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Margaritaville
April 20th at the
30th Annual Reverse Raffle

See p7

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Mayor Linda Hudson invites you to join her for Community News, Special Announcements, Complimentary Steamworks Coffeabar coffee, Orchid Island Juice, Breakfast Treats, and more!

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

April Showers Bring May Flowers

by Donna Sizemore



Spring is such a beautiful time in Florida. Have you noticed that traffic is a little lighter, and the wait to get into some of our local restaurants is shorter? This is the time of year when many of our local northerners and tourists travel north for the summer months.

With this migration, there comes a responsibility for our local community to ensure that our downtown businesses and restaurants thrive during the slower season. We rely on local support to keep our downtown businesses up and running and our economy strong. Tourism is the state's greatest source of income, and shopping locally not only supports our local businesses but also circulates money back into our community. Unlike large chains, local businesses take the time to get to know their customers and clients, fostering a more personal connection.


Support *The American Dream: The American Dream* is the theory that equality of opportunity should be available to any

American, allowing them to achieve their highest individual aspirations and goals. Small-business owners not only believe in this dream but actively pursue it. By supporting small businesses and shopping locally, you're supporting real, genuine people who have put their passion ahead of convenience and wholeheartedly believe in the businesses they are running.

Now more than ever, it's time to encourage strangers and friends alike to think globally, shop small, support local businesses, and ultimately fund a better tomorrow (www.forbes.com/sites/forbesfinancecouncil/2022/06/28/7-reasons-to-shop-local-and-support-small-businesses/?sh=448e1ff650d1).

Main Street Fort Pierce hopes to see you at our **30th Annual Reverse Raffle** event on April 20th; **Talk Derby to Me** event on May 4th; and **Golf Tournament** on May 18th. For more information on these events and more, visit: <https://mainstreetfortpierce.org>.

Happy shopping! ❖

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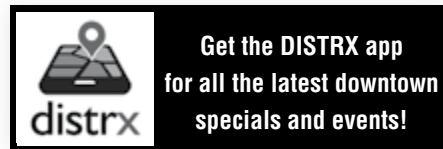
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Calendar

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



MONTHLY EVENTS

April 5, Friday: FRIDAY FEST AT MARINA SQUARE — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.; live music by **Silver Mullet Band**; sponsored by **Cobbs Landing** and **Little Jims** restaurants; Please remove all vehicles from the permitted Friday Fest road closure area (Marina Way & Melody Lane) by 2:00 p.m.; *Facebook*—Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; mainstreetfortpierce.org.

April 19, Friday: COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR — 8:00 a.m. at the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club**, 700 N. Indian River Dr.; *Sponsor* — **Sunrise Theatre Foundation**; *Facebook*—Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; mainstreetfortpierce.org.

April 19, Friday: ARTWALK — 5 to 8:00 p.m.; Various studios and shops open throughout the downtown area; 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.

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

LIVE MUSIC DOWNTOWN

Wine Down Wednesday
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TheFortSteakhouse.com

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facebook/Sailfish Brewing Company

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Cobbs Landing
cobbs-landing.com

Bottom's Up Public House
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121 Tapas on the Water
facebook.com/121tapasonthewater

SUNRISE THEATRE & SUNRISE BLACK BOX

772-461-4775 • sunrisetheatre.com

Tuesdays: Jazz Jam at the Sunrise Black Box Theatre— 7 to 10 p.m.; 460-5299; jazzsociety.org.

MANATEE OBSERVATION & EDUCATION CENTER

429-6266 • ManateeEducationCenter.org

DOWNTOWN FORT PIERCE LIBRARY

462-2787 • www.st-lucie.lib.fl.us/

SUNDAY DOWNTOWN CHURCH SERVICES

Common Ground Vineyard Church; 460-5414, commongroundvineyard.com.

First Church; 464-0440, firstchurchfp.org.

Fort Pierce Haitian United Methodist Church; 940-6728, haitianmethodist.org.

Notre-Dame Mission Catholic Church; 466-9617, notredamecc.com.

St. Andrews Episcopal Church (founded 1893); 461-5009 mystandrews.org.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

A.E. Backus Museum
772-465-0630 • backusmuseum.com

Bud Adams Gallery of Historical Photographs
772-462-1795 • 2nd Floor of P.P. Cobb Building

Fort Pierce Police Athletic League
772-370-6162 • fortpiercepal.com
Volunteers needed: 772-466-0606

Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society
772-460-5299 • jazzsociety.org

Fort Pierce RiverWalk Center
600 North Indian River Drive
772-489-6473 • cityoffortpierce.com

Heathcote Botanical Gardens
772-464-4672 • heathcotebotanicalgardens.org

National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum
772-595-5845 • navysealmuseum.org

St. Lucie County Marine Center
772-462-3474 • stlucieco.gov/marine_center

St. Lucie County Regional History Center
772-462-1795 • stlucieco.gov/history

APRIL: JAZZ APPRECIATION MONTH

APRIL 1: NATIONAL TROMBONE PLAYERS DAY

APRIL 2: AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

APRIL 5: GOLD STAR SPOUSES DAY

APRIL 5: NATIONAL PEEPS DAY

APRIL 6: NATIONAL TWINKIE DAY

APRIL 7: NATIONAL BEER DAY

APRIL 12: NATIONAL GRILLED CHEESE SANDWICH DAY

APRIL 14: NATIONAL DOLPHIN DAY

APRIL 15: WORLD ART DAY

APRIL 17: NATIONAL CRAWFISH DAY

APRIL 21: NATIONAL TEA DAY

APRIL 22: APRIL SHOWERS DAY

APRIL 27: WOODY WOODPECKER DAY

APRIL 30: INTERNATIONAL JAZZ DAY

The Art of Jazz Will Celebrate Jazz Appreciation Month

To celebrate *Jazz Appreciation Month*, the **A.E. Backus Museum** and the **Bluebird Educational Foundation** will present the *Art of Jazz* on April 26 from 5 till 8 p.m. *Jazz Appreciation Month* was created to recognize and celebrate the extraordinary heritage and history of jazz for the entire month of April. It is intended to stimulate and encourage people of all ages to participate in jazz — to study the music, attend concerts, listen to jazz on radio and recordings, read books about jazz, and more.

This special program between the Museum and **Bluebird Educational Foundation** is a perfect collaboration for keeping the legacy alive that A.E. “Bean” Backus left in the community. Backus (1906–1990) is well-remembered for his love of jazz music. The creative environment of his open studio was fashioned as a Bohemian-styled hangout, regularly featuring live jazz performances and attracting people from all walks of life for conversation, friendly debate, music, and of course, art.

The *Art of Jazz* will feature a special lecture by Jon Ward along with a musical performance by the **Billy Cofrances Jazz Quartet**.

Music and visual art are both very distinct forms of creative expressions. Each can evoke a full range of emotions. They tell stories and communicate ideas to those that view or experience



them. Ward’s lecture will explore how visual arts and music are entwined and how each art form influences and inspires the other. The lecture presentation and live band performance together will explore

the fascinating relationship between music and the visual arts. So whether you’re a fan of visual arts, music, or both, this event will introduce you to a fascinating experience that will expand your appreciation of the relationship between the different forms of arts.

Jon Ward has served as the development director for several Florida cities and as the Director of the St. Lucie County Cultural Affairs Council. He has also served as a board member for the Florida Humanities Council and for the Florida Council for Arts and Culture.

The **Billy Cofrances Jazz Quartet** was well-known in the New Haven, Connecticut jazz community before Cofrances moved to Stuart, Florida several years ago. Cofrances started his career as a member of the popular east coast favorite *Jump Street*. He has worked with legendary jazz pianist Sarah Cion, jazz vocalists Billy Weston, Giacomo Gates and Walt Andrus, lead singer of the Tommy Dorsey Big Band. Currently the group performs throughout Florida.

The *Art of Jazz* will be held at the **Backus Museum**, 500 North Indian River Drive, in Historic Downtown Fort Pierce on April 26, from 6 till 8 p.m., with galleries open early at 5 p.m. to enjoy the special exhibition *Art of the Fantastic: Imaginative Illustration from the Korshak Collection*. The program will include the lecture, performance, and hors d’oeuvres, wine and soft drinks. Seats are \$30 each and can be purchased at the **Backus Museum** or online at BackusMuseum.org. All proceeds benefit the **A.E. Backus Museum** and the **Bluebird Educational Foundation**. ❖





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Mayor's Message April is for Volunteers in Fort Pierce

by Linda Hudson, Mayor, City of Fort Pierce



April 21–27 is **National Volunteer Week** and Fort Pierce has a lot of them to be thankful for.

Fort Pierce hosted *The Great American Cleanup* and *Arbor Day* in March, because we have many volunteers who are seasonal residents, and we encourage them to be a part

of our community where they spend their winters. Last month, many volunteers registered to help *Keep Fort Pierce Beautiful's Great American Cleanup*.

The Great American Cleanup is not just about sprucing up the city; it is also an opportunity for students to earn community service hours for scholarships and graduation. Additionally, it encourages group participation, making it an ideal activity for families, businesses, civic organizations, sports teams, schools, churches, and other community groups to come together and give back.

Fort Pierce also celebrated *Arbor Day* on March 9 by dedicating a tree at the Jetty Park roundabout on Seaway Drive and A1A. Fort Pierce has earned the *Tree City USA* designation for thirty-five consecutive years from the *National Arbor Day Foundation*.

Our *City of Fort Pierce* is blessed to have volunteers for the **Sunrise Theatre**; on boards and committees; who clean up our beaches, parks and roadways; and help with our recreational programs.



The *Fort Pierce Yacht Club Foundation Chart Your Course* initiative to expose high and middle school students to marine professionals, was successful due to the volunteer members of the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club**.

Main Street Fort Pierce relies heavily on volunteers to produce many events throughout the year, such as monthly *Friday Fests* and *Coffee With The Mayor*, the **Reverse Raffle** on April 20 and the **Ghosts of Fort Pierce Past Walking Tours** in October.

The *City of Fort Pierce* and **FPUA** work as partners with volunteers to keep our city clean and safe. Want to volunteer? Contact the City Clerk's office at: cityclerk@cityoffortpierce.com. ❖



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Merry Margaritaville Memories to be Made at the 30th Annual Reverse Raffle

Dust off your flip-flops and join us for the **30th Annual Reverse Raffle Celebration** on Saturday, April 20. Hosted by **Main Street Fort Pierce**, this year's **Reverse Raffle** will be a tropical-themed evening filled with vibrant vibes and community camaraderie. Put on your best Margaritaville-inspired attire as we transform the **Pelican Yacht Club** into an island paradise.

The festivities will kick off at 6:00 p.m. with the exhilarating **Reverse Raffle** – a crowd favorite that promises cash prizes and thrilling anticipation! The evening will be buzzing with excitement as lucky numbers are drawn, where participants have a chance to win cash. The grand prize is an amazing \$2,000.

Mingle with friends in the main room amidst a dazzling display of silent auction items generously donated by local businesses. Discover treasures, bid on fantastic items, and revel in the lively atmosphere of community spirit.

The live auction begins at 8:30 p.m. and will feature an array of new and exciting items such as a unique *SWAT Tactical Experience*, a *Sunset River Cruise* on a sailboat, a *Tropical Sunset Party* at the **Hayek Tiki Bar**, and many more mysterious surprises!

Tickets for this event are priced at \$125 per person and include not only a chance to win the grand prize but also an evening of delightful food and entertainment. Act fast, as this event sells out every year due to the limited number of tickets available. Go to the **Main Street Fort Pierce** website at mainstreetfortpierce.org to secure your ticket in advance — they won't be available at the door! For more call **Main Street Fort Pierce** at (772) 466-3880.

Thank you to our local business sponsors whose generosity makes it all happen. When the need arises, consider supporting these businesses that make a difference in our local community:

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Let's come together, celebrate, and support the continued progress of our local community. All proceeds from this event directly contribute to **Main Street Fort Pierce's** mission to revitalize downtown commerce and preserve our historic treasures. Since 1994, the **Reverse Raffle** has been a vital fundraiser, contributing to the restoration of iconic landmarks like the **Historic City Hall**, **Sunrise Theatre**, and the **Manatee Observation & Education Center**. The **Platts/Backus House** is our latest restoration project, and your generosity helps make it all possible.

Don't miss the chance to make memories in **Margaritaville** while supporting a great cause! ❖



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FPUA & the Manatee Center Honor Volunteers



Did you know? April is *National Volunteer Month* in which we recognize all those who give their time and energy throughout the year volunteering for groups and organizations that make the world a better place! Manatees make the world a better place, and the **Manatee Center** is one of Fort Pierce's most sought-after places to volunteer.

Since its establishment 27 years ago, **Fort Pierce Utilities Authority (FPUA)** has provided critical administrative support allowing the center to focus on environmental education and outreach. **Manatee Center** volunteers devoted nearly 220,000 hours elevating the **Manatee Center** to a global tourist attraction. Volunteers work tirelessly educating and inspiring Fort Pierce residents and visitors as they explore the *Indian River Lagoon*, which remains one of the most diverse estuaries in all of North America.

Volunteerism is a cornerstone of our community and helps weave together the diverse fabric of our biosphere making Fort Pierce a unique coastal town with much to share with the world. **Manatee Center** volunteers are spirited and engaged and nature lovers, but like volunteer rates across America, volunteering is also declining at the **Manatee Center**.

National volunteer rates have been declining over the past 20 years according to a national study published by the University of Maryland last year. At the **Manatee Center**, though we have an active volunteer corps, volunteer hours have decreased by 42% since pre-Covid in 2019. Volunteers are essential in educating people about the importance of safeguarding the beloved manatee and ensuring the preservation and conservation of the IRL.

Last year, volunteers at the **Manatee Center** engaged over 60,000 people at community events, including over 35,000 visitors to the **Manatee Center**. A nostalgic and current crowd favorite is still the Manatee Flag which signals to strollers along the harbor when manatees are visiting the passive thermal refuge or drinking their daily dose of fresh water in *Moore's Creek*. For the Manatee Flag to fly, volunteer roving naturalists have to be present to report and record manatee sightings near the **Manatee Center** docks, and hoist the Manatee Flag.

Manatee Center volunteers do so much more than educating people about the *Indian River Lagoon*, manatees and conservation. **Manatee Center** volunteers annually inspire over 4,000 youth and student groups in learning about nature and the environment. Leading classes and workshops into the natural beauty and habitat of the *Indian River Lagoon*, **Manatee Center** volunteers share a glimpse into the unseen and complex marine habitat that surrounds us.

"I love being part of the **Manatee Center** Volunteer Team and meeting so many diverse volunteers and visitors," Maria Romo said. "I have learned so many great things about nature and the *Indian River Lagoon* by volunteering at the **Manatee Center**. I really enjoy volunteering at the **Manatee Center** and passing along the knowledge to visitors," added Romo, who will celebrate her first anniversary as a **Manatee Center** volunteer in May.

Thanks to **Manatee Center** volunteers, visitors, student and youth groups enjoy:

Field trips and day excursions like *Anglers for Conservation* where nature enthusiasts learn the "Art of Fishing" in the

Indian River Lagoon and the importance of conservation in the same setting.

Youth Seine Fishing Classes teach students fishing techniques used since the Stone Age. Instead of harvesting their catch, students learn about marine life in this catch-and-release adventure.

School Visits where volunteers foster a love for nature and inspire the next generation of IRL advocates.

Touch Tank experience where visitors gently interact and touch amazing inhabitants of our fragile ecosystem like Sea Stars, Conchs, Sea Urchins, Horseshoe Crab, Hermit Crabs and more among our large tanks with non-native fish and native fish.

Lunch and Learn is the **Manatee's Center's** longest running education program drawing interested and engaged audiences of all ages since we opened in 1996, and takes place the second Friday of every month at the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club**.

Volunteer opportunities from retired professionals to college and high school students include: Greeters; Discovery Guides; Roving Naturalists; Exhibit and Program Interpretation; Education Assistants; Camp Counselors; Gift Shop and Merchandising Assistants; and Special Events Assistants. All of these opportunities are satisfying and rewarding.

No matter who you are, no matter what skillset you have, you can make a difference. You can participate. You can feel satisfaction from doing something. At the **Manatee Center**, our volunteers are like family! From the newest teen volunteer to our lifelong friends, we strive to reward and commend our loyal and dedicated volunteers.

For additional information on becoming a **Manatee Center** volunteer contact our manager, Jessica Kadie Barclay at 772-466-1600 ext. 3339 or email at: Volunteer@ManateeEducationCenter.org. ❖

About the Manatee Center: The **Manatee Center** is a renowned educational facility dedicated to promoting the protection and conservation of the manatees and their vital habitats, supported by **Fort Pierce Utilities Authority**. Located in Fort Pierce, Florida, the **Manatee Center** has been a trusted resource for over 27 years, engaging and inspiring visitors through interactive exhibits and educational programs. The **Manatee Center** is located at 480 N. Indian River Drive, Downtown Fort Pierce. For more information, contact the **Manatee Center** at 772-429-6266 or manatee@manateeeducationcenter.org or www.manateeeducationcenter.org.

About FPUA: **Fort Pierce Utilities Authority** is a municipal, not-for-profit utility provider. **FPUA** adopted oversight of the **Manatee Center** when the Center was founded in 1996, providing critical administrative support that allows the **Manatee Center** to instead focus its energy on providing critical environmental education to our community. **FPUA's** mission is to provide our customers with economical, reliable, and friendly service in a continuous effort to enhance the quality of life in our community. Fort Pierce is one of more than 2,000 communities in the United States served by a community-owned electric utility, and one of very few who also provide water, wastewater, natural gas, and Internet services. Public utility systems are owned by the people they serve. All benefits from our locally controlled utility remain right here in the community. Additional information is available at www.fpu.com.

Fort Pierce & St. Lucie County Featured in Florida Trend Magazine!

The latest edition of *Florida Trend* magazine shines the spotlight on St. Lucie County! Get ready to dive into the vibrant community of Fort Pierce as they highlight our rich culture, stunning landscapes, and thriving local scene.

From breathtaking beaches to delicious culinary delights, and from historical landmarks to exciting events, this issue is filled with information about Fort Pierce and the surrounding areas.

Read the magazine here: pageturnpro.com/.../110717-Fl.../sdefault.html.

Don't miss the opportunity to explore Fort Pierce, one of Florida's hidden gems. #lovethafort #fortpierceproud. ❖

The Backus Museum Announces its Call to Artists for the Annual Juried Photography Competition *Through the Eye of the Camera*

T*hrough the Eye of the Camera*, the A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery's annual juried photography exhibition, returns to provide amateur and professional artists a great opportunity to be a part of this enduring and coveted competitive survey. Entries in both traditional and digital photography will be accepted by advance appointment April 10 through May 3. There is a \$30 entry fee for artists entering 1–3 works, \$25 entry fee for artists entering 4 or more works. This year's full prospectus with application, dates, guidelines, categories, awards, and entry procedures is available to download from the Museum's website at www.BackusMuseum.org/juried-shows or pick up during regular hours at the Museum, 500 North Indian River Drive in Historic Downtown Fort Pierce.

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. In addition to *Best of Show*, *Director's Choice*, *People's Choice*, and 1st-2nd-3rd and *Award of Merit* in the category awards, there is a special *Best Black & White Photograph* and *Best Film / Traditional RAW Photograph award*. Details are available in the prospectus.

Artists are required to sign up online for an entry appointment in advance. Each 15-minute entry appointment 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.

The juried exhibition *Through the Eye of the Camera* will be on view May 10 through the closing out of the regular season on June 21, 2024, with accepted artists and award winners announced online by Thursday evening, May 9. The opening reception is planned for Friday, May 10 from 6:00–8:00 pm. ❖

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Manatee Center 2024 Summer Camp

by Elyse Geraghty, Education Coordinator



Manatees are warm-blooded mammals and rely on warm water (no less than 68 degrees). Many rely on warm water from power plants which was one of the reasons manatees congregated along Moore's Creek. With many curious people coming to the Fort Pierce area and seeing all of the manatees, there came an issue

of feeding and watering them, altering their natural habitat. Seeing this, boundaries had to be set and education needed to begin. It was time for an intervention, and in 1995, *Main Street Fort Pierce* saw a vision and rallied for the cooperative effort of government agencies, local businesses and concerned citizens to open the **Manatee Center** in October of 1996.

Today, the **Manatee Center** is committed to delivering educational programs to leave a lasting impact; where the public will not only gain a deeper understanding of the *Indian River Lagoon* and its inhabitants, but also develop a sense of responsibility towards environmental conservation. Our programs consist of monthly *Lunch & Learn* lectures, on-site and off-site field trips, outreach and seining programs, as well as our annual *ManateeFest* and *NatureFest* events, and summer camp.

With **Summer Camp**, we strongly believe that by providing children the knowledge about the *Indian River Lagoon* and its inhabitants today, we can inspire them to become responsible eco-warriors of their surroundings tomorrow. We are truly excited about the opportunity to educate children as much as possible in hopes of fostering a love for nature and inspire the next generation of *Indian River Advocates*.

The **Manatee Center** will be providing a 4-week on-site and off-site summer camp opportunity for children, ages 7–12 years old where they will enjoy socializing, making new friends and learning about the *Indian River Lagoon* and its inhabitants.

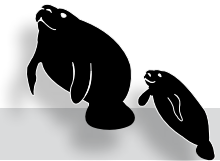
Week 1: Estuary Explorers – June 3 – 7 will feature some of the ocean's most iconic creatures, fossils and wild animals. Tours, games and activities will be provided for the campers!

Week 2: *The Great Outdoors* – June 17–21 will feature activities to explore and learn about nature. This camp will be great for kids who love being outdoors.

Week 3: *Wild Discovery* – July 8–12 will feature trips to see where nature exists along the Treasure Coast.

Week 4: Eco Adventures – July 22–26 will feature seining, fishing and fun projects, and will highlight of some of nature's most amazing estuary inhabitants.

Registration opens the first week of April at www.manatee-education.org. ❖



The Manatee Center April Events

Tuesday – Saturday at 2 p.m.
Fin-tastic Fish Feeding

Join us for a fin-tastic feeding program. The **Manatee Observation and Education Center** is home to over 30 fish species including lion fish, porcupine puffer fish, and a black edge moray eel. Learn more about these friends by visiting and attending one of our education programs.

Friday, Friday, April 12 at 12:00 p.m.
Protecting Manatees for Future Generations

Lunch & Learn — Presented by Gina McClain/Save the Manatee Club. Bring a lunch and bring a friend! This event will be hosted by **Fort Pierce Yacht Club** at 700 N. Indian River Drive in Fort Pierce. Contact Elyse Geraghty, Education Coordinator, geraghty@fpua.com.
Free Event.

Wednesday, April 17 at 11 a.m.
ManaTales Storytime, a Nature and Nurture Series

Nurture your child's natural curiosity about nature through this Mommy and Me style program. Fun for preschoolers.

Wednesday, April 24 at 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
FREE Admission Day

Manatee Center Research Verifies Manatees Continue Visiting Fort Pierce

Moore's Creek is a lifeline for Manatees seeking warmer, fresh water

Fort Pierce Utilities Authority (FPUA) proudly announces the publication of a peer-reviewed scientific article that confirms manatees continue to rely on Fort Pierce's *Moore's Creek* as a passive thermal basin in the area immediately adjacent to **FPUA's Manatee Center**, located at 480 North Indian River Drive in Fort Pierce.

The study, "Persistent long-term habitat use by Florida Manatees at Fort Pierce, Florida from 1997 to 2020," explored the impact that decommissioning the old Henry D.

King Power Plant had on the long-term habitat use of Florida manatees at *Moore's Creek* from 1997 to 2020. Historically, the power plant's clean, warm water discharged into *Moore's Creek* near the **Fort Pierce Marina** and created a 'thermal refuge' or artificial pocket of warm water which attracted manatees, especially during the winter months.

The power plant went offline in 1995 and was decommissioned in 2008, leaving manatee lovers and researchers alike wondering whether the loss of that thermal refuge affected the presence of manatees in the area.

Acting as Citizen Scientists, 'Roving Naturalist' volunteers at the **Manatee Center** devoted over 20 years and 7,000 hours to observing and counting manatees that visited *Moore's Creek*. These observations, coupled by the addition of a *Kilroy Continuous Water Monitoring System* device in *Moore's Creek* (an *Ocean Research & Conservation Association* device), led to a first-of-its-kind academic study exploring the impact of water temperatures and other environmental factors on manatees and Fort Pierce's place in manatees' habitat.

The study was conducted by Dr. Beth Brady, Senior Science and Conservation Associate at *Save the Manatee Club*, and featured original research from **Manatee Center** volunteers and Ms. Rachel Tennant, former **Manatee Center** Manager. Co-authors and research partners include: Kim R. Love of K.R. *Love Quantitative Consulting and Collaboration*, Eric A. Ramos of *Fundación Internacional para la Naturaleza y la Sustentabilidad* and the *University of Vermont*, and Ryan Schloesser of *Mote Marine Laboratory*. The researchers asked to what degree do manatees continue to occupy *Moore's Creek* and how do

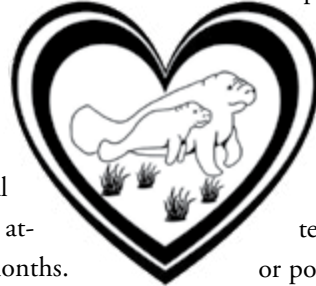
environmental factors influence their occurrence in the creek?

The study's results demonstrate that even after the power plant was decommissioned, manatees continued returning to Fort Pierce waterways because of *Moore's Creek's* status as a "passive thermal basin." Fort Pierce waterways are unique because the surrounding system of canals, rivers, streams and estuaries leading to the *Indian River Lagoon* create passive thermal basins which are essentially natural, short-term pockets of warm water. The water is warmed naturally by environmental factors and weather patterns, and the water retains its warmth for short periods of time.

During the winter, manatees move toward the warmer waters of Florida. Typically, manatees seek warm water refuge near natural springs or power plants where clean, warm water is discharged into basins and warm nearby waterways. Cold waters are harmful to manatees because it causes stressors which increase risks to infections and other ailments like lesions, pneumonia and heart conditions, according to the study. This is what attracts manatees to Fort Pierce waterways during the winter months from November through March. During the summer, manatees can travel as far north as Georgia and as far west as Alabama, the study noted.

"This study shows the value of citizen science and the decades of work that were needed to establish the ongoing usage of *Moore's Creek* by manatees," said Dr. Beth Brady. "Manatees visit the creek as a source of freshwater as well for a short period of time when waters in the creek are slightly warmer than the waters in the *Indian River Lagoon*. Manatees rely on warm water sources such as powerplants during winter months. This study also shows what happens after a powerplant shuts down and the reasons why manatees still come to this habitat."

The study is published by *PLOS One*, the first fully Open Access journal for researchers. Read "Persistent long-term habitat use by Florida Manatees at Fort Pierce, Florida from 1997 to 2020," at: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0297636>. ❖



Varsity Sport Shop – Outfitting the Treasure Coast Since 1972

Varsity is a local staple that supports multiple organizations from the local Little League teams, construction companies, corporations and schools/municipalities. They offer custom apparel including hats, shirts, polos etc. with screen printing, embroidery and transfers as decoration techniques. They also provide art services, signage and promotional items. Their printing and garments are of the best quality and they stand behind their product. "Our mission is to help the community thrive by giving back and we strive to provide products sourced as local as possible to help support our area and our beautiful state!" states **Varsity** owner, Kristina Gibbons.

Kristina was working for corporate America when she realized she knew more about what was happening in New Jersey than she did in her own hometown and wanted to invest her talent and skills back into her community. "My husband and I were on our way to the **Farmers' Market** one Saturday and popped into **Varsity** to say hi to our friend Mike who was the old owner. He told us he was selling the business and I walked out of the shop that day and said to my husband 'I



want to buy that place.' The rest is history as they say."

Originally opened in 1972 by the Picano family, **Varsity** has been a locally-owned business since its start and is a familiar fixture to generations of area residents. It moved from Okeechobee Road to downtown Fort Pierce in 2012. "Downtown is like home to me. I grew up down here and I wanted to help rebuild the downtown that I remember as a child. We have so many great businesses that help support each other, and we all have a shared vision to keep Fort Pierce funky and thriving!", says Kristina.

Kristina used her 401K to buy

Varsity by doing a ROBS rollover with it. "It is not right for everyone, but I didn't have any debt that way." She advises that being an entrepreneur is not for the weak of heart. "It takes a lot of stamina and sleepless nights, so make sure you are ready for that commitment." She recommends having a line of credit and a good working relationship with a local bank. Kristina has been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to buy the buildings that **Varsity** resides in and is an advocate of having a 'first right of refusal' clause in leases.

In addition to producing clothing for many local businesses, schools and organizations, **Varsity** also offers its own Fort Pierce gear in its boutique. Their retail offerings are popular with locals and visitors alike and feature beloved favorites like *Tickle Tummy Hill*, *Dive Bar* and *Fort Seasons* designs. All of the designs come from their 10 employees, customers, and friends. "If you have a design that you would like to see let us know and we'll give you a free shirt if we print the design!" says Kristina.

Varsity Sport Shop is located at 225 Orange Avenue in Fort Pierce; www.wearvarsity.com; Facebook & Instagram: @varsitysportshop. ❖

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There's some good news for all of my loyal customers like you! Starting April 1, 2024, there will be a 30% off storewide sale through Tuesday, April 30th.

I look forward to seeing as many of you before August 31st so I can personally thank you for being the 'best' customers I could have ever asked for! — Becky

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Creative Crayons Honor the Binney Family Contributions to Fort Pierce



On Saturday, March 9th, Main Street volunteers were gathered to be part of the *Great American Clean Up* event. The goal, besides picking up trash, was to remove the remaining decorated fish from the *Fish Fence*. The *Fish Fence* project was created to beautify and give character to the **Kings Landing** site fence, which separates the business district of downtown and the historic Edgartown neighborhood. After four years, the remaining fish were worn out from the weather and the fence needed to be cleaned up. While cleaning up, these wonderful volunteers hit upon a new idea! As a way to participate in the *Fort Pierce Art Club's* inaugural *Color Fort Pierce Beautiful* event (honoring Edwin Binney — the coinventor of **Crayola Crayons**) on March 30th, *Main Street* will create painted plywood crayons to bring color back to the fence and honor the Binney family for their contributions to Fort Pierce.

By the following Monday morning, a support team went



into action. *Main Street* board member, Charlie Hayek, contacted the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club** and they donated left-over plywood. **Conkling & Lewis Construction** (**Sunrise Theatre** and **Backus House** restoration projects) donated five sheets and **The Lift** crew came to the **Platts/Backus House** to cut the plywood into the shape of a crayon and prime the wood. The *Fort Pierce Art Club* sent word out to local artists to pick up and paint a crayon. This project would not have been possible without the combined efforts of all of these folks and is deeply appreciated.

The goal of this project is to remind those that see it how dedicated this community is to the arts and our rich history. Edwin & Alice Binney did many wonderful things for this community and the efforts they put into Fort Pierce were meaningful and lasting.

Thank you to all the participants who helped turn this idea into reality so quickly! ❖




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Love, JAZZ Community: The Practical Magic of Music

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:

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.

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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, or call 772-460-JAZZ. ❖



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TREASURES OF THE PAST

100 years ago this month as reported in the April 20, 1924 edition of the Tampa Tribune by F.E. Nickels

Ocean-front Site at Fort Pierce is Sold for \$250,000

The biggest individual deal in St. Lucie County ocean front property that has yet taken place was announced Friday. It was the sale of Surfside Beach property, located across Indian River almost directly opposite Fort Pierce, and the consideration for the 236-acre tract was a quarter of a million dollars.

The property was sold by Dr. R.C. Boothe of this city to the Chester Florida Land Co., Inc. with headquarters in New York.

100 years ago this month as reported in the April 25, 1924 edition of the Miami Herald

Fort Pierce “Paying Up”

April 22-29, inclusive, is to be “pay-up week” in Fort Pierce, according to plans of the local Merchants’ Association. The association is calling on debtors to pay up and get even with the world again.

100 years ago this month as reported in the April 28, 1924 edition of the Miami Herald

Fort Pierce High Going Up Rapidly

Good progress is being made on the erection of a magnificent new high school building for the Fort Pierce district.

The walls already are up for a height of from eight to ten feet and a large number of laborers are employed on the job. The present indications are that the building will be ready for use with the opening of next school session.

When completed the structure will match the present building which it adjoins and which is recognized as one of the most handsome and best planned school buildings in the state. It will give Fort Pierce a complete and thoroughly up-to-date school plant.

The new building completed and equipped will cost in the neighborhood of \$120,000. It is to be of Spanish design, faced with beautiful cream-colored brick. Twenty-three rooms for classes, offices, departments, assembly, etc. will be provided. The new building will be used exclusively for the high school department, and the present building for primary and grammar grades. (This is the current Fort Pierce Magnet School of the Arts on Delaware Avenue).

75 years ago this month as reported in the April 19, 1949 edition of the Miami News

New \$20 Notes Confuse Holders at Fort Pierce

Some people around here who are lucky enough to have them are suspicious of the new-issue \$20 bill, it appears.

Local bankers say they have had many inquiries both during and out of business hours about the bills by persons who feared they had been stuck with bogus notes.

The new bill, which has been in production since last November, has several details on the reverse side which are different from the former pattern, it was stated.

A south portico has been added to the White House to bring the portraiture up to date, the windows of the house appear open, the White House lawn appears to have been fertilized, showing up greener than before, the White House flag flies at a different angle, and the lettering beneath the portrait engraving is now “The White House” instead of “White House”. The other side of the note is unchanged.

75 years ago this month as reported in the April 21, 1949 edition of the Miami News

Fort Pierce Club Aids Blood Bank

The Rotary Club’s “walking” blood bank is now in operation, according to the announcement of Dan McCarty, chairman of the committee in charge.

The plan is to have persons who may be willing to give blood transfusions in emergencies to go to Fort Pierce Memorial hospital and have their blood typed so that they may be immediately available in case of need.

Most of the Rotary Club members already have had their blood typed and

members of other clubs and the public are being urged to do likewise.

75 years ago this month as reported in the April 26, 1949 edition of the Tampa Tribune

World’s Tiniest Adult Dies at 74

(Waycross, GA) Miss Martina de la Cruz, billed as the world’s tiniest adult, has died at the age of 74, a trouper to the last, it was disclosed today.

The 21-inch tall Filipino midget died last night in a Waycross hospital. She became critically ill several days ago while appearing with her midget brother, Juan de la Cruz, in nearby Blackshear.

The de la Cruz midgets made their winter home in Fort Pierce, while in this country. Martina’s body will be kept here until a family mausoleum is built in Fort Pierce.

75 years ago this month as reported in the April 27, 1948 edition of the Miami News

Fort Pierce Talks of Port Manager

Port committee of the Chamber of Commerce has suggested that the port commission consider employing a port manager, to drum up business and promote the port in other ways.

The committee also suggested a survey by a competent authority.

The committee endorsed the port commission’s proposal to send a small delegation to Washington to reestablish contacts in connection with the pending bill to pay the port district \$482,000 for its use by the navy during the war.

50 years ago this month as reported in the April 17, 1974 edition of the Palm Beach Post

New decal

Local artist Don Rhodes has completed work on a decal he designed for the Fort Pierce Downtown Revitalization Committee. The design, which shows a rising sun over a blue ocean, will be given to businesses which have made a contribution to revitalizing the downtown area and will be presented to the committee today. The committee is trying to get a master plan drawn for the downtown area to beautify it and draw more shoppers.

25 years ago this month as reported by an editorial in the April 23, 1999 edition of the Fort Pierce Tribune

Sunrise opens for Saturday matinee event

She’s old and filled with precious memories. Many years ago she retired. But, thanks to many friends, she is being readied for the creation of new memories equally precious.

The Sunrise Theatre in downtown Fort Pierce opened for business more than 75 years ago. It was a grand theater, a showplace that attracted appreciative audiences from throughout the Treasure Coast. It helped to put Fort Pierce on the map and made the downtown area a place to be.

But, the old beauty aged and, about 15 years ago, she closed for business, retired to become more a storage building.

Members of the community and representatives of Main Street Fort Pierce,

though, began several years ago a project to bring back the Sunrise as a performing arts center and as a magnet for cultural arts and activity in the downtown.

Last summer a board of directors to oversee the hiring of a manager for the theatre and fund-raising for the restoration project was selected. The goal now is to reopen the historic theatre in time for the city’s centennial celebration in two years.

From the outside, little looks different about the theatre. But, on the inside, changes are under way. Recently, a major cleanup effort has been going on with the use of inmates from the St. Lucie County Jail.

Those who want to get a glimpse of what has been happening and to get a glimpse at the potential for the theater will have an opportunity to do so on Saturday. To let the public in and to help raise funds for the effort, a matinee celebration will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. There will be the showing of a collage of classic movies that once flickered upon the theater’s screen and a fan dance performance in the manner of Sally Rand, who performed at the theater during its heyday...

...Downtown Fort Pierce is experiencing an unprecedented renewal and increasingly attracting residents from throughout the area as well as tourists to sample the food, entertainment and cultural offerings... Many will be able during tomorrow’s celebration to recall some of their own memories of the theater, to hear stories about some of the experiences others had there, to envision what a visit to the Sunrise may have been like years ago and to imagine what memories will be created there when the theater reopens...




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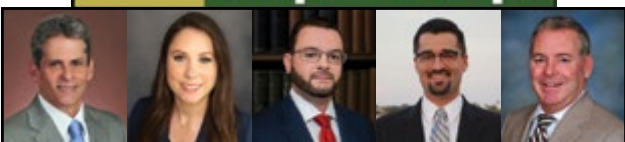


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Downtown Farmers Market Marks Another Successful Anniversary Celebration

If you happened to miss the *27th Anniversary of the Fort Pierce Downtown Farmers Market* in February, you can check out our Facebook page or website at fortpiercefarmersmarket.com and see all the smiling faces of your friends and neighbors who were there. We distributed 1,000 free cookies to our shoppers as a thank you for so many wonderful years of support. The cookies were made by **Farmers Market** vendor **Cookie Monster**. It's a family run cottage food bakery business and their flavors are out of this world! Dulce Pineda, the amazing baker, has the technology to screen print any design on a cookie with edible ink. Stop by her booth at the market to check out her creative treats or talk to her about a custom cookie job for yourself.

Each year to celebrate our Anniversary, the market offers a special canvas shopping bag printed with original artwork from a local artist depicting a well-known Fort Pierce image. This year we were fortunate to partner with Mrs. Doretha Hair Truesdell for permission to reprint one of her iconic *Highwayman* Flamboyant Tree (aka Royal Poinciana) painting that she painted specifically for our anniversary event. She joined us at the market to sign the bags. Watching her listen to stories of how her husband touched the lives of so many locals was heartwarming. The bags always sell out before the end of the market day. This year was no different even though we had more bags printed than usual. People love to give them as gifts but they've also become a collectible for long-time shoppers.

One new feature at this year's anniversary celebration was the opportunity to win the original painting featured on the bag.



We want to thank all those that bought tickets. Raffle ticket proceeds will be used to provide scholarship funds for local students interested in the agriculture field and to support the

Highwayman Museum. Lucky shopper Patty Dye was our ecstatic winner!

One thing this writer noticed while walking through the crowd to announce the free cookie giveaway was the cheerfulness. People were dancing to the live music. Others were learning about the unique products our vendors offer. One shopper stopped me to share that he'd lived in Fort Pierce since 1946 and had been coming to the market since it started in 1997. Others told me they were new and planned to be back often. Snippets I heard in passing revealed that many have their favorite products and favorite vendors that bring them back week after week. As usual, all activity at the market

stopped when the riders in the annual *Florida Cracker Trail Ride* came right by at the conclusion of their recreation of the historic nine-day, 140-mile ride.

What many may not know about the market is that every other week, the *University of Florida Master Gardener* volunteers are there to answer your plant and insect questions with research-based, non-biased information from the UF/IFAS Extension Service. Stop by with a plant sample for ID, get guidance on Florida-friendly landscaping and learn about the many insects we have that harm or help our environment.

So, if you happened to miss the anniversary celebration this year, don't fret. It will happen again next February and for many, many years to come. *It's a Saturday morning tradition!* ❖

The Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency Continues to Offer the Commercial Sign Grant Program

The **Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency** (FPRA) remains committed to supporting local businesses and enhancing the aesthetic appeal of our community through its ongoing *Commercial Sign Reimbursable Grant Program*.

This program encourages property owners to upgrade their signage, replacing old and outdated ones with modern and visually appealing signs. Upgrading signage is not only more aesthetically attractive for the residents and visitors in our community but also increases the brand exposure of businesses to improve the chances of new customer acquisition and repeat business. The FPRA *Commercial Sign Program* provides financial assistance by

offering a reimbursable grant of up to \$5,000 per property. This grant is being offered to existing businesses and can be used towards a new sign or to upgrade and replace old and outdated signs with modern and visually appealing signs. The property must be located within the FPRA District to be eligible for this program. The funds will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis until all funds are depleted.

For an application and a complete list of eligibility requirements, please visit: <https://choosefortpierce.com/969/FPRA-Incentive-Program>.

For more information about the FPRA *Commercial Sign Program*, please call 772-467-3786 or email fp@cityoffortpierce.com. ❖



Mahi and Kings for Spring!

by Captain Bo Samuel

Offshore fishing begins to heat up around now, especially targeting mahi mahi, also called dorado or the common dolphinfish. As the waters of April become warmer along the Treasure Coast, these fish will be actively sought after for their great fight and great taste. Mahi, bright greenish-blue fish with yellow sides, are fast swimming schooling fish. Anglers of all ages get excited to catch these aggressive-eating, high-jumping acrobatic fish, not just for the

excellent fight and some bragging rights, but also for the delicious fish dinner to follow. While mahi are certainly one of the prettiest fish in the sea, some anglers say mahi is the best tasting fish in the sea as well!

Mahi will bite artificial lures, feathers, and jigs, but I find the best choice is trolling ballyhoo with skirts. Structures, buoys, and floating objects are great places to find mahi. They also like to feed on food associated with sargassum so look for weed lines as well as diving birds and your chances of locating mahi are very good. Since they are a schooling fish, if you hook one,



be ready for more as the school will stay close by. Chumming cut bait will bring the school closer and increase your chances of hooking more fish.

Kingfish should be providing significant action in 80 to 100 feet. Live mullet or threadfins on a slow troll is a productive strategy for kings. Be ready for a fight as these fish are known to easily pull 100 to 200 feet of drag. There is no closed season on kingfish but there is a limit of two per angler per day and they must be

at least 24" to the fork. Bottom fishing for snapper in 50–100 feet is still a good strategy with mutton, lanes, and mangroves filling the fish box. Live shrimp work great for snapper fishing.

Our *Fishy Photo for April* shows Morgan Tucker with a fantastic mutton on a recent *Pullin Drag* trip.

The warmer temperatures and milder winds of April will have everyone thinking of spending more time on the water. Come see me at **Little Jim Bait & Tackle**, home base of **Pullin Drag Charters**, and we can plan your next salty adventure! The best way to celebrate spring is by *Pullin Drag!* ❖





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Favorite Recipes from Main Street Board Members

Easy, Healthy Turkey Soup by Joanne Blandford

This is a quick, fresh, home-made meal that you can prep in advance for busy weeks. It is a broth-based soup that takes around 30 minutes to make yet is packed with protein and nutrients to satisfy hunger. As a bonus, it takes 2–3 minutes to reheat and enjoy throughout the week.



Olive oil, 1 tbsp.

Onion, ½–1, diced (It is your preference whether you want more or less onion)

Garlic, 2–5 cloves, minced (I love garlic so I tend to put in more)

Italian seasoning

Ground Turkey Breast, 1 lb.

Diced Tomatoes, 1 can, 14.5 oz (for extra flavor and variety; I have used the Basil, Garlic Oregano or the Fire Roasted varieties of diced tomatoes)

White Northern or Cannellini Beans, 1 can, 15.5 oz.

Chicken Broth or Chicken Bone Broth, 32 oz

Frozen Spinach, 1 bag, 10–12 oz. (use ½ to full bag based on preference)

Salt, to taste

Optional (pinch of turmeric)

Instructions

Heat medium stock pot (10–12 qt.) using medium heat. Add olive oil to pot and when olive oil is ready (sizzles when water is sprinkled over it, but is not smoking), add onion.

Cook until onion is translucent but firm and then add garlic and stir. Cook until you can smell the fragrance of the garlic (1–2 minutes) then add ground turkey breast. Break up the turkey well and stir in with onion and garlic. Cook until there is no more pink coloring showing in the meat. I stir the mixture around during this step to ensure it heats equally.

Add Italian seasoning and a little salt (1 teaspoonish) & stir into meat mixture.

Add diced tomatoes, beans, & chicken broth. Stir well and heat through until just before it boils. At this point, switch heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes. I taste test the soup toward the end of the 10-minute simmer and this is when I add salt if needed and the optional turmeric.

After the 10-minute simmer, bring bag of chopped spinach out of freezer (can use chopped fresh spinach) and add about half to soup mixture. Stir spinach in to distribute equally throughout the soup. If you prefer more greens in the meal, add more slowly while stirring to your likeness. I have used a full bag but this is something you need to monitor as the spinach can take over the soup.

The soup can be stored for less than a week in the refrigerator or can be frozen for longer. I like to use up frozen items within 6 months. ❖



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