



Volume 19, No. 7

February, 2024

FOCUS

The Official Monthly Newspaper of Main Street Fort Pierce

Join Main Street Fort Pierce for the 6th Annual "Celebrating Florida" Art Show

FEBRAURY 8th & 9th AT THE PLATTS/BACKUS HOUSE



Artist Doretha Hair Truesdell

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Sunday, 8 a.m. (English), All Year

Sunday, 9:30 a.m. (English), December 10th, 2023 thru April 7th, 2024

Sunday, 11:00 a.m. (Creole) or 10 a.m. when there is no 9:30 a.m. Mass

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Notre Dame Catholic Church

Fort Pierce, Florida



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Sharing the Love of Historic Downtown Fort Pierce

by Donna Sizemore



Just like that and it's February! Wow! And almost Valentine's Day. If you are looking for something to do or for a gift for that special someone, downtown Fort Pierce has something for everyone. Waterfront dining, live music, great food, flowers, candles, clothes, activities, shops, salons, and so much more. If you can't get there on Valentine's Day with that special someone, gift cards are an option. Downtown Fort Pierce is the heart of the most exciting town on the Treasure Coast! It makes sense to spend Valentines there, doesn't it?

Make sure to stop by the **Backus House** (122 AE Backus Avenue) on February 8th to see the wonderful artwork of Anita Prentice (mosaics), Doretha Hair Truesdell (landscapes), and Jack Shelton (wood turning). Perhaps you'll find that perfect piece for that special someone, for Valentine's Day, or maybe treat yourself. The event begins at 5:00 p.m. and ends at 7:30 p.m. Take a second peak on February 9th from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

2024 is also a Leap Year. This year we have a day added to the calendar and February 29th is actually an extra day. How will you spend your extra day this year? I see it as a free day and an opportunity to do something extra. We only get that extra day every four years. If you'd like to spend that additional day volunteering with *Main Street Fort Pierce*, we'd love to have you.

To get involved or learn more about volunteer opportunities and how you might support our community visit the *Main Street Fort Pierce* website at mainstreetfortpierce.org, click on volunteers and submit the form, or join us at *Coffee with Mayor* on the third Friday of the month (Feb. 16) and introduce yourself to me (Donna Sizemore), Doris Tillman, Director of *Main Street*, or any *Main Street* Board Member in attendance. *Coffee with the Mayor* begins at 8:00 a.m. and we meet at the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club**. We'd love to meet you and explain more to you what *Main Street Fort Pierce* means to our town and how you can make a difference.

Please visit the *Main Street Fort Pierce* website also for events, mainstreetfortpierce.org. ❖



HAPPY

Valentine's Day



MAIN STREET FOCUS FORT PIERCE

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Phone: 772.466.3880 • mainstreetfortpierce.org



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

Friday, February 16, at 8:00 a.m.
at the Fort Pierce Yacht Club
700 N. Indian River Drive

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Join Us at Friday Fest on February 2nd with Live Music by Old Hippies Band

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Fees Apply



Calendar

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



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MONTHLY EVENTS

February 2, Friday: FRIDAY FEST AT MARINA SQUARE — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.; live music by **Old Hippies 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.

February 15, Thursday: GRAND OPENING PARTY — at **Madison Home Decor & Boutique**; 1 to 5:00 p.m.; 124 N. 2nd St.; 772-577-4003.

February 16, Friday: COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR — 8:00 a.m. at the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club**, 700 N. Indian River Dr.; *Sponsor* – **Fort Pierce Sportfishing Club**; Facebook—Main Street Fort Pierce, 466-3880; mainstreetfortpierce.org.

February 16, Friday: ARTWALK — 5 to 8:00 p.m.; Various studios and shops open throughout the downtown area; artstlucie.org.

February 17, Saturday: 7TH ANNUAL HIGHWAYMEN HERITAGE TRAIL FESTIVAL & ART SHOW — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Moore's Creek Linear Park (435 N 7th Street); cityoffortpierce.com/483/Highwaymen-Heritage-Trail-Festival; City of Fort Pierce, 772-467-3161.

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
Fort Social in the Galleria on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month, 6 to 8 p.m.
TheFortSteakhouse.com

Sailfish Brewing Company
[facebook/Sailfish Brewing Company](https://facebook.com/SailfishBrewingCompany)

Pierced Cider
[Facebook @piercedcider](https://facebook.com/piercedcider)

Cobbs Landing
cobbs-landing.com

Bottom's Up Public House
facebook.com/bottomsuppublichouse

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 — 7:00 to 10:00 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

Manatee Observation & Education Center
772-429-6266 • ManateeEducationCenter.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

- FEBRUARY: AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH
- FEBRUARY 1: NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY
- FEBRUARY 2: GROUNDHOG DAY
- FEBRUARY 3: NATIONAL ICE CREAM FOR BREAKFAST DAY
- FEBRUARY 3: THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED
- FEBRUARY 8: FAT THURSDAY
- FEBRUARY 9: NATIONAL PIZZA DAY
- FEBRUARY 11: INTERNATIONAL AUTISM SUNDAY
- FEBRUARY 11: SUPER BOWL SUNDAY
- FEBRUARY 12: OATMEAL MONDAY
- FEBRUARY 13: MARDI GRAS
- FEBRUARY 14: VALENTINE'S DAY
- FEBRUARY 27: NATIONAL STRAWBERRY DAY
- FEBRUARY 28: NATIONAL PANCAKE DAY
- FEBRUARY 29: NATIONAL TOAST DAY

Mayor's Message Honoring and Remembering the Florida Highwaymen

by Linda Hudson, Mayor, City of Fort Pierce



On February 17, the City of Fort Pierce and the Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency (FPRA) holds its seventh annual **Highwaymen Heritage Trail Art Show and Festival**, funded from the city's *Art in Public Places* fund. The **Florida Highwaymen** are world-renown African American speed landscape artists who originated in the City of Fort Pierce in the 1950s. They painted local natural beauty with vibrant colors. They painted quickly on construction materials, rather than traditional art supplies. They sold their art out of their vehicles along Treasure Coast roadways, to tourists and natives alike, or by visiting local businesses.

The city and the FPRA rededicated the **Jackie Caynon** building at 1234 Avenue D for the location of a new **Original Hall of Fame Florida Highwaymen Museum and History Center**. The city received a Florida Department of State grant to retrofit the existing building to create a top-notch facility to house and display valuable

Highwaymen works of art and artifacts. The project received full funding in the amount of \$483,662. Funds are being used to transform the two-story, 3,200-square foot building located in the historical African American community of Lincoln Park to house valuable works of art.

Doretha Hair Truesdell leads the Board of Directors of the new museum. On Saturday, February 24, Doretha, an artist in the **Highwaymen** style, is guest

of honor at the **Downtown Fort Pierce Famers Market Anniversary Celebration**, 8 a.m. to Noon, at the waterfront. The annual anniversary bags will feature her *Royal Poinciana* painting.

The **A.E. Bean Backus Museum** host its *Original Florida Highwaymen on the Way to Fame 1954–2004* exhibit January 13 to March 3, featuring the art of **Highwaymen** Harold Newton, Alfred Hair, Livingston Roberts and Willie Daniels. The **Original Highwaymen** were inducted in 2004 into the *Florida Artists Hall of Fame*. This exhibition of rarely seen paintings, gathered from private collections, celebrates their first fifty years of fame and bold course forward to the hard-won triumph of statewide recognition.

For more information, visit: <https://www.cityoffortpierce.com/483/Highwaymen-Heritage-Trail-Festival> or <https://www.backusmuseum.org/>. ❖

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TheHighwaymenTrail.com

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Facebook.com/ChicAndShoreThings | 205 North Second St., Fort Pierce
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6th Annual "Celebrating Florida" Show

by Holly Theuns

The artists Anita Prentice and Doretha Hair Truesdell are excited to be showing together again at their *6th Annual Celebrating Florida* show and sale at *Main Street Fort Pierce* on Thursday, February 8th from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. If you can't make the show on Thursday night there will be a second chance to see and add to your local artists' collection on Friday, February, 9th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Prentice and Hair Truesdell are pleased to have master wood artist Jack Shelton exhibiting with them again this year. Shelton has been creating award-winning wood art for over 30 years. He began making utilitarian pieces and then fell deeply in love with the grain, color and feel of wood. In Jack's hands,

wood is not an inanimate object — it comes alive. Shelton sees the beauty captured in the wood and releases it for all to see. His one-of-a-kind works of art have been shown all over the United States and are coveted by collectors worldwide.

You have probably seen and maybe even sat on Prentice's work. She is the mosaic artist responsible for the over 200 mosaic benches placed throughout St. Lucie County including at the Fort Pierce Jetty and Veterans Park. She is the resident artist for *Heathcote Botanical Gardens* and has created "Cobalt," a blue and white mosaic panda bear, a pair of mosaic lions and an old-fashioned hopscotch game in the *Children's Garden*. Prentice added a retired Florida roadside show gorilla, "Gloria," to



Artist Anita Prentice

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the *Rain Forest*. She is magnificent — completely mosaicked in upcycled old china. It is not a coincidence that one of the founders of the Garden was named Gloria Moore as Prentice chose to honor her memory and legacy with this installation. Prentice also works on a smaller scale and her mosaic landscapes, hibiscus and palm trees can be found hanging in most area homes. A couple of her lady bugs reside in France and one of her "Zora" portraits was exhibited in a show in Kent, England in 2022. Prentice was commissioned to create mosaic grave tributes to a number of the late *Florida Highwaymen*. In fact, that is how she first met Doretha Hair Truesdell, when she added a mosaic of his artwork to the grave marker for Hair Truesdell's late first husband, the *Highwayman* Alfred Hair.

Doretha Hair Truesdell was married to a *Highwayman* and is the mother of a 2nd generation *Highwayman* artist and most importantly, a Florida landscape painter in her own right. Hair Truesdell paints the Florida many of us have seen kayaking, on a hike or driving the back roads. The native landscape before it has been paved or gated. She is an articulate speaker and a

driving force behind the effort to have a Florida *Highwaymen* license plate added to Florida's specialty plate choices to honor these grassroots legends. Proceeds from plate sales will go towards funding and operating the *Florida Highwaymen Museum* in Fort Pierce.

Hair Truesdell's landscape paintings are sought after and held in many local collections. Her nocturnes, or paintings of night-time scenes, are especially magical. If you don't have a Doretha Hair Truesdell in your Florida art collection, here is your opportunity to buy one, or add to your collection.

Celebrating Florida is an excellent opportunity to see and purchase original artwork by three very talented Florida artists. Their work will be on exhibit and available for sale Thursday, February 8th from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at *Main Street Fort Pierce*, 122 AE Backus Avenue in Fort Pierce. Meet all three artists and enjoy light refreshments. There will be a second opportunity to catch the show and sale on Friday, February 9th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you have any questions about the show and sale contact *Main Street* at 772-466-3880. ❖

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Canada's Most Exciting Beatles Show *Ones* Is Now Gracing Florida at the Sunrise Theatre

What happens when the 27 Beatles songs that topped the world charts for seven consecutive years are played note-perfect by musicians that have toured with The Moody Blues, The Guess Who, Randy Bachman, Burton Cummings and feature five lead vocalists capable of representing the intricate vocals of the Beatles with incredible accuracy and tonal similarity? Plus, add on an orchestra to perform the strings and brass the way you heard on the records! For Beatles fans and general music aficionados, this is the show for you!

Ones – The Beatles #1 Hits will perform on Friday evening March 1 at 8 p.m. at the **Sunrise Theatre** in Fort Pierce. This extraordinary show is now off their Canadian tour, and for the first time performing on the east coast of Florida!

The pristine, beautifully restored, intimate 1,200-seat **Sunrise Theatre** is located in Historic downtown Fort Pierce, 117 S. 2nd Street. Tickets are on sale now ranging from \$30–\$80 and may be purchased at the Box Office 772-461-4775 or by visiting www.sunrisetheatre.com.



Ones is a commitment to the note-perfect performance of the number one Beatles songs from the Ed Sullivan Show in 1964 to their breakup in 1970. The difference between

Ones and other Beatles performances are the spell-binding clips on screen profiled in the amazing multi-media visuals and the use of narrations to tell the stories behind the songs. *Ones* is the only live collection of the hit songs that are truly the soundtrack of one of the most exciting decades in music.

Ones is Canada's most exciting Beatles Show and now it's performing on the Treasure Coast in Florida for the very first time.

Not every seat in the **Sunrise** will have a Beatles fan in it, singing along with the songs that changed everything. The rest of the seats will find their occupants on their feet dancing the night of away. Will you be one of them? Visit www.musicworksconcerts.com for all the details!

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FPUA WEOP Ceiling Insulation Program

This year, FPUA is revamping our *Weatherization Education and Outreach Program* (WEOP) to provide Blown-In Ceiling Insulation at no cost for FPUA electric customers while funding lasts. This new offering of the WEOP program will assist both homeowners and renters to reduce energy usage in their homes by adding up to 12 inches of ceiling insulation.

In Florida, the single largest consumer of energy in the home is air conditioning, and one of the best ways to assist your air conditioner is by insulating your ceiling. For that reason, this year's WEOP program will focus on ceiling insulation. While other factors may contribute to poor heating and cooling, lack of ceiling insulation is a direct cause of escaping heat and escaped cool air. Some studies show that households can save upwards of 40% of their energy consumption with a well-insulated home!

The WEOP program is part of FPUA's community outreach and conservation initiatives that helps households weatherize their home and reduce energy costs year-round, increase a home's comfort, improve safety and health, and conserve energy use. Thanks to funding from the *Florida Municipal Power Association* (FMPPA), we can customize our WEOP program to best meet the needs of FPUA electric customers.

To help FPUA customers learn about home-energy conservation and energy consumption, we provide home energy audit booklets and online resources that guide households thorough understanding home energy usage. Understanding energy use is key to an effective home-energy conservation plan.

Additionally, FPUA's online bill portal allows customers with Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters to track energy consumption and identify spikes in power usage. This easy-to-read data shows excessive energy usage and the potential benefit of improving your home heating and cooling costs with ceiling insulation. The addition of AMI meters to the electric service territory is part of FPUA's ongoing efforts to modernize our electric grid. Nearly 40% of almost 30,000 meters in the electric system have been upgraded to AMI so far.

FPUA designed an easy to follow WEOP application process that answers all your questions about eligibility criteria for this no-cost energy conservation program. Customer Service

representatives at FPUA are also available to review power consumption data with eligible households seeking no cost ceiling insulation under our WEOP program. Please note that homes with flat rooftops are not eligible for this weatherization program because the roof sheathing or roof decking frames do not have sufficient space between the frame and ceiling material to add the ceiling insulation.



FPUA's online tools will quickly verify FPUA electric customers' eligibility for our blown-in ceiling insulation program. Your home must meet ceiling requirements and should not currently have ceiling insulation. Once your home is determined eligible, a release of liability waiver must be signed, and then FPUA will hire licensed and insured contractors — at no cost to FPUA electric customers — to insulate your ceiling. There are no other obligations, costs or payments.

Homeowners and renters: Visit <https://fpua.com/WEOP/> to learn if your home qualifies for FPUA's free ceiling insulation program. Funding for this no-cost program is limited. Applications will be processed on a first-come, first-serve basis.

This project represents one of many economical, conservation, and environmental projects led by FPUA including: storm-hardening and upgrading the electric grid for resiliency and reliability; relocating the sewer treatment plant off the Indian River Lagoon; lining sewer pipes with PVC to protect against inflow and outflow from cracks in aging clay pipes; installing several more acres of seagrass thanks to grant funding from the *Florida Department of Environmental Protection Resilient Florida* program; and more.

About FPUA: **Fort Pierce Utilities Authority** is a municipal, not-for-profit utility provider. 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.fpua.com. ❖

Manatee Center's 28th Annual NatureFest is Here

Elyse Geraghty, Manatee Center Education Coordinator

Since its establishment 27 years ago on October 26, 1996, the **Manatee Center** has been a prominent tourist attraction, nestled along the scenic Indian River Lagoon and Moore's Creek in beautiful, downtown Fort Pierce. The venue has tirelessly worked to educate the community about the importance of responsible actions to safeguard the beloved manatee and ensure the preservation of the Indian River Lagoon; the most diverse estuary in all of North America.



The **Manatee Center** is committed to delivering educational and informative programs and events 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. These educational

programs consist of monthly *Lunch & Learn* lectures for adults, on-site and off-site field trips, outreach and seining programs and summer camps for children, and two annual events for the entire family. The two annual events are *ManateeFest* in November, celebrating *Manatee Awareness Month* along with MOE-the-Manatee's birthday and *NatureFest* in February. Easily our largest event each year, our *28th Annual NatureFest*



takes place Saturday, February 24, 2024. *NatureFest* is a family-friendly event filled with engaging activities, games, live animals, face painting, delicious food and much more. This is an exciting opportunity for everyone to come together, connect with incredible volunteers and celebrate with remarkable organizations that partner with the **Manatee Center** to promote and educate about our beloved Treasure Coast's fragile ecosystem and its inhabitants.

Activities begin at 10:00 a.m. and run until 2:00 p.m. We anticipate a turnout of over 25 organizations, each one with activities for the kids and information for the adults. Our annual figures fluctuate but we expect over 3,000 individuals to participate in this free and fun event.

Come celebrate the wonders of nature, conservation and the great outdoors. You are going to love it!

For more information on the event or to become a partner please reach out to the **Manatee Center** at 772-429-6266 or e-mail manateeeducationcenter.org. ❖



The Manatee Center February 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, February 9th at 12:00 p.m.
ORCA's Kilroy Program

Lunch & Learn — 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. *Free Event.*

Wednesday, February 21st 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.

7th Annual Highwaymen Heritage Trail Festival & Art Show

The *City of Fort Pierce* is hosting the *7th Annual Highwaymen Heritage Trail Festival & Art Show*, paying tribute to the renowned *Florida Highwaymen* artists and their significant contribution to the cultural history of Fort Pierce. The event will take place on Saturday, February 17, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Moore's Creek Linear Park (435 N 7th Street), situated at the corner of Avenue D and 7th Street.

Moore's Creek Linear Park, located in the heart of the Lincoln Park neighborhood, is where the *Highwaymen* artists, credited with initiating the "Last Great American Art Movement of the 20th Century," began their journey. The free event will showcase 'Original' and 2nd Generation *Highwaymen* artists displaying and selling their art. Tribute booths for several deceased artists, displays from regional artists and arts organizations, live jazz music, food, novelty vendors, and a Kid's Zone will also be featured.

Free guided tours of the award-winning *Highwaymen Heritage Trail* can be reserved by registering at the *Highwaymen Festival 2024 Tour*. The trail, marked with colorful indicators, public art, and an informative website, narrates the story of African American artists from the 1950s to their induction into the *Florida Artist Hall of Fame* in 2004. The new **Highwaymen Museum** will be open to the public during the festival, offering a sneak peek at vintage *Highwaymen* paintings as part of the *Highwaymen Heritage Trail*.

For more information about the event, contact 772-467-3161 or visit *City of Fort Pierce - Highwaymen Heritage Trail Festival*. If you are interested in participating as an artist vendor, food vendor, or volunteer, visit *Highwaymen Heritage Trail Festival - Participation*. ❖

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An Overnight Success 50 Years in the Making

Come See *Fast Forward: The Original Florida Highwaymen on the Way to Fame 1954-2004*

The next presentation of the 2023–24 season continues the **A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery's** annual series of special exhibitions celebrating the unique art movement that traces its beginnings to our community. *Fast Forward: The Original Florida Highwaymen on the Way to Fame 1954–2004* marks the 50th anniversary of the painters' induction into the *Florida Artists Hall of Fame*. *Fast Forward* is on view January 13 through March 3, 2024 at 500 N. Indian River Drive in Historic Downtown Fort Pierce.

When a nineteen-year-old Harold Newton became inspired to paint the Florida landscape in 1954, his vision, courage, and accomplishments encouraged his friends and neighbors to take up paintbrushes and follow a new path as professional artists. Over time, dozens of individuals joined the fast painting venture that elevated the natural beauty of the Sunshine State and unintentionally founded a movement.

Yet their progress over the decades was no secret. Their achievements were recorded in contemporary newspapers, documenting their work for local and regional audiences.

After more than fifty years in becoming an overnight success, the 26 landscape artists now known as *The Original Highwaymen* were inducted in 2004 into the *Florida Artists Hall of Fame*.

Fast Forward presents an exhibition of more than 50 rarely or never-before-seen paintings assembled from 10 private

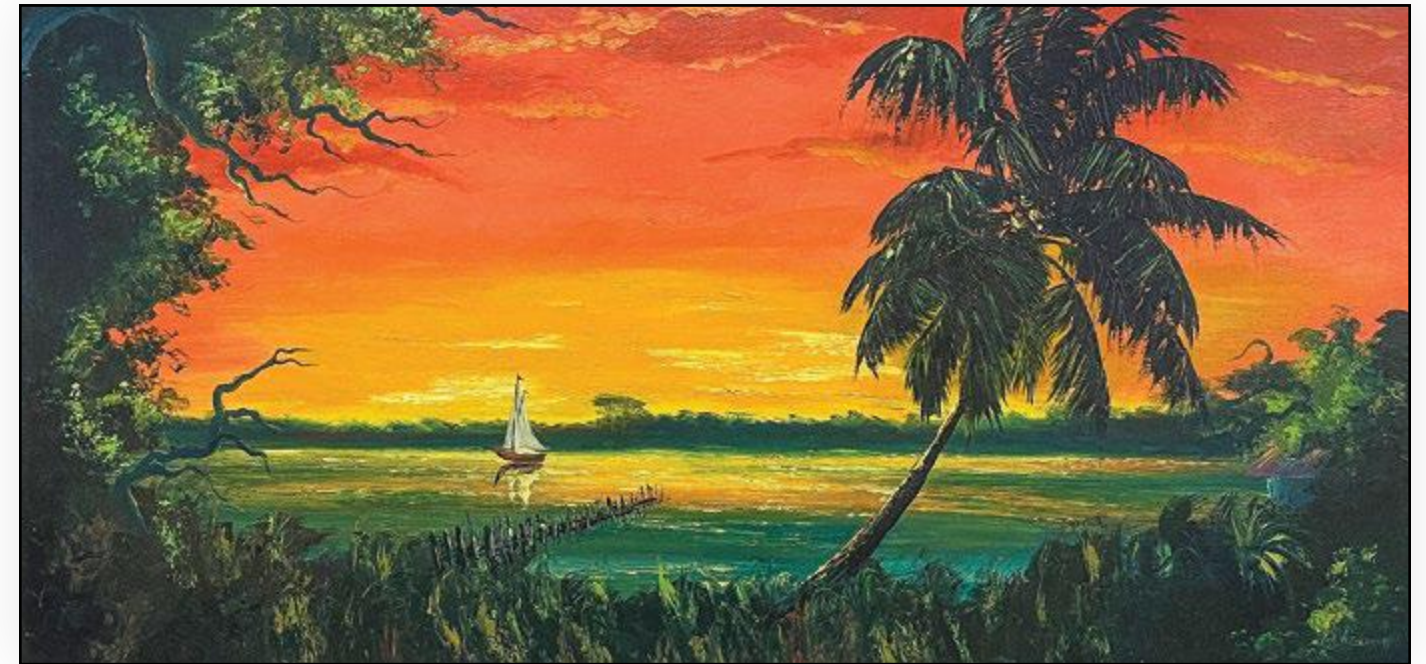
collections from around the state, including works by Harold Newton (1934–1994), Alfred Hair (1941–1970), Livingston Roberts (1942–2004), R.A. “Roy” McLendon (b.1932), Sam Newton (b. 1948), Mary Ann Carroll (1940–2019), Willie Daniels (1950–2021), and others. The exhibition includes notable newspaper appearances from the past, all celebrating the artists' first 50 years of fame and charting their bold course forward to the hard-won triumph of statewide recognition — exemplified by the original *Florida Artists Hall of Fame* award “La Florida,” conferred to the group in Tallahassee in 2004 and presented for public display in *Fast Forward* for the first time in 20 years.



Newton, Sam (b. 1948). *Washer Woman*, not dated. Oil on Upson board, 24 x 36 in. Roger Lightle Collection.



Hair, Alfred (1941–1970). *Night Breakers*, not dated. Oil on Upson board, 36 x 96 in. Private Collection.



Carroll, Mary Ann (1940–2019). *Indian River Sunrise*, not dated. Oil on Upson board, 24 x 48 in. Walker Collection.

Fast Forward: The Original Florida Highwaymen on the Way to Fame's opening reception will be held on Friday, January 19 from 6:00–8:00 p.m., with remarks at 6:30 p.m. Current members are always free; not-yet members are \$20 — or join this evening as a member for 12 months of inspiring arts and culture.

The **Backus Museum** is planning to present its annual favorite *Highwaymen Celebration Weekend* on February 16–18, featuring free admission during regular hours. Visitors to the Museum can enjoy a range of special offerings outside and inside. The highlight of the weekend takes place on the Museum's Outdoor Mural Plaza, where people seeking to start or build their personal collections of *Highwaymen* paintings will be able to browse an impressive selection offered for



Roberts, Livingston (1942–2004). *Rough Break*, not dated. Oil on Upson board, 24 x 36 in. Roger Lightle Collection.

purchase by professional dealers, specializing in the vintage works of these artists. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about the current state of the art market and to explore owning an original work of art for your home or office. *Fast Forward* will be on display inside, with free gallery talks for the public each day. The annual special exhibition expands upon the year-round display of *Highwaymen* paintings on view, a display which includes video excerpts from the award-winning documentary film “The Highwaymen: Legends of the Road.” For more information, please visit www.BackusMuseum.org/celebration.

All dates and programming subject to change; please check the website for any updates or cancellations. ❖



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Organ Pops Concert & Silent Movie

A Sunday afternoon in a historic space. A free concert and a movie. It's happening downtown in the Peacock Arts District at the corner of 7th, Orange, and "A." **First Church Fort Pierce**, a long-standing United Methodist Congregation in Fort Pierce, is hosting this free event. The church's sanctuary is a historic building with a beautiful wood and stone interior, featuring magnificent stained-glass windows.

Mark Herman performs across the U.S. and abroad. Currently residing in Los Angeles, Mark has toured in Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. He is one of the most in-demand concert organists. The youngest recipient of the American Theatre Organ So-



ciety's organist of the year, Mark Herman has been featured on NPR's "Pipe Dreams."

One of Mark's passions is showcasing new Allen Organs in the U.S. and beyond. He comes to Fort Pierce on February 18th to celebrate the brand-new Allen Organ at **First Church**. Because Mark lends his talents and skills to silent film scoring and composition, this Sunday afternoon concert will include a silent movie!

Pops concert and a silent movie on a Sunday afternoon guarantees a good time! **First Church Fort Pierce** welcomes the community on February 18th for a uniquely entertaining music and film event. It's not to be missed. So, mark your calendar. Visit www.firstchurchFP.org for more information. ❖

Lil Feet 2023 Art Auction & Firefighter Dinner

by Brenda Smith & Sue Dannahower

The **2023 Art Auction & Firefighter Dinner** was once again a huge success. This year the event was held at the **500 Orange Event Center**, a unique historical venue in downtown Fort Pierce. The theme, *A Very Haunted Wild West* unfolded as a captivating blend of creativity and community spirit. Artists from the Fort Pierce area contributed their talents by transforming old bunker boots, helmets, and fire extinguishers into beautiful pieces of art.

The evening commenced with a delicious steak dinner, prepared by our very own firefighters. Then the fun continued when our spirited auctioneer, County Commissioner Chris Dzadovsky started the bidding on the creative works of art and other donated items. The highest bidders were rewarded, making this fundraiser a distinctive and enjoyable experience for all.

The success of the event is credited to the active involvement of generous sponsors, donors, and dedicated



volunteers. Within the heart of the downtown Fort Pierce community, local vendors like the **500 Orange Event Center**, **Sunrise Theatre**, **Fort Pierce Jazz Society**, **A.E. Backus Gallery**, the **Cake Lady**, and more... all play crucial roles with their contributions of talents and resources.

St. Lucie County Lil Feet, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, is dedicated to providing school shoes and socks to children in need. The annual fundraiser is sponsored by **St. Lucie County Fire District** and the **St. Lucie County Firefighters Benevolent Association** as well as local businesses.

To date, thousands of needy children in St. Lucie County have received new shoes.

In essence, the **2023 Art Auction & Firefighter Dinner** not only displayed the artistic spirit of the community but also demonstrated the power of collaboration in making a positive impact on the lives of children in St. Lucie County. ❖

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Join the Backus Museum for "Juice & Jazz"

and Win a Masterpiece of Florida Art

Sunday, March 3, 2024 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Tickets available January 31, 2024. Enjoy a jazzy time on the Indian River for our choice outdoor concert event! Live music on the Outdoor Mural Plaza accompanies a scrumptuous assortment of sweet and savory delights with fresh juice

from **Natalie's Orchid Island Juice Company**, hot java and sparkling Mimosas, Bloody Marys, or Prosecco.

At 12:30 p.m. we hit the exciting climax — the drawing for the annual *Florida Art Raffle*. Bop over and Swing by for the favorite opportunity for fun and advance the mission of the **Backus Museum!**



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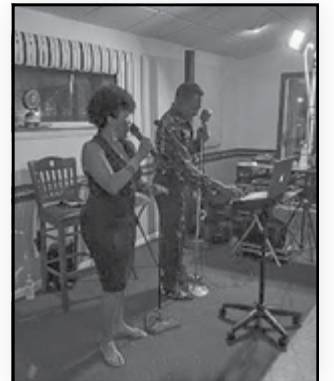
by Robynn Holland, Chair, FPYC Foundation and Michele March, Social Media, FPYC

The Board of Trustees for the *FPYC Foundation* and the *Motown Magic Committee* thank everyone for their support of the fund raiser for *Chart Your Course*. The event sold out!! The **2024 Chart Your Course** event will benefit St. Lucie Public Schools students from Centennial High, Westwood Academy, Lincoln Park Academy and Dan McCarty Middle Schools.

Chart Your Course, a maritime and marine industry career expo is hosted and sponsored by the *FPYC Foundation* in collaboration with the St. Lucie Public Schools, the *City of Fort Pierce*, maritime and marine industry representatives, and the *Fort Pierce Yacht Club*. Through *Chart Your Course*, 100 students from 8th to 11th grades have an opportunity to learn about potential careers in the maritime and marine industries as well as environmental science related fields. The intent is to introduce students to various career opportunities in these fields, and further, to motivate them to select relevant curriculums over the next one to four years, which will build the skills necessary to be the next industry participants. This is part of the *FPYC Foundation's* maritime and marine workforce initiative.

Thank you to all our *Motown Magic* sponsors, your support is greatly appreciated: Steve and Robynn Holland, *Project LIFT*, The **UPS Store**/St. James Dr. in Port St. Lucie, **Fort Pierce Yacht Club**, Sohni/Kremer and Murphy/Maughan, Steve and Ruth Jaroski, Ed and Diane Hyer, Bob and Ginny Harbison, FIN & FOIL, Mitch and Diane Korbey, Ron and Sue Miller, Barbara Rose.

The **FPYC** was transformed by event planners Venecia R. McCrary and Clesha Alexander Green of "**Da**" **Party Starters** who decorated in a *Rhythm and Blues* club atmosphere with gold and black, highlighted by vinyl records of the period, and who also prepared the delicious hors d'oeuvres. Guests enjoyed an evening of great food, great music and a lot of dancing as Mr. Motown (Curtis Hill) and Muffy Charles sang the Motown hits and kept guests up all their feet all evening! ❖



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New Year, New Assessment

For property owners in Florida, January 1 valuation isn't just the start of a new year: it's also the official assessment date for property taxes. This means the *Saint Lucie County Property Appraiser's Office* determines your property's value and eligibility for exemptions as of that date.

What does this mean for you? Your property value will be based on its "just market value" as of January 1. This means considering factors like comparable sales in your neighborhood, recent additions, and overall market conditions.

If you bought your property in 2023, the property's value will be reset to just market value and any exemptions or caps from the previous owner will no longer apply. This will also be the first year to apply for Homestead Exemption, Portability, or any other exemptions you may qualify for. Ready to claim your exemptions?

The good news is, filing for exemptions is easy. You can do it online at www.paslc.gov before the deadline of March 1, 2024. Don't miss out on valuable savings!

What to expect next: You'll receive your TRIM Notice in mid-August. This notice will outline your property's assessed

value, any exemptions applied, and your estimated property tax liability.

Here are some additional tips for navigating the January 1 assessment: Visit our website at www.paslc.gov to learn more about how your value is determined and the various exemptions available to residents. Additionally, you can view videos about our TRIM process and information for new homeowners.

Understand that your taxable value the first year of purchase may increase the next year dependent upon the exemptions applied under the previous owner.

Contact the Property Appraiser's Office if you have any questions: we are here to assist you in the assessment and exemption process.

With a little planning and preparation, you can easily navigate the January 1 assessment and ensure you are receiving all exemptions you are entitled to.

Keep an eye out for future articles in this series where we'll delve deeper into specific exemptions and tax-saving strategies for Saint Lucie County property owners. ❖

The City of Fort Pierce Unveils "Next Stop Fort Pierce" Podcast

The *City of Fort Pierce* is excited to announce the launch of its new podcast, "Next Stop Fort Pierce." This informative series is dedicated to keeping our community informed about the numerous advantages that a Brightline train stop could bring to Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, and the entire Treasure Coast region.

The "Next Stop Fort Pierce" podcast will delve into the potential positive impacts of having a Brightline train stop within our city limits. From bolstering economic development and creating job opportunities to enhancing connectivity and fostering community growth, each episode will shed light on the transformative benefits that a Brightline stop could offer.

In the upcoming episodes, listeners can expect to hear from local experts, community leaders, business owners, and residents who will share their insights and perspectives on how a Brightline train stop can contribute to the continued progress and prosperity of Fort Pierce.

Mayor Linda Hudson expressed enthusiasm about the podcast, stating, "Next Stop Fort Pierce' is a fantastic initiative to inform and engage our community in the discussions surrounding the possibility of a Brightline train stop. We believe that this podcast will serve as a valuable resource for residents to gain a deeper understanding of the positive impact such a development could have on our city and the broader region."

The podcast episodes will be available on the City's social media platforms, and residents are encouraged to tune in, stay informed, and actively participate in the conversation. The *City of Fort Pierce* looks forward to constructive dialogue as we explore the exciting prospects that a Brightline train stop could bring to our vibrant community.

For the "Next Stop Fort Pierce" podcast, please visit https://youtu.be/4lkaKOSq2_I and follow us on www.facebook.com/ftpierce for more updates! ❖

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Fort Pierce Downtown Farmers Market Turns 27!

A well-known local resource that many of us have come to know and love is celebrating its 27th year in 2024. From its beginning, the **Fort Pierce Downtown Farmers Market** has proven to be a great place to spend a Saturday morning. Whether you are looking for locally grown fresh vegetables or just grabbing a bite of breakfast to eat while admiring the Indian River Lagoon and enjoying live music, the Market has



just what you need. A lot of us count on organic veggies, specialty jams and syrups and unique food offerings for our weekly groceries, others love being able to showcase local products when giving gifts. No matter the reason we go, I think we all appreciate this weekly event.

Here's a question though: How did this Market get started? Here's an answer for you: Your Local County Extension Agent made it happen! Seriously, back in 1996, Anita Neal was the Environmental Horticulture Agent at the *University of Florida IFAS Extension Office* in St. Lucie County. She saw that consumers needed better access to fresh, local produce. To meet that need, she invited a group of local leaders to share ideas. The original plan was to create a community garden. Plans changed when they discovered they could have a bigger impact with a market than a garden. They chose the location and decided on a frequency. They set up a guiding Board of Directors and recruited a manager. Mrs. Neal said, "We projected we would have twelve vendors that first year with hopes for 25." The market now has space for three times that number.

Originally, the market was a seasonal event, but consumer demand pushed for a year-round schedule. From the very beginning, organizers were adamant that this Market would focus on agricultural products, not crafts. One early vendor was told, "if you want to sell baskets you make, put some oranges in it." Most don't realize that the craft market across the way from marina square is offered by a separate group. Back when it started, Marina Square was still a grassy area and vendors faced muddy challenges when it rained but the shoppers kept coming so they did too.

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After so many years it would be difficult to gauge the economic impact of the Market on our area. The Market has been a catalyst for job creation, business growth and improved commerce. When the market started, most downtown businesses weren't open on Saturday — that has changed. Besides that, a

lot of local musicians have had their start there. Local artists have had their work featured on the annual anniversary swag. Visitors from surrounding areas have come for the Market and stayed for the ambiance of the beautifully designed marina square. The library Director has even reported increased patronage during Market hours. Best of all, the market has supplied a retail outlet for local agricultural producers and food makers.

Now, 27 years later we might all agree that those original planners did a great job. So many in our area have grown up with the Market, spending Saturdays socializing, snacking and shopping along the waterfront in downtown Fort Pierce. Find more about the **Fort Pierce Downtown Farmers Market** at their website at <https://fortpiercefarmersmarket.com/> or their Facebook page. Remember, *it's a Saturday morning tradition.* ❖

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The Fort Pierce Yacht Club Invests \$20,000 in the Community

The *Fort Pierce Yacht Club*, organized in 1980 as an all-volunteer yacht club, has as its mission, in addition to promoting safe boating and clean water, a commitment to be involved in the Fort Pierce community. In 2023, the **FPYC** invested in the community by providing several hundreds of hours of volunteer service, and through the **FPYC** and the **FPYC Foundation**, the charitable arm of the **FPYC**, invested a little over \$20,000 in the community.

In 2023, the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club** were sponsors of: *Stars Over St. Lucie*, *Main Street Fort Pierce Ghost Walk*, *Sights and Sounds on Second*, and *Heathcote's Gardens of Light*. Donations were given through the **FPYC** to the **Original Florida Highwayman Museum**, *St. Lucie Learn to Read*, *Boys and Girls Club* and *FPPD Courageous Kids* program.

In addition to donations and sponsorships, members from the **FPYC** volunteered at various community events, including *Main Street's Friday Fest*, serving as guides and ghosts at *Main Street's annual Ghost Walk*, entering a float and walking in the annual Christmas Parade, and participating in the *Treasure Coast Youth Sailing Foundation's Wacky Raft Event*.

In March, the **FPYC** was proud to be a part of the Centennial celebration of the *Fort Pierce Police Department* by being a sponsor, having **FPYC** members serve on the Centennial committee, hosting the **FPPD** for a *Centennial Celebration* at the **FPYC**, and participating in *Back the Blue* event held at the **Causeway Marina**. **FPYC** member, Charlie Hayek, was the chair of the *FPPD Centennial Committee*.

For the 13th straight year, the **FPYC** sponsored and hosted the Fort Pierce community *4th of July Boat Parade*. Vice Commodore of Fleet, Victoria Westphal, did a wonderful job in both organizing the parade and encouraging boaters to come



2023 FPYC Board of Directors
Ruth Jaroski, Commodore Forest Blanton, Lou Tomasovic, Suzi Boardman, Susan Sohni, Victoria Westphal, Ron Miller and Robynn Holland

out and celebrate our *Independence Day!* Later in July the **FPYC** served as a weigh-in location for The *Annual Treasure Coast Waterway Cleanup* and weighed in a little over 250 pounds of trash. Several **FPYC** members served in December on the *St. Lucie County Christmas Boat Parade* committee which, together with the **MIATC**, doubled the number of participants to make it the most spectacular parade to date. Members also participated by entering a boat.

Collaboration with other community interests is always a goal of the **FPYC** and in 2022 Commodore Forest Blanton

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announced **FPYC** was supporting the **FPUA** and the **Manatee Center** grant proposal to help restore seagrass along the Indian River. And the good news is that the project was started in 2023 and there is now a series of PVC pipes along the shore east of the **FPYC** clubhouse. These PVC pipes will be used to specifically identify areas of seagrass and measure the change of our seagrass over time

The **FPYC** collaborates with *Main Street Fort Pierce* in hosting *Coffee with the Mayor*, and at the February 2023, *Coffee with the Mayor*, Robynn and Steve Holland, members of the **FPYC** were recognized as volunteers of the month. In March, the **FPYC** sponsored *Coffee with the Mayor* and chose Dorethea Hair-Truesdell as the volunteer of the month for her outstanding contributions to the community, and at the May *Coffee with the Mayor*, the sponsor, *Treasure Coast Youth Sailing* recognized Forest Blanton, **FPYC** Commodore, as volunteer of the month for his outstanding service to the **TCYSF**.

The **FPYC** hosts the **Manatee Observation and Education Center** (MOEC) *Lunch and Learn Program* throughout the year and during the summer, hosts the *Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society* for their summer series.

The **Fort Pierce Yacht Club** continued their support of the community through memberships in *Main Street Fort Pierce* and *Marine Industries Association of Treasure Coast* (MIATC). Two members of the **FPYC**, Charlie Hayek and Steve Holland also serve on the Board of *Main Street Fort Pierce*.

Trim A Tree, an **FPYC** Christmas tradition for over 20 years, raises money for a local community organization. In 2023, **E.N.D.It!** was chosen as the recipient and the event raised \$3,400 for the organization. This was the second year in a row **E.N.D.It!** has been chosen and in 2022 *Trim A Tree* raised \$3,000 for the organization, making a total of \$6,400!

The **Fort Pierce Yacht Club Foundation**, the charitable arm of the **FPYC**, was also actively investing in the community during 2023. The 2023 **FPYC Foundation** Board of Trustees were Robynn Holland, Diane Korbey, Victoria Westphal, Suzie Boardman, Lou Tomasovic, Christa Stone, Linda Sampson, and Kris Muus. In February of 2023, the **FPYC Foundation**, under the leadership of Diane Korbey, funded and hosted *Chart Your Course*, a maritime and marine career expo for 100

students of the St. Lucie Public Schools. The four schools chosen to participate were St. Lucie Centennial West, Forest Grove Middle, Fort Pierce Central High, and Dan McCarty Middle. The *Second Annual Chart Your Course* is being planned for 2024.

The charitable *Poker Run on the Water*, the annual fundraiser for the **FPYC Foundation**, was held in April under the leadership of Suzi Boardman and Victoria Westphal. A successful charitable *Poker Run on the Water* helped provide funding to **FAU Harbor Branch** for a summer intern from **Indian River State College**. The **FPYC Foundation** has supported **FAU Harbor Branch** with scholarships for summer interns for the past five years and was excited to do so again. The \$7,000 scholarship for 2023 was awarded to **Indian River State College** student Angel Mosher.

Other organizations that benefited from the charitable *Poker Run on the Water* were *FPPD Courageous Kids Program*, *Treasure Coast Youth Sailing Foundation*, the **Manatee Center**, and *Wesley Island Eco Camp*. Additional donations given from the **FPYC Foundation** included a donation to the *Alexander Family Christmas Toy Drive*, the *Marine Cleanup Initiative*, an organization involved in creating artificial reefs by sinking ships, and the *Annual Treasure Coast Waterway Cleanup*.

Mark your calendars for the 2024 *Charitable Poker Run on the Water* to be held on Saturday, April 27th. The winning hand wins \$500.00!

A Night of Motown Magic, a benefit to raise money for the *Second Annual Chart Your Course* was hosted by the **FPYC Foundation** in November. The event was a success and will allow the **FPYC Foundation** to collaborate with the St. Lucie Public Schools, the *City of Fort Pierce*, the **FPYC**, and marine and maritime industries to once again provide a career expo/workforce readiness event for 100 students. The event will be held in February, 2024.

The **Fort Pierce Yacht Club** membership values the community of Fort Pierce and looks forward to continuing their 43-year tradition of being an active part of the community by volunteering and providing financial support to various organizations. We look forward to doing even more in 2024. *We Love The Fort!* ❖

Fall in Love with Fishing!

by Captain Bo Samuel

One thing we love about our amazing Treasure Coast waters is the abundant opportunities for great fishing adventures. This month anglers will be enjoying catching snapper, pompano, snook, triggerfish, sheepshead, and Spanish mackerel. February is a terrific time to plan on targeting sheepshead on the shallow reefs near shore while they are in for feeding and breeding, although they can be caught year-round in our area. Sheepshead are generally known to be bait thieves and difficult to hook, but with a little skill, we can fill up the fish box. Gray triggerfish and Florida pompano are also being reported this time of year around the inshore reefs and both are very good on the table.



Best results for sheepshead will be seen using live shrimp on light tackle with 30-pound fluorocarbon leader and a quarter-ounce jig. Run out to the shallow reefs along the beach in about 20 to 30 feet of water and plan to fish first thing in the morning as the sun comes up for some great action. Anglers of all ages will love the excitement of catching a sheepshead with almost every drop of bait! They provide a fun fight, with some larger sheeps getting as big as 10–12 pounds, and a very tasty



dinner. These fish are excellent blackened, fried, baked, or hobo style on the grill and a perfect way to get to someone's heart!

One of my favorite fish to catch in February is the elusive snook. Many anglers will be hoping to avoid heartbreak by landing that first keeper snook of the season which opens February 1st. A "keeper" snook is one that falls within the FWC slot regulation of no less than 28 inches and no more than 32 inches and causes an angler to fall in love with snook fishing! Snook can be targeted in the inlet and around the jetties on both incoming and outgoing tides using live mullet, pilchards, and threadfins.

The *Fishy Photo* this month shows avid angler Mike Stump with a giant gray triggerfish caught on live shrimp. Nice job, Mike!

My tip for Valentine's Day is book a trip and find out for yourself why we love fishing in the Fort! Salty memories, reel fun, and fresh fish dinners are a promise. If you're planning to come visit my home base of **Little Jim Bait & Tackle** for a great lunch or some great music, we can talk about your next salty fishing adventure on the blue. One trip is all it will take for you to *Love Pullin Drag!* ❖



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An Interview with

Doris Tillman
Main Street Manager

- *Name:* Doris Tillman
- *Place of Birth:* Jacksonville, Florida
- *Year you moved to the area:* 1978
- *Significant other, spouse, children, pets:* dogs, donkeys and horses.
- *High School / Military Service:* Andres Jackson High School, Jacksonville
- *Degrees & certifications:* Masters Degree in business and Certified Main Street Manager
- *Career Path:* Assistant Buyer for Department Store, Contractor for FPL and with *Main Street* —33 years!
- *Hobbies:* As weird as it sounds – mowing. And being with my animals and walking.
- *Career Accomplishments & Community Awards:* Winning the *Great American Main Street Award*.

- *Other local/national organizations you are a member of:* **National Main Street.**
- *What year did you become a Main Street board member:* August 1991 (board) then 1 month later, manager.
- *What attracted you to become involved with Main Street Fort Pierce?* I had volunteered with *Main Street* for a year and when the job came up, I applied.
- *What is your favorite project/event that Main Street Fort Pierce has accomplished and or have been a part of?* I love our community and the support they have given our program. The **Sunrise Theatre** restoration, the **Manatee Observation and Education Center**, **Platts/Backus House** and the **Historic City Hall** restoration projects. I love events and it was special to have *Friday Fest* chosen as the best Festival by *Indian River Magazine* readers.
- *What is a favorite memory about downtown Fort Pierce?* The night the **Sunrise Theatre** reopened in 2006 after its restoration.
- *What is one of your favorite things to do downtown and/or what is something you would recommend for visitors and guest to do in downtown?* The beauty of downtown is there are so many things you can do — great restaurants, shops, art, the water and a lot of creative businesses. Did I say shopping was my favorite?
- *What is your hope/wish for the future of downtown?* Fort Pierce has a big future ahead and after watching the positive changes from past years, I know we are headed in a good direction. Our community is very giving, and it shows in so many ways. My hope is that we stay positive and continue to work together. ❖

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