



Volume 16, No. 6

January, 2021

# FOCUS

The Official Monthly Newspaper of Main Street Fort Pierce

# 2021

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

# Grateful for the Heart and Soul of Historic Downtown Fort Pierce

by Sue Dannahower



**H**appy New Year to everyone. 2020 has been quite a ride. Unprecedented is the way I describe it. I hope everyone made it through 2020 safe and in good health.


On December 3, 2020, *Main Street Fort Pierce* had a successful *Virtual Reverse Raffle & Auction*. Thank you to our title sponsor **Stifel: Melville Wealth Management**. Other major sponsors include **Hoskins, Turco, Lloyd & Lloyd, RK Davis Construction Corporation** and **Sunrise Ford**. We appreciate everyone's support!

**RK Davis Construction Corporation** was the *Reverse Raffle* winner. They graciously donated their winnings back to *Main Street*. Matt Samuels was the *Lottery Tree* winner.

Our loyal MEMBERS are an important part of the organization. If you are not a member, I urge you to join today. There's much to be done planning, designing and implementing projects and we can't do it without you! Your personal involvement and membership commitment will help *Main Street Fort Pierce* accomplish goals, set new ones, and support downtown's economic wellbeing, revitalization and cultural vibrancy in the very heart and soul of our downtown community.

*I wish all of you a healthy and prosperous 2021!*





**MAIN STREET  
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|                      |                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| Contributing Writers | Britt Anderson, Joanne Blandford, Sue Dannahower, Pam Gillette, Michael Howard, Mayor Linda Hudson, Anne Satterlee, Holly Theuns, Doris Tillmann, Laura Louise Tingo |
| Photography          | John Culverhouse, Mary Ann Ketcham                                                                                                                                   |

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# Mayor's Message Strategic Planning for Fort Pierce

by Linda Hudson, Mayor, City of Fort Pierce



January means strategic planning for the City of Fort Pierce Commission and staff. Conducted by consultant Lyle Sumek, this year's session will be January 12 at Indian River State College. We review our 2020 accomplishments and setting goals and objectives for the coming year, five years and 15 years. We identify five areas of city activities and list goals for each category. We assign responsibility (Commission or staff) and establish dates for phases or completion. Here are just a few of the 2020 achievements. Much of this year was diverted to COVID-19 activities such as business and resident grants and food giveaways and free testing.

## SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

To improve officer retention, we took a big step with our budget for 2021 with increased budget for compensation of our more seasoned officers. The Savannah Road Animal Shelter is now rehabilitated, while the City and County still seek a third party to make the shelter fully operational. We made a good start rebuilding and repairing our roads and bridges, thanks to voters who approved the half-cent sales tax hike. Adequate parking is needed, especially in Downtown, South Beach, Peacock Arts and Lincoln Park Districts, which is addressed in a parking study recommended by the newly-reconfigured Parking Committee.

## DEVELOPING OUR COMMUNITY

The Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency (FPRA) commissioned a study to inventory, and make recommendations for attracting businesses and services. Some progress has been made relocating the Island Water Reclamation Facility (IWRP), with FPUA investing more than \$20 million toward this goal. Kings Landing remains a top priority in downtown Fort Pierce, as does the revitalization of the Avenue D business corridor. The Commission will consider proposals to redevelop Fisherman's Wharf in 2021. We welcome the proposed Wave Garden and Willow Lakes on Midway Road.

## ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

Since large gatherings were prohibited most of this year, our city could not have traditional activities like July 4th Fireworks and *Sights and Sounds* holiday parade. Our city adjusted to keep our community engaged via virtual events. We heavily promoted 2020 census compliance. In place of large gatherings our city provided free food and testing for COVID-19 via drive up events. We created a Youth Council to encourage the free flow of ideas from our high school students.

## BEAUTIFYING OUR COMMUNITY

Our code enforcement activity began initiating pro-active code enforcement, with condemning and demolishing dangerous and unsightly structures. In addition, lot clearing initiatives were increased. Our city acquired the Means Court historic school property and will develop a plan on optimum use of this central landmark in the Lincoln Park neighborhood.

## ENJOYING OUR COMMUNITY

Fort Pierce has increased murals around our city, along with the colorful wrapped traffic signal boxes. The FPUA has also wrapped many of their electrical boxes. Our youth recreation programs were put on hold due to the pandemic, as were shows in the **Sunrise Theatre**. One of the most popular new amenities is the new outdoor fitness station at Indian River Drive and Seaway. Our newly-reconfigured Parks Committee was a tremendous help to the Commission, especially in making recommendations to make Jaycee Park safer for residents. ❖





## What a Year! The Manatee Center in 2020



2020 started off like any other year at the **Manatee Center**. There were education programs for school children, volunteers interacting with visitors and people shopping inside the **Vanishing Mermaid Gift Shop**. Our annual *NatureFest* celebration was a big hit in February with residents and tourists alike stopping in to learn about nature and our wonderful Fort Pierce community.

March and April brought rising COVID case numbers, school closings and a statewide stay-at-home order. Parents who were working from home struggled with online school and people everywhere were feeling the stress of staying in the house. The **Manatee Center** brainstormed and sought to help by creating the *Daily Manatee* and later the *Weekly Manatee*. These electronic environmental education lessons were designed in-house to help parents keep their kids engaged in fun learning activities at home. In addition, **Manatee Center** staff developed and presented a virtual education series called *Live from the Lagoon*. These programs were presented three times each week via Facebook Live and complemented lessons presented in the *Daily* and *Weekly Manatee* publications. Our *Lunch and Learn* presenters were up to the challenge as well, enabling the **Manatee Center** to continue offering this popular long-standing lecture series via Facebook Live throughout the year.

In spite of the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic, many exciting things have been happening at the **Manatee Center** this year.



**Summer Camp** – The **Manatee Center** was committed to providing children who had just spent the past several months in virtual school with a real hands-on, in-nature experience for summer camp. Our traditional full-day travel camps were re-configured to half-day camps with a limited number of campers. All camp activities took place outdoors and campers even received a special manatee snout face mask to wear during seated activities.

**Grace Education Summer Volunteers** – The *Manatee Center's Volunteer Program* partnered with Fort Pierce's *Grade Education & Business Center* for a second year of on-the-job training and summer fun for area youth. *Grace Education's* summer students sign on as official **Manatee Center** volunteers to man exhibits and interact with visitors. This past summer *Grace Education* campers set up exhibit stations outdoors to talk with passersby about the Indian River Lagoon, touch tank critters and our striped mud turtles.

**Guided Kayak Trips** – The **Manatee Center**, in partnership with *Lisa's Kayaks*, began offering regular guided kayak trips in early 2020. These leisurely naturalist-led paddles, which introduce participants to the beauty and importance of the Indian River Lagoon, are offered on Saturday mornings. A reservation is required by emailing [Education@ManateeEducationCenter.org](mailto:Education@ManateeEducationCenter.org).

**Outdoor Classroom** – New retractable screen walls were installed to close in the **Manatee Center's** outdoor classroom thanks to a successful *Treasure Coast Manatee Foundation* fundraising campaign. The screens will provide **Manatee Center** educators more than 500 square feet of outdoor, mosquito-free space for hands-on school programs, *Lunch and Learn* lectures, summer camps and much more!

**Annual Community Halloween Party Goes Virtual** – Each year the **Manatee Center** hosts a Halloween bash with face painting, pumpkin decorating, live critter programs and, of course, candy! Usually bringing up to 700 visitors in only two hours. COVID precautions presented some obstacles to our traditional night out so, we took Halloween virtual. From 6:00–8:00 p.m. on October 29th, people could tune in to Facebook Live to learn how to decorate a pumpkin or paint their face for Halloween, do the Monster Mash with the *Lincoln Park Academy Theater Zombies*, and play a fun Halloween “Boo or False” game.

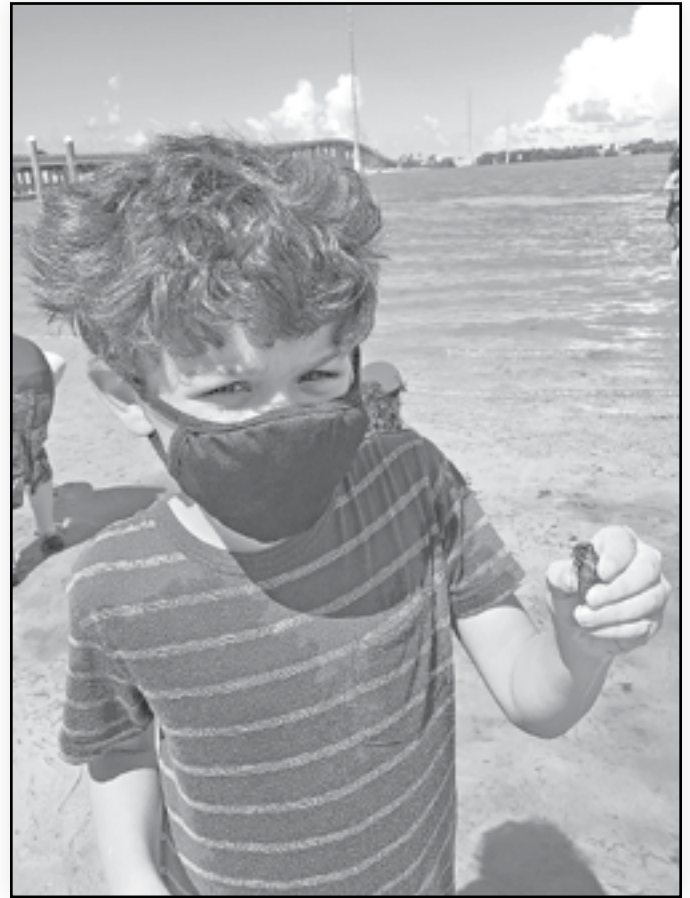
**Manatee Center 5K** – Typically held on the third Saturday in March, the **13th Annual Manatee Center 5K** was postponed due to the statewide stay-at-home order. More than 120 athletes signed up to walk or run in the Treasure Coast Manatee Foundation fundraiser which took place on Saturday, November 14th.

**Vanishing Mermaid Online Shopping** – The **Vanishing Mermaid Gift Shop** has added new and updated products to the online store. Customers can have items shipped directly or they can choose curbside pickup to receive their orders more quickly.

**New Exhibits and Updated Exhibits** – **Manatee Center** staff have been working hard behind the scenes to develop a number of new exhibits including a new coral reef exhibit, a history of Fort Pierce, a hands-on exploration of the lifespan of trash, a timeline of the Henry King Power Station and several new outdoor signs. Our 800-gallon aquarium received a complete makeover in early 2020 with a new “under the docks” design. One side of the tank now houses Florida native fish species while exotic and invasive species swim in the opposite side. In addition, many of our other exhibits have also been updated with new information and a fresh look.

**Roving Naturalist Volunteers** – Our *Roving Naturalist* volunteers have been on duty outside the **Manatee Center** throughout these troublesome days. These dedicated volunteers have been counting the manatees that swim into Moore’s Creek as well as helping visitors look for and learn more about them.

The **Manatee Center** team has much more planned for 2021. Please check our website, [www.ManateeEducationCenter.org](http://www.ManateeEducationCenter.org), or our Facebook page, [Facebook.com/ManateeCenter](https://www.facebook.com/ManateeCenter), for up-to-date information about opening and upcoming events. ❖



## The Manatee Center January Events

**Friday, January 9th at 12:00 p.m.**

### **Harbor Branch Oceanographic Research**

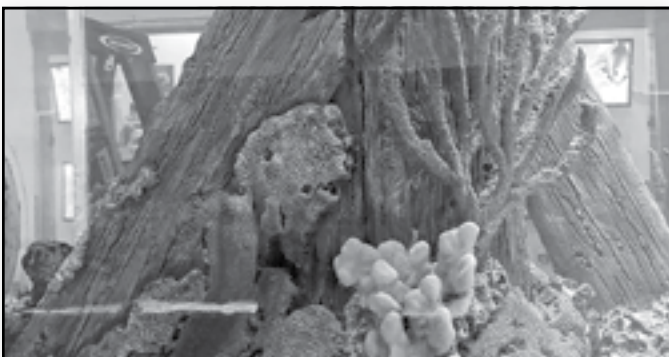
*Lunch & Learn* — Join us for a *Facebook Live Lunch & Learn* presentation at noon on Friday, January 9th at 12 p.m. Grab your lunch, turn on your computer, and join us on [Facebook.com/ManateeCenter](https://www.facebook.com/ManateeCenter) for this special Facebook LIVE presentation. *Free event.*

**Saturdays, January 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**

### **Guided Kayak Trip**

Look for wildlife, get up close and personal with mangroves, learn about the Indian River Lagoon on an easy ninety-minute paddle led by a MOEC naturalist. Great for beginners and anyone who wants to learn more about the Lagoon. Tours start at Fort Pierce Inlet State Park. The fee for this program is \$30 per person and includes kayak, paddle and safety gear (state park entrance fee of \$4-\$6 per car not included). Registration is required.

Call (772) 466-1600 ext.3337 or e-mail [Education@ManateeEducationCenter.org](mailto:Education@ManateeEducationCenter.org) for more information or to register.



# Win a Masterpiece of Florida Art and Benefit the Backus Museum

As the **Backus Museum** celebrates its 60th Anniversary Year in the most extraordinary of times, the acclaimed arts institution is launching a new vision for a favorite fundraising activity. This year, the Museum is offering the community a chance to win a stunning masterpiece of Florida Art by the renowned artist James F. Hutchinson. Tickets are available for donations of \$25 each, or \$60 for three, or \$100 for six chances to win, and are available at the Museum at 500 North Indian River Drive in Historic Downtown Fort Pierce. Tickets are also



Pierce Art Gallery that would later bear his name. Backus would offer his own paintings to raffle, often straight from the easel, and raise much needed funds for their community work. Since he passed in 1990, the **A.E. Backus Museum &**

available online at [www.BackusMuseum.org/raffle](http://www.BackusMuseum.org/raffle). All proceeds will help support the Museum and its work in the community.

Even before the institution was founded in 1960, it was a central feature of A.E. “Bean” Backus’s humanitarian spirit to help local nonprofits in their work helping others — including the original Fort

Pierce Art Gallery that would later bear his name. Backus would offer his own paintings to raffle, often straight from the easel, and raise much needed funds for their community work. Since he passed in 1990, the **A.E. Backus Museum &**

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**Gallery** has continued a version of this tradition by obtaining an original painting from a private collector, and giving individuals the opportunity to support the Museum’s vital fundraising efforts with a chance at winning a prized work of art.

This anniversary year, the Museum is shifting to focus the annual painting raffle to the revered work of James F. Hutchinson (b. 1932), another artist with a long history with Backus, who shares the same desire to help the organization continue its important work. As a teenager, Hutchinson developed his artistic skills in the studio of Bean Backus, and quickly grew to become a renowned painter in his own right by following his own path. He has devoted a lifetime to rendering the idyllic beauty of the Florida landscape, and is widely recognized for recording the vanishing traditions of Florida’s Seminole peoples. This modern master’s paintings are featured in many public and private collections throughout Florida and well beyond. In 2011 Hutchinson was inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame.

The **Backus Museum** is pleased to offer Hutchinson’s magnificent painting “Golden Savannas,” 2017 (oil on canvas, 24 x 36 inches) depicting the grandeur of Florida’s natural environment, seen under the dynamic and changing sky of a typical day on the sun-touched grasslands. Four towering palm trees, with varied and richly textured surfaces, stand as sentries over the land, while a traditional dugout canoe drifts soundlessly toward a distant camp — instantly transporting the viewer into a bygone era. Valued at more than \$12,500, it is the quintessential image of the beauty and longing for a deeper connection with the landscape by the renowned Florida artist.

Only 2,000 tickets will be available this year — 500 fewer than a normal year, offering an even greater chance to win.

*Continued on page 10 ...*



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**BACKUS ... continued from page 9**

In addition to the Grand Prize, sixteen additional prizes totaling more than \$1,500 will be awarded, including a framed, limited edition hand-textured canvas reproduction by A.E. Backus. The raffle drawing will be held on Sunday, April 11, 2021 at 12:00 noon — ticket holders need not be present to win. Complete raffle rules are posted at the Museum.

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

Please note that this year we are holding the annual painting raffle drawing on April 11, 2021, independent of the Backus Brunch date event.

**Currently On View** – The special exhibition *Insight: Photography of Jon Kral* features work from the renowned photojournalist, who spent his formative youth growing up in Fort Pierce back when it was a scruffy town on the edge of Florida's cowboy country. More than thirty black and white photographs depict many Florida cowhunting images evoking the ranch life and living; a collection of diverse scenes showcasing the artist's affinity for people, animals, and the land; and some old time Fort Pierce places and familiar individuals, including Bud Adams, "Uncle Bill" Summerlin, Harold Williams, Art "Potty" Pottorff, and A.E. "Bean" Backus. The photographs span the years from the early 1970s to 2020, with many never published or displayed before. Throughout a diverse career of subjects and assignments, Kral has always focused on his documentary interests, with a special attraction

for people, places, and capturing just the right moment. *Insight: Photography of Jon Kral* is on view through January 3, 2021.


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

Please note that at press time we are unable to plan for traditional exhibition opening receptions due to mass gathering limitations during the coronavirus public health crisis. Please watch for announcements for alternatives or for when we are able to schedule future receptions this season.

**About the A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery** – Since its founding in 1960 and the first day the doors opened in 1961, the **A.E. Backus Museum & Gallery** has been a center and catalyst for creativity and culture in our region. The Museum houses the nation's largest public presentation of artwork by Florida's preeminent painter, A.E. "Bean" Backus (1906-1990), and is home to the state's only permanent multimedia exhibition on the *Florida Highwaymen*. In addition to preserving and perpetuating the artistic and humanitarian legacy of Backus, the Museum organizes and hosts changing exhibitions from artists of national and international acclaim.

Regular Season Hours are: Wednesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday, 12 Noon to 4 p.m. (closed Monday-Tuesday). The Museum is closed Christmas and New Year's Day. Admission is \$5 per person; AARP, AAA, and Veterans with appropriate ID receive a \$2 discount. Students with school ID, children under 18, active-duty military, and current members are always free. Visitors are asked to wear face coverings and practice social distancing for the safety and comfort of guests, staff, and volunteers. ❖

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# Seriously Mixed Media Announces Guest Artist Ginny Piech Street

by Holly Theuns

Not only do the artist-owners of **Seriously Mixed Media** exhibit their own work in multiple mediums, work by the local clay cooperative artists from **Peacock Clay** and a constantly changing assortment of mixed media artwork by the group, **Art Chix**, they also feature a guest artist most months. This month the well-known and highly-collected artist Ginny Piech Street will be presenting her new work in clay in a show called *Birds & Blossoms*.

Piech Street's work is known for its whimsical character and bright colors. Her flowers are not the sort you find at



the florist — more like something from a cult movie — and her birds ooze personality. She was trained as a printmaker at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky and mixes printmaking techniques in with her clay work.



She is a great teacher and has classes at both her home studio and at a clay works she manages, **Indian River Clay**. Check out indianriverclay.org for the class schedule. There are classes for the beginner as well as the advanced student.

The opening reception for *Birds & Blossoms* will be on **ArtWalk Friday**, January 15th, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Come downtown and visit the galleries

and studios and enjoy dinner out in one of Fort Pierce's many restaurant options.

**Seriously Mixed Media** is located at 207 Orange Avenue in Historic Downtown Fort Pierce. Their hours are Tuesday to Thursday, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.; Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; and Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. For more information check their website at [seriouslymixedmedia.com](http://seriouslymixedmedia.com). ❖

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Although the Grinch had some small successes last month, each of his attempts at mischief simply gave rise to more **JOY** and **CHEER**.

While we missed the annual **Sights & Sounds on Second Christmas Parade & Festival**, Santa instead visited downtown Fort Pierce multiple times throughout the month. He greeted children from atop the **Fort Pierce Utilities Float** on 2nd Street each Saturday and his helper elf assisted visitors with Santa letters. Santa and his elf also made stops at local businesses to help the merchants spread Christmas joy.

Every Thursday evening, the annual **Sip & Shop** events came alive with the sounds of holiday classics performed by members of **Fort Pierce Jazz & Blues Society**. These festive tunes were also present on Friday nights and during the **Shop Around Saturday** events. The windows in each shop downtown showed **CHRISTMAS** spirit and resilience. Santa and his reindeer were immortalized in lights by resident artists and the popular dancing lights of Marina Square welcomed crowds each evening as darkness fell.

In the end, the **Fort Pierce Police Department** caught the Grinch, and he seems to be genuinely apologetic for all the havoc he's caused. Let's hope he has learned his lesson, and **CHRISTMAS** 2021 includes a bit less "excitement."

Christmas came to **Downtown Fort Pierce** through the hard work and support of many this year, most of which are unseen and desire no recognition. By the time you read this, we will have welcomed the **NEW YEAR** with fireworks and small celebrations throughout downtown.

**THANK YOU** to friends, neighbors, a City that supports us, residents and visitors who embrace this piece of paradise we call home. **HAPPY NEW YEAR & CHEERS TO 2021!**



**Downtown Fort Pierce Holiday Window Decoration Winners**

**1st Place, Cake Lady | 2nd Place, Notions & Potions | 3rd Place, Varsity Sport Shop | Honorable Mention, Dunkin Donuts**

# Fort Pierce Yacht Club: Let 2021 Shine

While there is a surge in COVID 19 cases currently and while the rollout schedule for vaccinations is uncertain, we can see the light at the end of this long dark tunnel. Like all small businesses, **Fort Pierce Yacht Club** has suffered from the effects of the pandemic. Key sources of our revenue have evaporated overnight; long held traditional events have needed to be “reimagined” and re-staged; and commitments are still entered in pencil.

With uncertainty still looming, the **Fort Pierce Yacht Club** and the **Manatee Observation and Educational Center** have decided not to hold the 4th year of *Third Thursday Eco Evening* programs open to the community to provide insight into the environmental challenges we face. While no less committed to being a steward of our waterways, large gatherings are a risk and virtual sessions too difficult to implement. Watch for our 2021 announcement of programs! And our *Annual On the Water Charity Poker Run* likewise is challenging to organize safely and will not be scheduled for 2021.

But we are re-launching our monthly community sailboat races! Contact our Vice Commodore of Fleet at [vcfleetfpyc@gmail.com](mailto:vcfleetfpyc@gmail.com) to enter our handicapped races; check out our website for dates at [www.fortpiercenyachtclub@gmail.com](http://www.fortpiercenyachtclub@gmail.com). Being on the water with your own “bubble” of crew is not only fun but a safe way to enjoy our community! Our *Spring Interclub Regatta* is planned for



April, so we are encouraged that life is slowly returning to “normal”. Cruises and raftups will follow later this spring.

And we had a bountiful season of giving over the past holidays. Pandemic or not, our members opened their hearts and pocket-books to donate to **St. Lucie Boys and Girls Club** and to local families selected by the **Fort Pierce Police Department**.

We think that our Club offers a safe social environment “where everyone knows your name.” Come visit! Contact [membershipfpyc@gmail.com](mailto:membershipfpyc@gmail.com) to find out if we can be your home away from home. ❖



# Love, JAZZ Community: A Prescription for 2021

by Don Bestor

When Father Time and the New Year's Baby passed one another on their way in and out this year, there's a good chance Father Time was looking even older and more worn out than ever before. There is no question that 2020 was a challenging year for each and every one of us. And even though we're still slog-ging through the mire on our way to what we're sure are brighter days ahead, all of us at **Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society** want to share something that always helps us feel better and makes every day a little brighter. Of course, it's music.

If you've ever wondered why stores play music while you're shopping or why fitness and workout facilities play music while you exercise, it's simple — music has the power to lift moods, lower depression and anxiety, and even improve the perception and response to pain. If you've ever been on a road trip, you probably already know that listening to upbeat music will help keep you awake. In fact, according to researchers from Harvard University, listening to music helps organize the firing of nerve cells in the right half of the cerebral cortex, the part of the brain responsible for higher functions, so listening to music might even make you a teensy bit smarter.

You may wonder why I'm sharing all these fun facts about how music really does have, as British dramatist William Congreve put it in 1697, "charms to soothe a savage breast." The reason is simple. After last year, we could all use a little stress reduction, diminished anxiety, lower blood pressure,

and mood lifting, right? That's where **Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society** comes in. You may not think of us as medical professionals, but our musicians are veritable experts in mak-



ing music of all kinds. We are masters in jazz, blues, pop, salsa, swing, and so much more, and even better — we all love sharing the magic of music with you, too. Whether it's our regular Tuesday evening *Jazz Jams* with the basic combo, *FDO* with the *Big Swingin' Band* nights designed

for dancing, a gig in the botanical gardens, our twice-yearly *Waterside Blues* concerts on Melody Lane, or even Saturday morning free concerts at the **Jazz Market**, we're all about helping to improve your health and well-being by doing what we do best — making music.

Sometimes the concerts are free, and sometimes we charge a small admission to help cover our costs and to raise funds for scholarships for talented young musicians to further their education. But when you compare the cost of a gym membership to the cost of an evening of great music, I think we both know which one is a better deal — and with music, you don't have to put on spandex shorts or a hernia belt, and you probably don't have to worry about perspiring enough to have to jump in a shower before heading home after a jazz jam. Best of all, a little dose of music will probably help you feel better, have a better outlook on life, and give you a little bit of something we can surely all use right now — a perpetual prescription for hope.





If you'd like to learn more about **Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society**, want to know how to join (to get super discounts on upcoming events and activities), volunteer, share a gift membership for someone special, or snag a copy of our newsletter,

*Milestones*, or our schedule, call 772.460.JAZZ (5299), or visit us online at [www.jazzsociety.org](http://www.jazzsociety.org). **Happy New Year** from all of us at **Fort Pierce Jazz and Blues Society**, and thank you for keeping the music alive with your support. ❖

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# A Look Back, and to the Future


by Janne Blandford

Looking back, 2020 is a year that certainly stands out in a sea of other years that have passed and will pass. For some, it is a year they wish they could forget and never repeat; for others, it was a period of reflecting on what is important while slowing down and appreciating time that is normally taken for granted. For downtown communities around the country, it was a period of adaptation. Here in Fort Pierce, the small businessmen and businesswomen along with the *City of Fort Pierce*, the *Downtown Business Alliance* and *Main Street Fort Pierce* worked together to research, brainstorm and facilitate solutions to allow for the continuation of business while ensuring the safety and confidence of patrons.

The downtown *Parklet Program* allowed for participating shops and restaurants to expand eating and shopping space to the parking spot in front of their stores. As an additional benefit, they heightened the creative atmosphere of downtown Fort Pierce as each of the parklets were uniquely decorated.



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*And I wish everyone a very happy, healthy 2021  
(with not a mask in sight!).*

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Some businesses used the time during the shutdown period to make needed or desired updates and improvements. Restaurants installed safety shields between booths and retail merchants began making products for customer Covid-19 prevention. After the shutdown lifted, businesses adjusted to new occupation restrictions and newly formed consumer Covid-19 reservations. Everyone was becoming accustomed to this new life yet seeking as much normalcy as possible. And it is in quaint downtowns across the world where normalcy is most felt.

There were some business closures in downtown last year; however, several new businesses joined or are about to join the mix of restaurants and retail establishments. Some of the most exciting additions were on both the northeast and northwest corners of Marina Way and 2nd Street. These anchor corners now house an entertainment venue with **Hard Axe Lounge**

*Continued on page 18 ...*







and the newly opened (hopefully by the time this is published) restaurant, **Pickled**. Other established businesses expanded into larger spaces which left their previous spaces available for new startup entrepreneurs.

Entertainment options were limited as most crowd attracting festivals, galas, shows, and events were cancelled; however, new options took the form of outdoor movies and music. Most of the downtown restaurants offer their own music entertainment on selected days and some offer games such as Bingo and Trivia nights.

The **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** temporarily moved out of downtown to continue business as a drive-through venue. This allowed their small business owners to operate through the shutdown and eventually the Market

was able to move back to its original location with updated precautionary procedures.

Many local nonprofits lost the ability to host fundraising events including, **Main Street Fort Pierce**. For the first time in 32 years, all monthly *Friday Fest* events after March were cancelled until October, 2020, when a much smaller popup *Friday Fest* street party was held. The monthly *Coffee with the Mayor* was hosted online which drew an increased audience. Other events like the **Ghosts of Fort Pierce Past**, the **Main Street Golf Tournaments** and the **Reverse Raffle** were able to be held with modifications.

The **Manatee Observation & Education Center** modified its popular summer camp to be able to still offer kids the





opportunity to discover all the great things living in and around the Indian River Lagoon. The **Backus Museum & Gallery** modified its bigger events this year but was able to continue to host the public and allow viewing of its collection and shows. The downtown library had to close during the shutdown but was able to continue its lending services through curbside pickup. It opened with limited capacity but is once again able to offer its needed services to youth and adults.

Though most of 2020 was laced with inconveniences, one great benefit was the ability to slow down and appreciate relationships with family, friends, and community. Everyone across the world went through this shared experience. A major goal of 2021 will be returning to a semblance of normalcy

but the lessons and growth from 2020 will resonate with all current generations. This could lead to exciting developments in entrepreneur opportunities and housing trends in the upcoming years. *Main Street* cities and *Main Street* neighborhoods across the United States are poised to be at the center of these developments because they have withstood the test of time and trends. They developed as the transportation, commercial, & social center of the areas they serve long ago. Historic downtowns and downtown districts are able to provide desirable living and working environments because while they continue to evolve, they maintain their charm by offering a glimpse into the past. This is certainly true for downtown Fort Pierce and we look forward to its future. ❖







## A New Year Begins at the Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market

The new year is here. It should be a fantastic beginning, but we still have Covid lurking and the new normal might be here to stay. With restrictions on gatherings come new and different ways to shop and browse, meet up with friends, or just enjoy the fantastic Florida winter weather.

The **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** is certainly here to stay! With safe social distancing and masks the Market has maintained its place as the Saturday morning tradition in historic downtown Fort Pierce. Along the waterfront at Marina Square patrons continue to flock to shop, to eat, to view the scenes at the seawall. Not much has changed except the safer conditions that have been provided by the **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** to its vendors and customers. The time is right for open-air shopping.

The **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** offers the best of the best. The vendors have been chosen with care to reinforce the unique hometown charm of our historic town. From fresh produce, both organic and conventional, to sauces and jellies, soaps and lotions, indoor plants, outdoor plants, and freshly-prepared meals and treats, the most discerning shopper will find everything needed for home and pantry. Many onsite food vendors incorporate products from other vendors — fresh vegetables and fruits, herbs, and juices all combine to make the perfect dishes.

All through the year, the Market continually seeks out new vendors with exciting new products. Almost weekly there may be an addition to the lineup that will entice new customers to try something new and different. All these vendors are small business owners, most from the Treasure Coast, and are contributing to our local economy.

Fresh air and sunshine! What more could one want? Marina Square provides the perfect setting for the open-air

Market where friends meet to shop for the week or the day. Conversations abound over hot coffee or tea while strolling and eating delicious pastries or savory breakfasts. There's never a need to worry about lunch or dinner, as everything is either ready to go or ingredients available for the perfect meal at home. The scene is ever-changing with life in the lagoon just steps away from the hustle and bustle of the Market.

Next month the **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** celebrates its 24th anniversary. Things will be a little different this year in order to maintain safe social distancing practices. The traditional Anniversary Bag will be sold as limited edition by a favorite local artist. The bags sell out fast so make sure to come early to get yours before they're gone. The live music will get the crowds dancing and the band is a big surprise this year! Check out next month's article for more details.

Join us every Saturday at Marina Square in the heart of downtown Fort Pierce. From 8 til 12, rain or shine, the **Downtown Fort Pierce Farmers Market** is the Saturday morning tradition! Follow us on Facebook or find us on the web at [www.fortpiercefarmersmarket.com](http://www.fortpiercefarmersmarket.com). ❖

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# Anna Preston has been Dancing Almost Her Entire Life

by Laura Louise Tingo

High points of Anna Preston's career include having danced with a professional modern company that received the industry-acclaimed Bessie nomination, and represented the state of Florida, with concert dance in France. She took her own company to Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas, when it was chosen to perform at the Festival for Modern Dance and was showcased in-residence across the state.

Her experience in dance, is diverse and remarkable, with commercial dance, performance and choreography work for a host of musical theatres, churches, and community events. At Walt Disney World, Preston worked as a staging specialist and performer. She holds advanced level education certifications and has enjoyed teaching at Palm Beach State and Palm Beach Atlantic University.

Her accolades span years, and are many, but for Preston, artistry is more about giving than receiving. Her company, **Preston Contemporary Dance Theatre**, based in Stuart, offers students of every level and ability from beginner to professional, a resident professional contemporary company and pre-school to professional training in ballet, pointe, tap, jazz, musical theatre, modern, lyrical, hip hop, contemporary, tumbling, and aerial arts. At the core is Preston's leadership and innovative approach to events that exemplify the company's tagline: *connecting passion to purpose*.

"It's exciting to be in a place where I can now be someone who is building and mentoring in the community," said Preston, who has lived on the Treasure Coast area since 2004.

A staple in carrying out her mission, involves collaborating with members of the artist community from the Downtown Fort Pierce corridor, Port St. Lucie, and Stuart to host events that, for example, ask patrons to bring food donations, in lieu of an admission charge.

"I try to create events that show how diverse and rich our art community is and can be," she said. "People can be part of the art landscape in a way that it should be. It's not about competitions ... it's a conversation with your audience when you are putting out artistic work."

More area events with Preston's ideas at work, have included bringing her company to perform at the *Causes Event Festival*, in the Faerie Forrest Port St. Lucie Botanical Gardens. Inspiring participation was Greg Hold's wire faerie sculptures and Mark Barnes' musical composition that set the ambience.

"When we hear about projects that we find interesting, we reach out, network and apply to see how we can contribute, be a part," she said.

"Points in my career that I am most proud of are the collaborations that have provided outreach to the community either in terms of awareness or critical needs."

One example includes participating in the *Dance for Food* event with Terry Barber — internationally acclaimed Countertenor, and founder of the nonprofit organization, *Artists for a Cause*.

Preston is proud that her company represents dance educators, people who have chosen to work, live and contribute to this community. It's one of the reasons she joined the *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance*.

"When you bring artists together, great things happen!"

To learn more about the *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance* and the benefits of membership, please visit [ArtStLucie.org](http://ArtStLucie.org) or e-mail [info@artstlucie.org](mailto:info@artstlucie.org) or call 772-462-2783.

To learn more about the **Preston Contemporary Dance Theatre**, visit [www.pcdancetheatre.org](http://www.pcdancetheatre.org). ❖

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# TREASURES OF THE PAST

*100 years ago this month as reported in the Wednesday, January 26, 1921 edition of the Oklahoma City Times*

## Harding on the Way to Palm Beach

Fort Pierce, Fla. Jan. 26 – President-elect Harding smacked a clean 200-yard drive down the fairway at the Fort Pierce golf course this morning. He squared his shoulders, expanded his chest and announced: “This is great.”

This was his second day of golf over a well laid out course with grassy greens and he enjoyed it to the utmost. After spending the night at anchor between Vero off Fort Pierce, the president elect was up early and the party on board the houseboat, Victoria, prepared to continue toward Palm Beach later today. They will anchor far from any habitation tonight.

Cabinet discussions, it is understood, played a small part in the conversations on board the Victoria but there is strong support for the belief that Senator Fall may be induced to accept the portfolio of the interior and that Charles Evans Hughes will be secretary of state. Fall, Cummins and Daugherty have been busy preparing certain data on domestic problems for Mr. Harding.

*75 years ago this month as reported in the Friday, January 18, 1946 edition of the Miami News*

## Major Realty Deals Made at Ft. Pierce

Two important real estate deals involving downtown business property were announced today.

One involved the former Fee corner at Second St. and Avenue A, one of the first business blocks in Fort Pierce. It was purchased by Touchton, Inc., Avon Park, headed by Dr. W.C. Touchton, from the Scott Fruit co., Tom Scott, president, Fort Pierce, at a reported consideration of \$40,000.

The property has three buildings, the main structure of which was built in 1908 and occupied until a few years ago by the former Fee Hardware co., another by the Fee Mortuary.

The new owner, it is understood, will modernize the buildings to provide store and office quarters.

The other sale involved Indian River Inn, a two-story 25-room frame structure at 217 Ave. A, a 15-room concrete block annex and a smaller building. It was bought by Edward Hendrix of Goldsboro, N.C. with N.E. Hellstrom handling the deal. The consideration was not announced. The property fronts 110 feet on Ave. A and 140 on Depot Drive.

Operation of the hotel will be continued under the same management.

*50 years ago this month as reported in the Miami Herald on Saturday, Jan. 30, 1971 by Anne Wilder*

## Mini-Sub Dubbed ‘Invaluable Tool’

Looking like a helicopter without a rotor, the Johnson-Sea-Link submarine, built for the Smithsonian Institution, was formally commissioned and launched Friday afternoon at the Marine Science Center here.

Before the letter-perfect demonstration, the two men responsible for the research craft, Edwin A. Link and J. Seward Johnson, were presented with the Matthew Fontaine Maury Medal, for outstanding achievement in oceanographic engineering research.

More than 300 guests, including scientists from the Smithsonian, representatives of the Alcoa Co. and representatives of the armed services, attended the commissioning ceremonies.

In presenting the medals to the men responsible for the environmental research submarine, S. Dillon Ripley, secretary of the Smithsonian, told the gathering that the integrity of the world’s oceans is jeopardized by pollution and that ocean study is more critical than ever.

“Our hope is that this technically advanced, submersible link with man’s origin will become an invaluable tool in studying the seas around us, adding to the body of human knowledge that serves the human family,” Ripley said.

Eugene Wallen, director of the office of environmental science of the Smithsonian, was master of ceremonies.

The 23-foot-long submarine, with its acrylic sphere, was hoisted onto Ed Link’s Sea Diver, and was officially christened by Johnson’s daughter, Mrs. Peter H. Gregg, and Mrs. Link.

First man into the sub, as it rested on the Sea Diver deck, was Lieutenant-governor Tom Adams who climbed in as the first guest of the Smithsonian.

Adams was seated in the bubble beside the sub pilot, John Fike, and had the responsibility of calling off the checklists preparatory to launch.

A special hoist designed by Link swung the submarine off the deck and into the water and, after some test maneuvering, the craft submerged.

While the submarine was under water, two divers in the air-lock portion left the sub, surfaced, and then re-entered the underwater vehicle.

When the sub surfaced after some 20 minutes and was hoisted back on board the Sea Diver, Adams called over the radio, “Someone got a bargain!”

“It was the Smithsonian who got the bargain!” Wallen called back.

Link, responsible for the submersible’s unique design, has been widely recognized for his inventions in the aviation field (including the Link Trainer).

Ten years ago he began working with equipment to solve problems of underseas diving when the technology was in its infancy.

The Johnson-Sea-Link promises to be one of the most effective of the new generation of small submersible vehicles built to penetrate the shallow depths of the Continental Shelf.

# Microsoft Tips & Tricks

by Sue Dannahower

## ➤ MICROSOFT WORD TABLES: PART I

Tables are useful for various tasks such as presenting text information and numerical data. In Word, you can create a blank table and apply a variety of styles and formats to existing tables. Use tables for putting things into columns. I have been using tables for over 20 years. You'll love this feature!

Select **INSERT** and **TABLE**. Select the number of columns; in this case, 3 columns, & 4 rows. You can add more rows very easily.

Add the following text using the **TAB KEY** to move from cell to cell while entering text.

| LAST    | FIRST   | SALARY   |
|---------|---------|----------|
| Smith   | John    | \$55,000 |
| Johnson | Robert  | \$45,000 |
| Miller  | Suzanne | \$99,000 |

Click the left side of the table, top row to highlight the Category Text. Click the **BOLD** Icon.

| <b>LAST</b> | FIRST   | SALARY   |
|-------------|---------|----------|
| Smith       | John    | \$55,000 |
| Johnson     | Robert  | \$45,000 |
| Miller      | Suzanne | \$99,000 |

Add another row by positioning your cursor in the last row & column. Then press the **TAB** key. Add the 4th row of information.

| LAST    | FIRST   | SALARY   |
|---------|---------|----------|
| Smith   | John    | \$55,000 |
| Johnson | Robert  | \$45,000 |
| Miller  | Suzanne | \$99,000 |
| Brown   | Valerie | \$15,000 |

We'll explore more about tables in the coming months.

Happy computing! ✦

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by Sue Dannahower

## Asparagus is Good For You!

This spear-shaped veggie is an awesome weapon for your health. It's packed with disease-fighting nutrients including fiber, folate, vitamins A, C, E and K and glutathione, a detoxifying compound that may protect against certain types of cancer. And it's loaded with age-defying antioxidants that work to neutralize cell-damaging free radicals in your body. Look for spears with tight buds and firm stalks without wrinkles.

Asparagus is easy to prepare. This method, from friend, Jane Rowley, produces perfectly cooked asparagus every time without shocking them in cold water.

**Perfect, 1 Minute Asparagus:** Clean asparagus. Add salted water to a large pot and bring to a boil. Add asparagus to the boiling water. Cook 1 minute, then remove from water. Serve immediately or hold in a warming drawer.





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# Top Business Trends for 2021

*Leverage these four emerging business trends to give your business an edge in the new year*

For small businesses across America, 2020 has been one of the most challenging years in history. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, small business owners have been resilient, pivoting, and adapting their business models to navigate continually changing conditions. With the new year on the horizon, there are potential new opportunities to take advantage of

and ways to adapt to challenges you may face. Here are a few business trends that are likely to dominate in 2021, along with tips on how to position your business for growth:

**BUSINESSES WILL CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE E-COMMERCE.** While e-commerce was already growing before the pandemic, a report by IBM shows the shift away from physical stores to digital shopping has sped up by roughly five years. According to the report, e-commerce is projected to grow by 20% in total in 2020. To prepare for this shift in consumer spending, fine-tune your small business's e-commerce presence in 2021. Create a seamless e-commerce experience for your customers by making your site mobile-friendly.

**ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT OPTIONS WILL PROLIFERATE.** Another trend that is likely to last into 2021 and beyond is the dominance of alternative payment options. In their annual State of Retail Payments study, the National Retail Federation found that no-touch payments (e.g. contactless credit and debit cards or mobile pay) for retailers have increased 69% since January. Among retailers that have implemented contactless payments, 94% expect the increase to continue over the next 18 months. Heading into next year, explore touchless payment options for your small business, including online payments with curbside pickup.

**REMOTE WORK WILL PERSIST.** During the pandemic, many small businesses shifted to part-time or full-time remote work schedules in response to local ordinances. According to a survey by Intermedia, 57% of small to medium-sized business owners said they will continue to offer remote work options in the long term. Depending on your type of business,



you may need to consider offering remote work options to compete for talented workers in 2021 and beyond. This also means that you may need to invest in additional technology and software solutions going forward to ensure that your employees can telework. For example, another survey from GGV Capital shows that 54% of small business owners spent more on

software solutions in 2020 than in 2019, and 75% expect that spending to increase next year.

**BUSINESSES THAT OFFER VIRTUAL SERVICES WILL CONTINUE TO BE IN HIGH DEMAND.** According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the pandemic has led to increased demand for certain business types, particularly those related to technology and virtual health and fitness. These include cybersecurity, at-home fitness, food delivery, gaming, home improvement, and telemedicine businesses. If you are considering starting a business, or are looking for ways to pivot or expand your business, look to these business categories for inspiration.

For further insights on how you can incorporate these trends into your small business plans for 2021, connect with a local SBA resource partner for expert, tailored advice. ❖



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## My New Neighbor, *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance*

by *Lisa Jill Allison, Lisa Jill Allison Art Gallery*



Who doesn't love fun, smart, exciting, creative new neighbors? Seriously, I feel like I have won the new neighbor jackpot! The **One Eleven Building**, located at the corner of Orange Avenue and Indian River Drive in Downtown Fort Pierce proudly welcomes the *St.*

*Lucie Cultural Alliance* to the building. **Lisa Jill Allison Art Gallery** could not be more excited to rub elbows with such a diverse, dynamic organization.

The mission of the *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance*, in their own words, "is to better position the arts and cultural sector as a significant contributor to the vibrancy, education and economic well-being of St. Lucie County." The Alliance is a nonprofit organization, and their website is [www.artstlucie.org](http://www.artstlucie.org). Just like mine, their door is always open to all artists, visitors, and residents.

My personal experience so far has been exciting and fulfilling. I have participated in several shows under the Alliance, as well as in community events. It has given me the opportunity to share my artwork with others, be involved with the community and mingle with other area artists I may not have met otherwise. It has also given me the pleasure of getting to know the two dynamos behind the scene, Executive Director Alyona Aleksandra Ushe, and Dieulanie Claude, the Alliance's Communications Manager. A trailblazer with an impressive track record, Alyona is beyond our dreams as the captain of this ship, and Dieulanie's creativity and commitment to promoting our cultural community is commendable.

You'll find the Alliance office on the third floor of the **One Eleven Building** and be assured once you cross the threshold of the entrance you are in for magic. The energy, and soon to be hung members' art, the bustle of deadlines for art submissions and the overall creative and embracing vibe will envelope you. Much to my delight, all of this magic cascades throughout the rest of the building giving this spectacular old bank building an even greater breath of fresh air.

I personally am looking forward to more events and creative endeavors in connection with my new neighbors. The Alliance being my neighbor makes them your neighbor too! For any that have visited my new gallery location, you know the coffee pot is always on and there are always moments to sit in the spacious sitting areas for inspiration and encouragement.

If you are feeling a bit antsy or edgy, as many are nowadays, what better relief than art? Viewing art, purchasing art for your home and for people you love, creating art, chatting about art, or even encouraging art in the community can all contribute to a sense of satisfaction and progression; such key elements of life. I am here for you in a personal sense and the *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance* is here for you in a much greater sense. Feel free to come by the gallery and we can grab a cup of coffee and head up to meet Alyona and Dieulanie or just head up to the third floor and introduce yourself. You will be warmly welcomed. I have shared my ideas and vision for the city and the county with the Alliance team, and I know they want to hear from you!

Whenever I write for the *Main Street Focus*, I endeavor to share something of a personal nature that may strike a chord in you as well. I chose sharing the addition of the *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance* as my topic because, on a personal note, the world climate, I must admit, has taken a bit of the wind out of my sails. It is taking me more effort to remain focused and progressive. I do know that in unity there is strength. I know with the addition of a stronger presence of the *St. Lucie Cultural Alliance* more breeze will be in circulation to fill my sails and yours as well! Let's, each of us, in our own way, avail ourselves of this brilliant opportunity to expand our own personal art, art in the community and positive energy into the world in general. We know Fort Pierce is a shining star of creativity, community and character. ❖

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# New Year of Fishing!

by Captain Bo Samuel

January is the very best time to make a new resolution to enjoy the great fishing here on the Treasure Coast. I believe it's one of the best months to be out on the water and the fish are plentiful. Redfish, trout, snapper, cobia, tripletail, and sheepshead are choice targets. From the Indian River Lagoon to the Fort Pierce Inlet and out into the Atlantic, there are amazing opportunities to catch some nice fish and spend quality time outdoors.

Cobia move from the colder waters of north Florida into our area and south in these cooler months and are highly prized for their great fight and great taste. Cobia are powerful predatory fish and when hungry will eat anything from crabs and shrimp to artificial lures and feathers. Some good-sized mangroves are being caught offshore in reefs at about 50 to 100 feet. Live bait such as pilchards and pinfish are the choice for snapper but frozen bait will work, too. Tripletail can be found nearshore and at inlets and lagoons, usually near structure. Look for them by crab traps, buoys, channel markers and weed lines using shrimp or crab as bait. Trout fishing is best in the early mornings using soft plastics or live shrimp under a popping cork.

Remember to check fishing rules and regulations at your local bait and tackle shops like **Little Jim Bait & Tackle**, a waterfront restaurant with bait, ice, food and drinks. Let's all have a better 2021! Make your New Year's resolution to enjoy some great fishing and start *Pullin Drag!* ❖



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## Recipe Corner

by Sue Dannahower

### Spotlight on Asparagus, a.k.a. Sparrow Grass

#### Asparagus Risotto

- 2 cups Lundberg Arborio Rice
  - 2 Tablespoons olive oil
  - 1 large onion, chopped
  - 1½ cups parmesan cheese, grated (use whole parmesan & grate)
  - 8 cups hot chicken (or vegetable) stock\*
  - 1/2 cup white wine
  - 1 pound, cleaned, cooked asparagus
- \*I use *Better than Broth*

Heat olive oil in a heavy non-stick 2-quart pot. sauté onion in oil until translucent. Add rice and stir rice until grains are coated with oil. Add wine and stir constantly on medium heat until wine is absorbed.

Add 1 cup hot stock, stirring until liquid is absorbed. Continue cooking for about 5 minutes, adding more liquid one cup at a time until you have used all 8 cups, about 30 minutes.

Remove from heat, stir in cheeses, asparagus and serve immediately. *Serves 4-6.*



For variety add fresh herbs and/or chopped, cooked vegetables (mushrooms, peas, etc.) during the last 5 minutes of cooking.

#### Grilled Asparagus with Gorgonzola Butter

- ¾ cup (loosely packed) crumbled Gorgonzola cheese
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 pounds asparagus, trimmed

Stir Gorgonzola cheese, butter, and lemon juice in medium bowl to blend. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate. (Gorgonzola butter can be prepared 2 days ahead. Keep refrigerated.)

Prepare barbecue (high heat). Whisk oil, basil, and garlic to blend in small bowl. Spread out asparagus in single layer in baking dish. Pour oil mixture over asparagus and turn to coat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Transfer asparagus to barbecue. Grill until charred on all sides, turning occasionally, about 4 minutes. Transfer to plates. Top asparagus with some Gorgonzola butter and serve. *Serves 6.*





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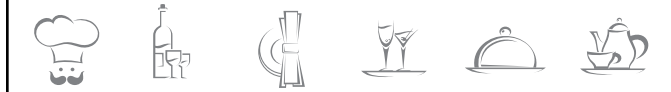


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