



Volume 16, No. 9 April, 2021

# FOCUS

The Official Monthly Newspaper of Main Street Fort Pierce

The New Event Venue  
at **500 Orange**

"IT WAS A 'LABOR OF LOVE' ..."

Story p16



PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLYN LIGHTCAP

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**Business and the Arts are Thriving in Historic Downtown Fort Pierce**

by Sue Dannahower



In 2021, *Main Street Fort Pierce* celebrates 33 years of service to our community. Through the years we have been through many good times, as well as times that have challenged our creativity and perseverance.

Our downtown businesses have been resourceful. They are helping one another as well as local non-profit organization by holding fundraisers. On February 13th, the DBA hosted “Puppy Love” with proceeds going to the *Humane Society of St. Lucie County*. Then on March 13th they hosted “Downtown Fort Pierce Putt Putt.” This was a terrific event with raffles, prizes, and a trickster leprechaun creating lots of hazards.

The artist community in Downtown Fort Pierce has brought back *Art Walk* on the 3rd Friday of each month. Downtown artists Lisa Jill Allison (**Lisa Jill Allison Art Gallery**) and Janet Fuller (**2nd Street Art**) both donated artwork to the *Treasure Coast Food Bank's Virtual “Spring Auction”* held April 23 through May 2, 2021.

Working together we will survive and thrive! ❖




**MAIN STREET FOCUS FORT PIERCE**

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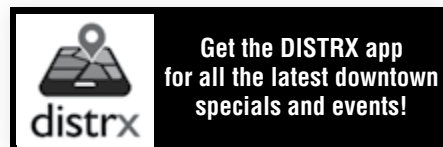
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# Calendar

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



## MONTHLY EVENTS

**April 16, Friday: COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR RETURNS** — 8:00 a.m. at the Fort Pierce Yacht Club, 700 N. Indian River Dr.; *Sponsor – Old Florida Coffee Company*; Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; [mainstreetfortpierce.org](http://mainstreetfortpierce.org).

**April 16, Friday: ARTWALK** — 5 to 8:00 p.m.; Various studios and shops open throughout the downtown area; [artstlucie.org](http://artstlucie.org).

## WEEKLY EVENTS

**Wednesdays: Wednesday Green Market & Food Co-Op** — rain or shine 12:00 to 6:00 p.m., Downtown Marina Square; 971-8480.

**Saturdays: The Jazz Market** — 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; north side of the Downtown Fort Pierce Library; Jazz & Blues Society, 460-5299, [jazzsociety.org](http://jazzsociety.org).

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

## LIVE MUSIC DOWNTOWN

### Sailfish Brewing Company

*Facebook/Sailfish Brewing Company*

### Pierced Cider

*Facebook @piercedcider*

### Cobbs Landing

*cobbs-landing.com*

### Bottom's Up Public House

*facebook.com/bottomsuppublichouse*

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**Tuesdays: Jazz Jam at the Sunrise Black Box Theatre** — 7:00 to 10:00 p.m.; 460-5299; [jazzsociety.org](http://jazzsociety.org).

## MANATEE OBSERVATION & EDUCATION CENTER

429-6266 • [ManateeEducationCenter.org](http://ManateeEducationCenter.org)

## SUNDAY DOWNTOWN CHURCH SERVICES

**Common Ground Vineyard Church**; 460-5414, [commongroundvineyard.com](http://commongroundvineyard.com).

**First Church**; 464-0440, [firstchurchfp.org](http://firstchurchfp.org).

**Fort Pierce Haitian United Methodist Church**; 940-6728, [haitianmethodist.org](http://haitianmethodist.org).

**Notre-Dame Mission Catholic Church**; 466-9617, [notredamecc.com](http://notredamecc.com).

**St. Andrews Episcopal Church** (*founded 1893*); 461-5009 [mystandrews.org](http://mystandrews.org).

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

### A.E. Backus Museum

772-465-0630 • [backusmuseum.com](http://backusmuseum.com)

### Bud Adams Gallery of Historical Photographs

772-462-1795

2nd Floor of P.P. Cobb Building

### Downtown Fort Pierce Library

772-462-2787 • [st-lucie.lib.fl.us](http://st-lucie.lib.fl.us)

### Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society

772-460-5299 • [jazzsociety.org](http://jazzsociety.org)

### Fort Pierce Police Athletic League

772-370-6162 • [fortpiercepal.com](http://fortpiercepal.com)

Volunteers needed: 772-466-0606

### Fort Pierce RiverWalk Center

600 North Indian River Drive

772-489-6473 • [cityoffortpierce.com](http://cityoffortpierce.com)

### Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society

772-460-5299 • [jazzsociety.org](http://jazzsociety.org)

### Heathcote Botanical Gardens

772-464-4672

[heathcotebotanicalgardens.org](http://heathcotebotanicalgardens.org)

### Manatee Observation & Education Center

772-429-6266 • [ManateeEducationCenter.org](http://ManateeEducationCenter.org)

### National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum

772-595-5845 • [navysealmuseum.org](http://navysealmuseum.org)

### St. Lucie County Marine Center

772-462-3474

[stlucieco.gov/marine\\_center](http://stlucieco.gov/marine_center)

### St. Lucie County Regional History Center

772-462-1795 • [stlucieco.gov/history](http://stlucieco.gov/history)

APRIL 1: APRIL FOOL'S DAY

APRIL 2: WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

APRIL 2: PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY DAY

APRIL 4: EASTER

APRIL 6: NATIONAL TWINKIE DAY

APRIL 7: NATIONAL BEER DAY

APRIL 10: NATIONAL SIBLINGS DAY

APRIL 11: NATIONAL PET DAY

APRIL 12: GRILLED CHEESE SANDWICH DAY

APRIL 13: NATIONAL SCRABBLE DAY

APRIL 14: NATIONAL GARDENING DAY

APRIL 16: WEAR PAJAMAS TO WORK DAY

APRIL 21: NATIONAL TEA DAY

APRIL 22: EARTH DAY

APRIL 23: NATIONAL PICNIC DAY

APRIL 24: ARBOR DAY [PLANT A TREE!]

APRIL 25: WORLD PENGUIN DAY

APRIL 26: NATIONAL PRETZEL DAY

APRIL 28: NATIONAL BLUEBERRY PIE DAY

APRIL 30: INTERNATIONAL JAZZ DAY

# SAVE THE DATE!

## Fort Pierce Inlet Centennial Celebration Activities

May 3rd **City Proclamation**, 6 p.m. at City Hall Commission Chambers

May 4th **County Proclamation**, 10 a.m. at County Commission Chambers

May 7th **Friday Fest Celebration Returns!** Melody Lane, 5 p.m.

St. Lucie Historical Society to remain open on 2nd floor of P.P. Cobb Building

May 8th **Flag Raising and Prayer Service**, at Smithsonian Boat Ramp, 10 a.m.

Boat Parade/Blessing of the Fleet 11:30 a.m.

Priest on boat on Summerlin Dock for jet skis and kayaks

BBQ after parade at St. Lucie County Regional History Museum

May 15th **Scenes from the Inlet – Plein Air Event**

**1921 Costume Party** at the Fort Pierce Yacht Club

May 4th **County Proclamation**, 10 a.m. at County Commission Chambers

May 21st **ArtWalk** will feature the Plein Air art from the May 15th event

May 28th **Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting** for Derektor at the Port of Fort Pierce

*Stay tuned for updates and information on these events.*



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## Pickled in Downtown Fort Pierce

The former owners of downtown's **121 Tapas**, Jason Alfonso and Hallie Thomas, expanded into a larger space with their new restaurant, **Pickled**, in late December. This restaurant is a welcome addition to the corner of Marina Way and 2nd Street. For more information, visit [pickledinthefort.com](http://pickledinthefort.com) or find them on Facebook at Pickled Restaurant and Bar. ❖



# Mayor's Message

## The Florida Legislature Cannot Resist Preemption

by Linda Hudson, Mayor, City of Fort Pierce



Florida cities are granted the right to govern themselves and can do what their residents want them to do, as long as it doesn't conflict with state law. This right, labeled Home Rule, was included in Florida's 1968 Constitution, Article VIII, Section 2 (b) and implemented by the state legislature in 1973. It recognizes that Florida's 400-plus cities, towns and villages are unique; citizens have the expectation of local voices making local choices.

The legislature has the irresistible urge to preempt our local choices. In past legislative sessions, the legislature had a preponderance of preemption bills, but 2021 appears to be the mother lode, including bills (SB 522, HB 219) that strip cities of any jurisdiction over vacation rentals.

The state legislature has routinely voted for state control over vacation (short-term) rentals (called dwelling rentals in Fort Pierce when rented 30 days or less) in the name of private property rights and encouraging tourism. But many of our year-round residents want their local leaders to protect their neighborhoods from adverse impacts of transient visitors.

Balancing everyone's property rights is key to solving this problem. Unruly behavior and issues with parking, noise and public safety impact the families that live next door. Residents

do not know who will be renting these properties, sex offenders do not have to register before staying in them, and, ultimately, neighbors are less likely to confront strangers when problems or nuisances arise. Additionally, many of these properties are investor-owned with no direct point of contact to reach when situations occur. The out-of-state property owner may not even be aware of the problems created by their renters with constant turnover. The problem ends as one renter leaves and begins again as new renters arrive. This causes a significant drain on law enforcement and other resources, like planning and code enforcement.

I serve on the advocacy committee for the Treasure Coast Regional League of Cities. I advocate for local voices making local choices for Fort Pierce with our legislators on the Treasure Coast. I ask that you consider joining this advocacy effort. Visit [https://www.floridaleagueofcities.com/docs/default-source/advocacy/2021-legislative-issue-backgrounds/short-term-rentals---12-01-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=2904d6d5\\_2](https://www.floridaleagueofcities.com/docs/default-source/advocacy/2021-legislative-issue-backgrounds/short-term-rentals---12-01-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=2904d6d5_2) for more information about short term rentals. Visit <https://www.buildingstrongercities.com/> to learn how you can help advocate for Home Rule and important issues affecting cities. ❖

**SIGN UP TO RECEIVE TEXT ALERTS:**  
Want to stay up-to-date on legislative action that affects Florida's cities? Text the keywords **Home Rule** to **50457**. When you receive a text confirmation, click the link and add your information.



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Joanne McCurdy,  
Broker/Owner

## Historic Downtown Building has New Life with Art and a Modern Twist

by Jeanne Johansen

The **Carlton Center**, located at 108 North Depot Drive, was originally built by Sheriff Daniel Carlton in 1897. Today, the **Carlton Center** (historically known as "The Carlton House") has taken a practical spin by becoming a modern office environment with a twist. The center offers office space for businesses, meeting rooms, and it serves as a wonderful event space. Their current tenants include non-profits, roofers, recording engineers, and draftsmen.

"The building houses a diverse and fun group of downtown businesses all within its

walls," says Samantha Simnett, owner and manager. "The thing most people don't expect in a downtown business center is the *largest free art gallery* open to the public during business hours!"

Rick and Samantha Simnett, the Center's owners, have made every available wall, nook and cranny in the building free for local artists to exhibit their work. Unlike for-profit galleries, The **Carlton Center's** gallery doesn't charge wall rates or commission when art pieces sell.

"The local history and arts community was one of the biggest draws for us to downtown Fort Pierce," says Rick Simnett. "We wanted to celebrate the arts as part of our business plan. We're happy to be able to help promote the local artists. Plus, the art is truly a blessing and privilege to



be able to look at and enjoy everyday."

The Simnetts don't stop with just supporting the Fort Pierce visual arts community with gallery space. Rick Simnett currently serves on the boards of the *Lindsay School of the Arts*, the *Sunrise Theatre Foundation*, and is the founder and director of his 501c3 organization, *Destination Fort Pierce*, along with his wife, Samantha. The **Carlton Center** hosts charity events for the *Lindsay School of the Arts*, *Big Brothers Big Sisters*, the *Fort Pierce Art Club*, and others with more events being planned.

"We're happy to donate our time to help our art community and city grow and prosper. Fort Pierce is our home, and we are doing our part to embrace and support it," says Rick Simnett.

The **Carlton Center** is currently exhibiting local artists, Ade Rossman, Chris Gunkel, Christian Sean Yong, Faye Hedera, Lisa Jill Allison, Rina McCormick, Robert "Badbob" Francis, Salvatore Nastasia, Steve Fogel, Walter "Dubz" Novak, and many others.

The Simnetts are planning some 2021 surprises for the **Carlton Center** so be sure to following them on their website: <https://thecarltoncenter.com> or on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/thecarltoncenterfortpierce> or call them at (772) 672-3076. The **Carlton Center** is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. ❖

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## Old Florida Coffee Co Brings New Twist to Downtown's Oldest Commercial Building

Over 140 years ago, the historic **P.P. Cobb** building stood tall and alone along the bank of the Indian River. It was a landmark to the boats and steamships that delivered supplies and mail along the settlements that dotted the east coast of Florida. The Hogg family originally built the building in the early 1880s and ran a trading post until they sold the business to an oyster cannery business. Their former employee, Peter Cobb, managed the oyster cannery and bought the store when the cannery left the area. It was at this point, in the very late 1800s, when the building took on the name of the merchant that did so much for early Fort Pierce.

The **P.P. Cobb General Store** was the epicenter of early Fort Pierce. In the days before the railroad tracks were laid, supplies and mail would arrive weekly to Cobb's dock where it was transported up to the big building and disbursed to customers as they came by. Along with their supplies, they would also pick up on gossip and news. Along with providing goods for sale, Peter Cobb also loaned money to those starting businesses or building homes and at least on one occasion, forgave the loan of a widow with no means to repay it. He set out candy for the children, formed a partnership with Dr. Platts to provide the first pharmacy, and was one of the founders of the City of Fort

Pierce when it was formally incorporated in 1901.

The **P.P. Cobb** building has an incredible story and probably more than one ghost. When the news circulated that the **Old Florida Coffee Co** would occupy a recently vacated

downstairs storefront, it was met with excitement.

Dan and Claudina Pennell love the history of the **P.P. Cobb** building and the revitalization of downtown Fort Pierce. When a space opened up in the historic buildings, they felt like a high-end coffee shop is just what downtown needed. It seemed like the perfect opportunity to create a unique destination shop that could be enjoyed by locals and visitors.

Their business model is based on selling fresh roasted coffee that is master-brewed or bagged fresh for purchase to take home. Along with specializing in high quality coffee, both savory and sweet hand-wrapped Paris street-style crepes are served for breakfast, lunch, as a snack or for dessert. Fresh pastries, breakfast quiche and lunch

pies are also offered. In keeping with the general store tradition, a large assortment of vintage sodas, candies and unique items made from local artisans are available.

Dan and Claudina floated the idea of opening a small business for several years and in September 2020 decided to formalize their idea into reality. Their first priority was to invest

heavily in the quality of the build and the equipment. To make their shop special, they knew they would need a design, theme and equipment that set them apart. They built all the furniture out of hardwood live slabs, bought the best possible espresso and roasting equipment, and tried to pay attention to every single detail of design and build. They spent time experimenting and developing recipes and drinks that would be impossible to resist. Only fresh ingredients are used. They resisted items that felt "average" or "normal" and sought to make every single item on their menu something their customers could not get anywhere else. To top this off, each menu item was individually branded with its own special name.

Once the equipment and menu were in place, Dan and Claudina spent time hiring a great staff and training them well. They organized all of **Old Florida Coffee Co's** workspaces to allow staff to prepare food and drinks in the least amount of steps while creating processes and cheat sheets for every recipe and role. To ensure a positive checkout experience for both customers and staff and to track all inventory and raw goods, a well-researched Point-of-Sale software was purchased.

Even though they had a soft opening on February 11th, word quickly spread and they soon had days where a line formed outside of their doors. After their opening week, they immediately revised and re-trained their staff based on what they learned about their customer's needs and the demand they had experienced.

The Pennell's advice to other entrepreneurs is to limit the scope of a business to what can be done with excellence. "Customers will ask for many things. Every day customers ask us if we serve lunch, sandwiches, etc. We do not, and we will not be in the future. There are many great lunch spots in downtown; we are focused on being the best coffee shop and creperie we can be. Expanding the scope would ultimately require a bigger kitchen, a different workflow and different staffing. It would result in a reduction in the quality of what we do, so we will hold that line and not budge. So, pick a scope of what you offer. That scope should be based on your realistic limitations with budget and time. For instance, if I could not afford to purchase the very best "roasting" setup, we would not have added roasting to our offering. Everything we do has to be the best, and we will not add anything if we cannot meet that standard," stated Dan.

**Old Florida Coffee Co** is open Monday to Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and they are closed on Sundays. They are located in the historic **P.P. Cobb** building on 100 Avenue A, #1C. For more information, visit [OldFloridaCoffee.com](http://OldFloridaCoffee.com) or find them on Facebook and Instagram. They offer a 15% discount to anyone who served or is currently serving in the military or in law enforcement. ❖



# Living Docks Coming to Moore's Creek This Month

by Rachel Tennant, Manatee Observation & Education Center Manager

In April 2020, the **Manatee Center** partnered with **Florida Tech** (formerly the Florida Institute of Technology) and the **Fort Pierce City Marina** to bring oyster reefs to the new and old marina docks on Moore's Creek, east of Indian River Drive. The project was funded by the **Treasure Coast Manatee Foundation**.

COVID-19 put the project on pause, but it has recently re-emerged as a volunteer effort and fundraiser outside the **Manatee Center**. For \$1, passersby could write their names on an oyster that would eventually become part of the oyster reef. This fundraiser brought us to our final fundraising goal for the mural that was installed last month. And it continues as an ongoing fundraiser for the **Treasure Coast Manatee Foundation**, which will fund future upgrades and education programs at the Center.

This month, **Florida Tech** will make the drive from Brevard County to install the oyster mats. Together with two members of the *ManaTeam*, they will wrap 17 pilings with oyster mats, each containing over 100 oyster shells. Each oyster filters 50 gallons of water per day. The presence of oyster shells will attract oyster larvae which will grow into a living oyster reef. If we estimate 100 oysters per mat, these reefs will filter over 31 million gallons of Moore's Creek water per year!

We're hopeful that these 17 oyster mats will be only the

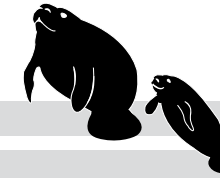
beginning of an effort to clear up Moore's Creek east of Indian River Drive. This section of the creek is the area where the freshwater pours out during big rainstorms, bringing with it much runoff and debris. If we can establish healthy oyster reefs, we hope to combat the effects of that runoff and create a healthier, richer environment for our visiting manatees and their resident lagoon neighbors.

Business is helping us expand this project. Here in Downtown Fort Pierce, the **2nd Street Bistro Raw Oyster Bar** has generously collected their used oyster shells for us to pick up every two weeks. These shells are laid out

to sunbake (and for bugs and birds to clean the shells) for six weeks on **Fort Pierce Utilities Authority** property across from the **Manatee Center**, with assistance from the *Wastewater Collection* team. After six weeks, they are picked up for further

processing to get them ready for future oyster mats.

Stop by the **Manatee Center** to learn more. If you'd like to get involved or purchase an oyster mat and oysters for your party (we give you the mat and shells for names and decorating, and you return them to us for later install in the Creek), contact the **Manatee Center** Manager, Rachel Tennant, at 772-429-8597. ❖



## The Manatee Center April Events

Friday, April 19th at 12:00 p.m.

**Which Way to the Sea? Orientation in Sea Turtle Hatchlings Lunch & Learn** — Join us for a special online presentation by Ashley Chelberg of the Stella Maris Environmental Research Group. Grab your lunch, turn on your computer, and join us. This special presentation will be hosted on Facebook Live. Access the presentation at [www.Facebook.com/ManateeCenter](http://www.Facebook.com/ManateeCenter).

Saturdays, April 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th  
**Guided Kyak Trip**

Look for wildlife, get up close and personal with mangroves, learn about the Indian River Lagoon on an easy ninety-minute paddle led by a MOEC naturalist. Great for beginners and anyone who wants to learn more about the Lagoon. The fee for this program is \$30 per person and includes kayak, paddle and safety gear. Registration is required. Call (772) 429-6266 option #3 or e-mail [Education@ManateeEducationCenter.org](mailto:Education@ManateeEducationCenter.org) for more information or to register.

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## Tickets Are Going Fast — Drawing Is April 11

The last tickets are going out the door, snapped up by excited connoisseurs like you who dream of owning an original masterpiece of Florida art by *James F. Hutchinson*, and who love to help the Museum.

“Golden Savannas,” painted in 2017 is an oil on canvas, size 24 x 36 inches.



It depicts the grandeur of Florida’s natural environment, seen under the dynamic and changing sky of a typical day on the sun-touched grasslands. Four towering palm trees, with varied and richly textured surfaces, stand as sentries over the land, while a Seminole dugout canoe is pushed soundlessly toward a distant camp — instantly transporting the viewer into a bygone era. Valued at more than \$12,500, it is the quintessential image of the beauty and longing for a deeper connection with the landscape by the renowned Florida artist.

Tickets are available, while supplies last, for donations of \$25 each, or \$60 for three, or \$100 for six chances to win, and are available online at [www.BackusMuseum.org/raffle](http://www.BackusMuseum.org/raffle) or at the front desk of the **Backus Museum**, located at 500

North Indian River Drive, in historic downtown Fort Pierce, Florida. All proceeds will help support the Museum and its work in the community. The raffle drawing will be held on Sunday, April 11, 2021 at 12:00 noon — ticket holders need not be present to win. Complete raffle rules are posted at the Museum.

The Museum is grateful for this generous donation by the artist. More about Hutchinson and his extraordinary work can be found at [www.hutchinsongalleries.com](http://www.hutchinsongalleries.com). ❖

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## Call to Artists – the Backus Museum’s Annual Juried Photography Competition, “Through the Eye of the Camera” Returns this Spring

The **Backus Museum’s** annual juried photography exhibition, *Through the Eye of the Camera*, returns this spring with new opportunities to recognize and celebrate the finest artistry in the photographic medium. Amateur and professional artists in traditional and digital photography are encouraged to enter this longstanding and favorite competitive opportunity from March 31 through April 30, 2021. There is a \$30 entry fee for artists entering one to three works, \$25 entry fee for artists entering four or more works. This year’s full prospectus



with application, dates, guidelines, along with new categories, awards, and entry procedures is available to download from the Museum’s website at [www.BackusMuseum.com/juried-shows](http://www.BackusMuseum.com/juried-shows) or pick up at the Museum, 500 North Indian River Drive in Historic Downtown Fort Pierce, Florida.

There are new categories for the 2021 competition. Photographers may enter their work in one of four categories: (1) Animal subjects; (2) Flora & Landscape subjects; (3) People/Portrait subjects; or (4) Open, for subjects that are not included in the three major categories. There are no longer categories for how images are captured, manipulated, or how they are

presented. In addition to Best of Show, Director’s Choice, People’s Choice, and 1st-2nd-3rd in the category awards, there will be a new “Best Black & White Photograph” and “Best Film / Traditional RAW Photograph” awards. Details are available in the prospectus.

There are new entry procedures related to the ongoing public health situation. Artists are required to sign up online for an entry appointment in advance, in order to limit the number of people on site and protect the health of our staff and visitors. Each 15-minute entry appoint-

ment will accommodate one artist entering up to three (3) works of art; artists wishing to enter more than three works may sign up for additional entry appointments. Artists can access the online appointment schedule with all entry information at [www.BackusMuseum.org/juried-shows](http://www.BackusMuseum.org/juried-shows).

The juried exhibition *Through the Eye of the Camera* will be on view May 7 to June 18, 2021, with accepted artists and award winners announced online by Thursday evening, May 6. In lieu of an opening reception, the Museum will extend its hours to members and the general public on Saturday and Sunday, May 8 and 9, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. ❖

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# 500 Orange – A New Event Venue with an Historic Past

by Joanne Blandford

Before the Internet and Amazon, post offices were natural community gathering spaces. They were bustling with activity and familiar faces. From the days the steamships sailed their routes along the Indian River, locals gathered where the mail was distributed. Here in Fort Pierce, **P.P. Cobb's General Store** served as the first post office. People from all over the county would ride into town to shop, pick up their mail and catch up on local and national news. The local post office expanded from Cobb's store to another location on what is now Marina Way (Avenue A). In 1935 it expanded yet again when Fort Pierce was selected to receive a new post office building through the Works Progress Administration, a program created to boost employment during the Great Depression. The downtown Fort Pierce USPS building served its community in multiple ways until its closing in the early 2000s. After sitting vacant for almost two decades, the newly

restored **500 Orange** building is opening its doors once again as an exciting new event venue for public gatherings.

In 1935, as a result of President Roosevelt's New Deal, the Works Progress Administration funded new government buildings and road projects all across the country. In addition to adding needed infrastructure, these projects provided jobs in the wake of the stock market crash of 1929 and the Great Depression. It was this year that construction began on the structure that would become the downtown branch of the Fort Pierce post office. The downtown branch opened the next year and remained in operation until May 2001. In addition to processing mail, this location also served as the federal courthouse for the area from 1975–1996. During its remodeling in 1975 for federal court proceedings, space was made for a judge's chamber, support staff offices and a single jail cell that was erected upstairs in the north side of the building.

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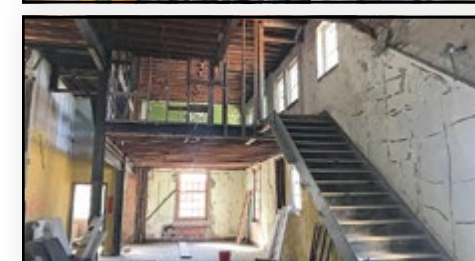
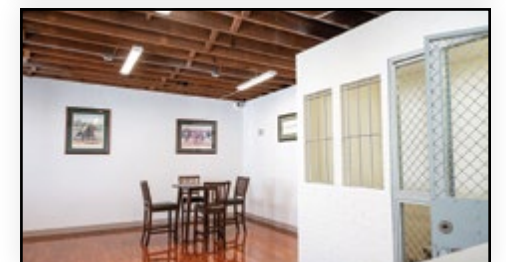
In the early 2000s, the downtown post office was in bad shape. According to a *Palm Beach Post* article from July 2001, even though the branch served over 750 people on an average day it was in need of costly repairs such as sagging ceilings and a faulty air conditioning system; as a result, the USPS closed the downtown branch for good on May 23, 2001. Government services such as post offices, libraries, and court houses, are important public attractors to historic downtowns. They help by creating pedestrian traffic for small businesses in the retail, restaurant and service industries. As such, city officials offered to help pay for the repairs, but the cost remained too high for the federal government to reopen. In November of 2002, the structure was sold to the City of Fort Pierce and many ideas were floated about its future as a possible museum space, art gallery or other public gathering venue to both save the historic building and bring people to the area.

Stan and Jean Synkoski fell in love with Fort Pierce in 2005. They were on, what was supposed to be, a brief visit away from their residence near Washington, D.C. Each kept asking the other when they should return home until the realization hit — they were home. They decided to make their vacation paradise their permanent residence in 2006. At the time, Fort Pierce was recovering from Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne and in addition to the rebuilding efforts, several new investment projects were also in the works. One of these was a *Main Street Fort Pierce* project — the fully funded restoration of the 1923 **Sunrise Theatre** building as a performing

arts complex. The City of Fort Pierce had recently completed a much-needed infrastructure update both above and below the roads and sidewalks in downtown. The **Renaissance on the River** and the **Harbour Isle** condominium projects followed shortly after. Downtown Fort Pierce was experiencing a rebirth that was a long time in the making and all of these projects together were rejuvenating downtown Fort Pierce as a strong commercial center once again. This was the atmosphere in Fort Pierce when Stan and Jean arrived. The opportunity to add their mark to the downtown area would come several years later when Jean's vision aligned with Stan's business venture experience.

*Continued on page 18 ...*

PHOTOGRAPHY (BELOW) BY CAROLYN LIGHTCAP



**500 ORANGE ... continued from page 17**

As they would drive back and forth along Orange Avenue, Jean would admire the vacant mission style building that sat one block west of the newly restored **Arcade** building and U.S. 1. It was obvious the building needed repairs, but Jean saw its potential and when the City of Fort Pierce listed it for sale in 2017, she



immediately called for a showing. The inside was much worse in sight than the outside and the odor from decades of water leaks and decay was overwhelming; but again, Jean saw what it could be. So, the decision to buy the building and prepare for its restoration was made.

They had a couple of ideas for its use once restored. After considering their options, they decided to transform the building into a unique reception and event venue that would maintain the charm and integrity of the historic architecture features and also add new elegant and modern touches. The path to opening **500 Orange** traversed through an extensive restoration that was based around a budget and getting things done by themselves with the help of friends.

The first step was to work with an architect. They chose Rick Gonzalez of **REG Architects** — which had won numerous awards and specialized in historic renovation and restoration — to develop the plans, and hired Jason Caroglanian of **JTC Builders** as their general contractor. To save money, they, along with friends Chad Mautz and Jermaine Clarke, rolled up their sleeves and pitched in over 15,000 hours of labor.

“It was a ‘labor of love’ for Chad and Jermaine and while we faced obstacles during our renovations, they approached each challenge with a positive, can-do attitude and ultimately got it done,” says Stan. Other local contractors and businesses that provided crucial components of the project include the following: **Steve’s Electric, James Maggi Plumbing,**

PHOTO BY CAROLYN LIGHTCAP



**D & S Air Conditioning, Bruce Hopper of Plant Haven Nursery, Airtronics Security Systems, Carlos & Sons Irrigation, Canvas Works, and East Coast Lumber.**

The restoration included removing 21 tons of plaster from the ceiling which revealed rare Dade County Pine wood beams and rafters. Restored features

throughout the building include chain-and-pully windows, solid wood floors and doors, matching replacement tile to blend with the original tile section of the flooring, the heavy freight post office bumper doors, and the federal courthouse jail cell, which is located in the new Groom’s Room. The rafters that were deemed too damaged to be replaced were split and reused as a beautiful wood planked wall that added a rustic, yet elegant focal point along the back of the reception space. Original post office boxes were restored and added as functional benches and decorated adornments. The display cases that once held official federal announcements, proclamations and most wanted posters, were retained and now showcase historic local and national memorabilia. The outside façade was repaired and painted while stunning landscaping



PHOTO BY CAROLYN LIGHTCAP

from **Plant Haven** nursery was added. **FPUA** also wrapped two utility boxes on the property with historic postcards featuring the building in its heyday as the downtown post office.

There are several beautiful historic churches in the vicinity of the **500 Building** that have been the location of many weddings over the decades. Now, future weddings will have another historic option as a reception site within a short drive or walking distance from these churches. Of course, the venue will also be available for birthday and anniversary celebrations, as well as company parties and conferences. Stan has extensive experience in the food concession and hospitality industry and has been a principal partner in several business ventures. He currently serves as co-chairman of a successful multiunit **Applebee’s** franchise in Salt Lake City, Utah. His familiarity with the hospitality industry has given him insight to ensure that **500 Orange** meets the needs of its patrons.

There is a catering area with an ice machine in the back of the venue where food and supplies can be stored out of site of the main area until needed. Multiple catering options are available, and Jimmy Frietas from Bonner Bar Service can customize packages for any occasion. The restrooms were expanded to accommodate large gatherings and there are separate rooms for both brides and grooms to prepare prior to a wedding and/or reception. It also has several ideal locations inside and out for wedding or event photos. Recently, with help from Michelle Carter and **Affordable Swarayz**, the venue was professionally arranged as a “practice” for upcoming events and

to address any additional details that needed to be ironed out prior to the first event. Sarah Snitshus from **Saradipityevents** put the finishing touches to the space by providing outstanding floral arrangements. This is just an example of the commitment to detail that Stan and Jean have put into their “labor of love.”

It took many years to restore the former downtown post office, which served its community for decades. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places and its renovation has been submitted for two historic preservation awards: the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation Award and the American Institute of Architecture’s Historic Rehabilitation Award. Its importance in history is now preserved for future generations and its reopening as **500 Orange**, a place with a celebratory purpose, will create new memories for decades to come.

For more photos of its restoration and/or for booking information visit **500 Orange** on Facebook. To book a tour or questions about booking the 500 Orange call (301) 332-5692 or email [insynkinc@gmail.com](mailto:insynkinc@gmail.com). ❖

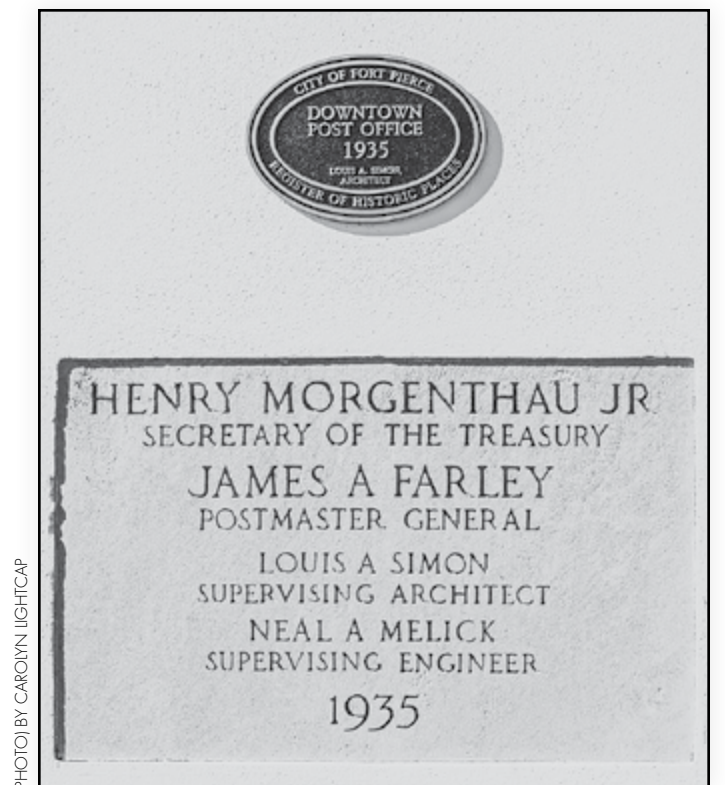


PHOTO BY CAROLYN LIGHTCAP

# Love, JAZZ Community: The Practical Magic of Music

by Don Bestor

According to one of the largest organizations for young people and social change, children who study music reap some serious benefits. At **Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society**, we know this and see it every day, but in case you wondered why music education is so important and why we work so hard to ensure that students continue to have opportunities to learn to play instruments, study and perform, here are a few reasons why:



Did you know that ...

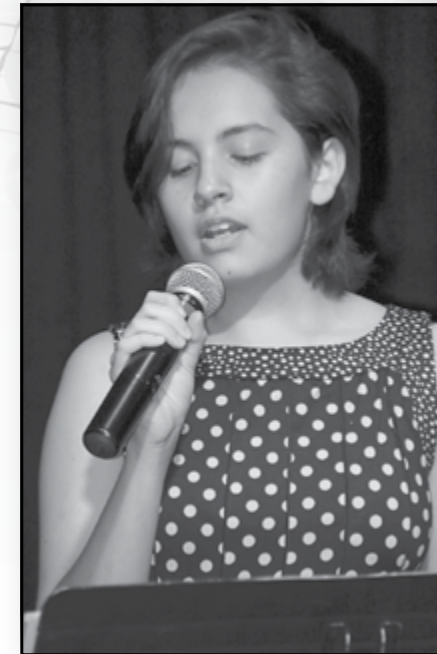
- Children who study a musical instrument are more likely to excel in all of their studies, work better in teams, have enhanced critical thinking skills, stay in school, and pursue further education.
- Secondary students who participated in a music group at school reported the lowest lifetime and current use of all substances (tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drugs).
- Schools with music programs have an estimated 90.2 percent graduation rate and 93.9% attendance rate compared to schools without music education, which average 72.9% graduation and 84.9% attendance.

- Regardless of socioeconomic status or school district, students who participate in high-quality music programs score 22% better on English and 20% better on math standardized exams.
- Children who study music tend to have larger vocabularies and more advanced reading skills than their peers who do not participate in music lessons.
- Children with learning disabilities or dyslexia who tend to lose focus with more noise benefit greatly from music lessons.
- Much like expert technical skills, mastery in arts and humanities is closely correlated to high earnings.

- Young children who take music lessons show different brain development and improved memory over the course of a year, compared to children who do not receive musical training.
  - A 2004 Stanford University study showed that mastering a musical instrument improves the way the human brain processes parts of spoken language. (Source: DoSomething.org.)
- Even if we didn't have all this statistical information to back it up, we all know how good music makes us feel about

ourselves and our surroundings. All of us volunteers involved with the Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society believe in the power of music and the importance of passing along a legacy of music to students. That's why we work all year long to raise funds for scholarships to help ensure that there are always plenty of terrific opportunities for music here on the Treasure Coast. And just think, that's just some of what we do!

It's also why we share our time and talent with students throughout St. Lucie, Martin, and Indian River County providing master classes in music and performance and why we invite student musicians to perform with us every Tuesday evening at the **Sunrise Black Box Theatre** in historic downtown Fort



Pierce, and every other Wednesday evening at the **Port St. Lucie Botanical Gardens**. We believe in the power of music, and we want to make sure we pass that magic along to the next generation through scholarship, opportunities, and education.

There are lots of investments with a much lower return, but we believe in the power of music and the incredible return it gives in the form of education, building teamwork and cooperation, creating and celebrating joy, and creating a legacy of love that will be passed on generation to generation for as long as we are. Won't

you join us in supporting the power of music? To learn more about **Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society**, please visit [www.jazzsociety.org](http://www.jazzsociety.org), or call 772-460-JAZZ. ❖

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# TREASURES OF THE PAST

100 years ago this month as reported in the Sunday, April 17, 1921 edition of the Miami Herald

75 years ago this month as reported in the Thursday, April 1, 1946 edition of the Miami News

## To Enlarge Ice Plant

Announcement is made that this summer the St. Lucie Ice company of this place will enlarge its plant by the installation of a new 50-ton unit, increasing the total capacity of the plant to 80 tons of ice every 24 hours.

According to R. Whyte, president of the company, the work of installing the new unit will start about July 1, and is ready for use by December 1. It is to be electrically-driven throughout, if the city can furnish the necessary current at that time, which can probably be done, as the municipal plant is shortly to be enlarged and improved.

The constantly increasing demand in the icing and re-icing of cars of fruit and produce makes necessary the enlargement of the local ice plant, it is stated. From twenty to twenty-five cars a day, and in the rush season many more than that number, are re-iced here.

The new unit is to be installed in the present building. The present plant, which has a capacity of 30 tons a day, was installed in 1911.



## Ft. Pierce USO To Close Doors Program will mark end of Club's work

The Indian River USO club, which during the wartime period provided recreation and entertainment for thousands of servicemen on duty at the U.S. Naval Amphibious Training base here, will officially close its doors in public exercises to be held Sunday afternoon.

For the occasion, open house will be observed starting at 3 o'clock and afterwards short talks will be made by members of the USO council, voluntary workers and representatives of the management committee. Then light refreshments will be served.

Within another few days the building will be turned over to the city, which with the aid of federal funds built it. The city already has agreed to turn it over to the St. Lucie county playground and recreation board for operation as a youth center.

Opened in 1942 as a voluntary project under the leadership of Charles Breiling, the club about a year later was taken over officially by the United Services Organizations to be operated as a YMCA facility. Upon completion of the building it occupied the new quarters and a regular staff was employed. Since its opening as estimated 1,800,000 servicemen attendances have been registered and truly it has been "a home away from home" for them. A.H. Fugitt, former member of the faculty of Mississippi State College, has been its director since 1944.

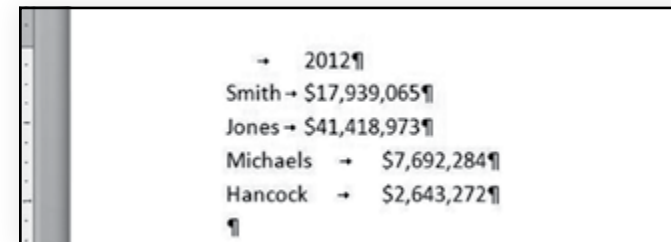
Another USO club, operated as a NCCS facility and known as the Tenth Street club, closed several months ago. ❖

# Microsoft Tips & Tricks

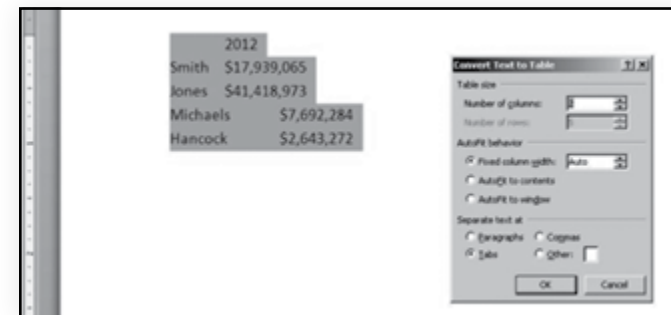
by Sue Dannahower

## TEXT-TO-TABLE MADE EASY

The simplest way to generate a table is to select text and convert it. Word does a great job of interpreting the data and defaulting to the right settings if you're consistent during data entry. Specifically, insert one delimiting character (like a tab) between each item, and enter a single paragraph return (press Enter) between each row, as shown below.



There's only one tab character between each item and a single paragraph return separates the rows.



To convert a list, select the text. Then, click the **Insert** tab and click the **Table** drop-down (in the Tables group). From the resulting list, choose **Convert Text to Table**. You shouldn't have to adjust the default settings much if you use delimiters consistently. Interpreting the tabs and returns, Word can detect that there are two columns and five rows, as shown below.

	2012
Smith	\$17,939,065
Jones	\$41,418,973
Michaels	\$7,692,284
Hancock	\$2,643,272

Word uses the delimiting characters to align columnar data. Plan ahead for easy-to-implement table conversion. ❖



by Sue Dannahower

## Perfecting Scalloped Potatoes

*Do I need a mandolin to cut potato slices?* No, but it will make your life so much easier. If you don't have one, practice your knife skills and use a very sharp knife.

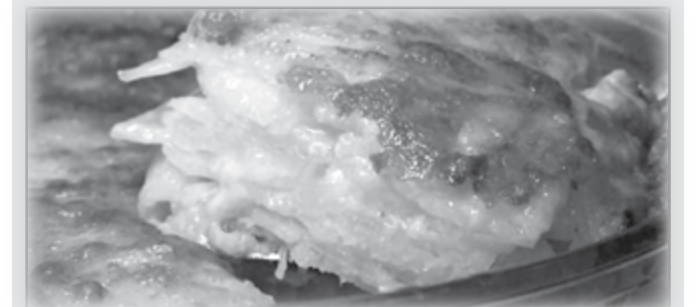
*What's the difference between potatoes au gratin and scalloped potatoes?* Gratin has cheese; scalloped potatoes do not.

*Should I use milk or cream?* I like to use a combination of both. Heavy cream adds a wonderful richness and makes the sauce velvety.

*Why do I need to cover with foil?* The foil helps cook the potatoes (steam and boil in the sauce) while in the oven. Take the foil off the last 15 minutes to make the cheese layer golden and crispy.

*How do I prevent watery potatoes?* Baked potatoes will release a lot of moisture, causing your final dish to be a little soupy. To help prevent that you can lay your sliced potatoes out on paper towels to help soak up some excess water. The last 15 or 20 minutes of baking you should also bake the dish uncovered. This will help some moisture escape and make the top of the gratin golden brown.

Finally, let your dish rest for a few minutes after baking. This will allow your potatoes to absorb more of that cream sauce! ❖





# SHOP SMART


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# Main Street Fort Pierce Board Members Participated in the Keep Fort Pierce Beautiful Event on Saturday, March 13



**Manatee Observation & Education Center**  
**GUIDED KAYAK TOURS**  
 on the Indian River Lagoon



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### It Takes All of Us to Make Our Historic Downtown Prosper and Grow!



Main Street Fort Pierce wants to invite you to become a part of the renaissance of our Historic Downtown area. Over the past twenty-nine years, we have worked to repair streets and sidewalks, upgrade storefronts, renovated the Sunrise Theatre, Old City Hall and the Platts Backus House, sponsor charrettes to design a downtown "Master Plan," built the Manatee Observation and Education Center and so much more! Annually, Main Street Fort Pierce sponsors over 30 events — most which are free of charge.

Yet there is still so much more to be done! We need you to be involved in our continued planning for the area. Become a member and support *Main Street* financially. We rely on the participation and the voluntary annual dues from our members to accomplish our goals and complete our projects.

Whether you own a downtown business or you just love Historic Downtown Fort Pierce, we need your energy and support to continue to rejuvenate our community's heart and soul.



#### Why Main Street Fort Pierce?

- Downtown Fort Pierce is an important employment center.
- The area is a reflection of the community image.
- Locally owned businesses keep profits in town and support other local businesses and community projects.
  - A vibrant downtown creates a feeling of "hometown pride" and sense of place.
- The downtown district is a public gathering area, where parades, special events, and celebrations are held in a unique setting.
  - Community character and historic integrity cannot be recreated.

#### What are Membership Benefits?

- Your membership dues are an investment in the future of Historic Downtown Fort Pierce, helping us to sponsor improvements and events throughout the year.
- Members receive advanced notice and invitations to special events.
  - You will receive the monthly subscription to *Main Street Focus* magazine and links to *Focus On-Line*.

As a member of *Main Street* you are automatically aligned with others who want to preserve the past and influence the future of Fort Pierce. You can belong to Fort Pierce *Main Street* at one of eight different membership levels, starting at just \$15.

#### Main Street Membership Levels

<b>Benefactor Levels</b>	<b>Community Levels</b>	<b>Corporate Levels</b>
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#### Please Take a Minute to Join Today!

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

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- 1 – Call Main Street Fort Pierce at (772) 466-3880
- 2 – Visit our Website at [www.mainstreetfortpiece.org](http://www.mainstreetfortpiece.org), click the membership link
- 3 – Fill out the membership form and mail to:

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## Looking for Signs

by Lisa Jill Allison, Lisa Jill Allison Art Gallery



As I sat at my computer this morning thinking about this upcoming article, I debated on the topic and then the phone rang. A friend said he was watching the daily visit of the cardinal outside his patio door. So, my mind wondered, "what does it mean when you keep seeing a cardinal?" Is it merely coincidence or something of greater significance? Who knows? I will say I do find the game of looking for signs a fun one. It can heighten my awareness of some daily events that might otherwise go unnoticed; a sparrow on the tree branch, that faint double rainbow in my rear-view mirror and the song I keep hearing as I pass through local businesses, are now all on my radar. So, my mental musings continue. If I was Mickey Mouse in Fantasia, (now you see how my mind works) and could wave my wand and orchestrate a flurry of signs, what would I conjure up? So many things immediately fill my mind. Signs of love and financial abundance come to mind. A calm spirit, patience towards all. And good health with longevity come to the fore.

Now, several hours later, I am back at my computer, ready to share some more. The interim was spent in the best of company, that of my son and grandson. We spent the afternoon visiting a spectacular park. It was unique in that the benches in the park were dedicated to intentions: intentions of patience, kindness, equity, wisdom and much more. I find it interesting that I began the day thinking about subtle signs that may or may not lead in a particular direction and I spent my afternoon in a setting of clear signs and specific direction.

It was a perfect day, sunny, cool and just the right amount of breeze. As we strolled the grounds, the reverence and candor with which my grandson approached the benches of intentions stirred my heart and moved my spirit. Gavin stopped before each bench, read the intention and then seriously considered if he might be lacking in this area. If he felt the lack, he sat on the bench very still, which is amazing for a 9-year-old boy, and then silently asked whatever or whoever he asks in his own private spiritual world, to be filled with this quality. He then

rose, confident that his petition had been heard, and moved to his next task.

The humility and openness with which he approached this tour in self-discovery and self-help brought me such feelings of love and gratitude for being gifted such a beautiful human as a grandson. It also gave me food for thought. Yes, there may be many subtle day to day occurrences that are beacons for the future. The world around us may be visually showing us great things are coming our way. Yet, the benches of intention are all around us as well. Cute signs with sayings such as "life is short, stop to smell the roses," "just breathe," "happy is as happy does," and other catchy phrases adorn walls of many homes and businesses. We are surrounded by gurus that are eager to teach us their ways.

Perhaps somewhere in the middle is the place for me. Perhaps I will thrive best if I am eagerly looking for indicators from the world around me that I am progressing and that as a human family we will progress. Will I not also benefit myself and others if I see the sparrow that perches on my windowsill as a reminder to remain creative and the rainbow that hugs my home as a reminder to walk in faith? Yet, I do also feel a sense of personal responsibility. This is a sense of responsibility to sort through myself, see where I might be lacking, as I watched my grandson do, and then specifically address these areas.

Is it fun or easy? Not really. I must say, I do love the expression, "change comes when the pain of staying as is out ways the pain of change." It reminds me of the discomfort of digging out a splinter verses walking on that splinter. These may seem like big topics, but we are living in big times. We are asked to dig deep and face new realities, new concepts and some strong divisions among the human family. How much more progress could be made globally if we put a good measure of attention on ourselves, not in a hedonistic way, but in an altruistic fashion. Can we scan our days for signs of a personally bright future that will contribute to a globally bright future and can we also, in honesty and humility, sort through ourselves and fill in the spaces that may be lacking in attitudes and intentions of highest nature? Opportunities are ripe in these arenas. Look and you will see! ❖

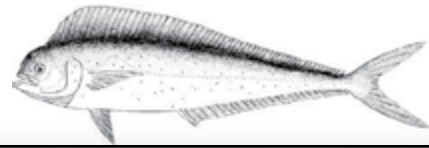
# Mahi and Kings in the Spring

by Captain Bo Samuel

Offshore fishing heats up around now, specifically targeting mahi mahi, also called the common dolphin-fish. These fish are frequently found offshore in April as the waters become warmer. The bright greenish-blue fish with yellow on their sides are fast swimming, schooling fish. Most all anglers enjoy catching these aggressive-eating, acrobatic fish for a fun fight and for a fresh fish dinner afterwards. Some even call mahi the best tasting fish in the ocean!

Mahi will bite artificial lures, feathers, and jigs, but trolling ballyhoo with skirts is the best choice. Structures, buoys, and floating objects are great places to find mahi. Since they are a schooling fish, if one is caught be ready for more as the rest of the school will stay close by. Chumming with some cut bait near the school will increase your chances of hooking more fish and that's when the fun really begins. The kingfish are still providing significant action in 80 to 100 feet. Use a slow troll with live mullet or threadfins for your best bet on kings. Just be prepared for a challenge as kingfish are known to pull 100 to 200 feet of drag.

Snapper can be found on the reefs in about 50-100 feet. Using live bait is best and the threadfins and pilchards are still plentiful in the area.



Remember **Little Jim Bait & Tackle** for tackle needs, bait, ice, and food, plus live music on certain days. They can also help you with fishing rules and regulations or go to myfwc.com. Keep your line tight, be ready for the bite, and keep *Pullin Drag!* ❖

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## Recipe Corner by Sue Dannahower

### Scalloped Potatoes for Easter Dinner

- ¼ cup butter
- 1 large onion, sliced very thin
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 3 pounds Yukon gold potatoes, sliced about 1/8" thick
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350°F. To make the sauce, melt butter, onion and garlic over medium low heat. Cook until onion is softened, about 3 minutes. Add flour and cook for 1-2 minutes. Reduce heat to low. Combine milk, cream and broth. Add a small amount at a time whisking to thicken. The mixture will become very thick; continue adding a little bit of liquid at a time whisking until smooth.

Once all of the liquid has been added, bring to a boil over medium heat while continuing to whisk. Stir in salt and pepper and let boil 1 minute.

To assemble, grease a 9"x13" baking dish. Place 1/3 of the potatoes in the bottom and season with salt and pepper. Pour 1/3 of the cream sauce over top. Repeat layers ending with cream sauce. Cover and bake for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake for an additional 35-45 minutes or until golden brown and potatoes are tender. Broil for 3-4 minutes to obtain a golden top. Allow to rest for 15 minutes before serving. *Serves 6 to 8.*



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