, community access to local agricultural products and fresh foods, and the economic development of small businesses, agricultural businesses, and Fort Pierce’s downtown businesses. The managing board of the Market, a non-profit organization, contributes annually to community food banks, charities, and educational programs.

For further information on the Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market 21st Anniversary, visit the Market website at: https://www.fortpiercemarket.com or go to the Facebook Fort Pierce Farmer’s Market page. The Market Manager can be contacted at 940-1145.
Local Fishing Report: Catching Cobia
by Captain Bo Samuel, Pullin Drag Charters

It’s time to make a resolution to do more fishing in 2018! Our local waters, from the Indian River Lagoon, to the Fort Pierce Inlet and out in the Atlantic, provide abundant opportunities to enjoy this great activity. From the avid angler to the youngest novice, there is room for everyone on the boat!

In the cooler months, there is more opportunity to catch cobia since they move from the colder waters of north Florida to our area and south. Cobia, a powerful predatory fish, is highly prized for its fight and taste. Sometimes these fish can be spotted from the boat swimming on the surface near buoys, pilings and wrecks. Cobia also school so when you see one, there are probably more in the area. When hungry, cobia will eat almost anything from crabs and shrimp to artificial lures and feathers. Medium to heavy tackle will help land these fish but keep a gaff handy depending on size. Keepers must be at least 33 inches long to the fork.

As always, check with your local bait and tackle shops or myfwc.com for fishing rules and regulations. And make your New Year’s resolution to get on the water and start Pullin Drag!

Recipe Corner

Cheddar, Bacon & Apple Grilled Cheese
8 ½-inch thick slices country-style white bread
12 ounces farmhouse Cheddar, sliced
12 slices bacon, cooked to desired doneness
1 green apple, thinly sliced
3 tablespoons butter
Dijon mustard
Mayonnaise

Heat a griddle or large skillet over medium-low heat. Alternatively, you can use a panini press if you have one. Generously spread the Dijon & Mayonnaise on 4 slices of bread. Top each slice with some of the Cheddar, 3 pieces of bacon, some apple and additional Cheddar. Place a slice of the remaining bread on top of each sandwich and spread with the butter. Place a sandwich on the skillet buttered-side down and butter the remaining side. Cook until the cheese is slightly melted and the bread is browned. Flip the sandwich and continue to cook until the cheese is thoroughly melted and the sandwich is golden brown. Repeat with the remaining sandwiches. Serves 4.

BLT With a Twist
Basil Mayonnaise
2½ cups (lightly packed) fresh basil leaves
1 cup mayonnaise
¼ cup (½ stick) butter, room temperature
Salt and pepper, to taste
12 thick-sliced bacon strips (about 1 pound)
12 ½-inch-thick slices fresh country-style white bread
3 large tomatoes, cut into ¼-inch-thick rounds
Salt and pepper, to taste
2 ripe avocados, pitted, peeled, sliced
1 red onion, thinly sliced
6 lettuce leaves

Mix basil, mayonnaise and butter in processor until basil is finely chopped and mixture is well blended. Season to taste. Cook bacon in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat until crisp, about 8 minutes. Transfer to paper towels; drain.

Spread half of mayonnaise mixture over 1 side of 6 bread slices. Top each with 2 tomato slices. Sprinkle tomatoes with salt and pepper. Top tomato slices with avocado, then with bacon strips, onion and lettuce. Spread remaining mayonnaise mixture over remaining 6 bread slices. Place bread slices atop lettuce. Cut sandwiches in half and serve. Serves 6.

Sandwiches for Dinner

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Salt and pepper, to taste
12 poppy seed buns
2 ripe avocados, pitted, peeled, sliced
1 red onion, thinly sliced
6 lettuce leaves

Mix basil, mayonnaise and butter in processor until basil is finely chopped and mixture is well blended. Season to taste. Cook bacon in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat until crisp, about 8 minutes. Transfer to paper towels; drain. Spread half of mayonnaise mixture over 1 side of 6 bread slices. Top each with 2 tomato slices. Sprinkle tomatoes with salt and pepper. Top tomato slices with avocado, then with bacon strips, onion and lettuce. Spread remaining mayonnaise mixture over remaining 6 bread slices. Place bread slices atop lettuce. Cut sandwiches in half and serve. Serves 6.
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