

Readers share memories of Port St. Lucie's early years | 50th anniversary event schedule

Staff Reports

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READER MEMORIES OF PORT ST. LUCIE

We asked readers to share their memories about Port St. Lucie. To share your memories and photos, go to TCPalm.com/submit.

Mark Goss, 51

A 28-year Port St. Lucie resident

Port St. Lucie Boulevard was one lane either way and the bridge was flat. I remember the bridge leading to St. Lucie West was gated. Almost all woods there. The Southbend community was nonexistent. There might have been 10 homes in the whole area. Becker Road was a single-lane dirt road that if you met another vehicle one would have to back up to pass. It was a pick-up truck road only. Mud holes were too deep for cars (to travel). And it was all covered over by pepper trees and scrub palms. A lot of the roads on the east side of the city, grass grew up from underneath. Most of the tar roads had seashells in them. Winn Dixie on Bayshore and Port St. Lucie Boulevard was the first "inner city" grocer; it was built and opened in less than six months. I remember the "Moonraker" village when the movie was filmed here. The city was a lot quieter and you actually could tell when the snowbirds got here. I liked the city a lot more then, and we had a Piggly Wiggly (grocery store). I remember when a Waterpark was supposed to be put in. Wish that had happened.

Bill Tabscott, 51

51-year Port St. Lucie resident now living in Stuart

Everyone knew everyone from Fort Pierce to Jensen Beach. There were neighborhood fish fries on Sunday evening. Fourth of July was the best. We made our own fireworks. Deputies would swing by, have a plate and visit. Deer and hogs running across the road was not uncommon. Fishing was great and crime rarely heard of. Anything 1 mile west of U.S. 1 was the woods. I wish it had never changed.

Susan Smith, 70

Jensen Beach resident

I moved to Jensen Beach in 1966. At that time, I had never heard of Port St. Lucie, but quickly learned about GDC, the company that developed it. My son was 6 years old when we arrived and by the time he was 15 and learning to drive, I knew where to go that would be safe to teach him how to drive a car. Yup! Port St. Lucie, where the asphalt roads were in place with stop signs, but absolutely no traffic and no houses. Maybe one house on each street. It was perfect with no traffic and not much of anything else at that time. Since then, I have become very familiar with this fast-growing community, as I have worked for a couple of title companies doing real estate closing at the height of the real estate boom. I have since retired, but have many friends living in Port St. Lucie and find it to be one of the most diversified cities around. Congratulations on 50 years of growth. May the next 50 be slower and more measured.

Port St. Lucie 50th Anniversary Celebration

The city of Port St. Lucie will celebrate its 50th anniversary on April 27. Here is the schedule for the week-long celebration that is planned. For more information, call (772) 878-2277.

Monday, April 25

City Council meeting proclamation: The community sharing of a special 50th anniversary cake; author Nina Baranski will be available to sign editions of the city's history book, "Port St. Lucie at 50: A City for All People"; residents will get their first preview of the "City of Dreams," a promotional video reel to be used to market development and tourism, 7 p.m., City Hall, 121 S.W. Port St. Lucie Boulevard, Port St. Lucie.

Tuesday, April 26

Port St. Lucie Botanical Gardens anniversary celebration: Includes a time capsule ceremony, Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful exhibit, history book signing and anniversary cake, 10 a.m., Botanical Gardens, 2410 S.E. Westmoreland Blvd.

Wednesday, April 27

Premiere of "City of Dreams" docudrama: Music and dancing to classic oldies, antique cars and more. "City of Dreams" features a fascinating view of the city throughout its history. Wear your favorite 1960s attire. 6 p.m. at the Port St. Lucie Civic Center, 9221 S.E. Civic Center Place, Port St

Lucie, movie starts at 7 p.m., \$5 ticket required for movie only. Tickets can be purchased at the Civic Center.

Thursday, April 28

Celebration at the Shell Bazaar: Adult and children story-telling, history book signing, anniversary cake and more, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., free event, 10100 S. Federal Highway, Port St. Lucie.

Friday, April 29

Community tailgate party: Come out to Digital Domain Park, home of the St. Lucie Mets, for a community tailgate party, history book signing and anniversary cake. Tailgate party is free and starts at 4 p.m., followed by a 6:30 p.m. Mets game and fireworks. As part of Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful's food drive, in partnership with the Treasure Coast Food Bank, fans who contribute two nonperishable food items will receive a free ticket to the game. Otherwise, tickets are \$6 general admission, \$8 for premium seats.

Saturday, April 30

Multi-cultural street festival: Free festival includes a parade, family entertainment, music, food, arts and crafts, and a fireworks finale, noon until 10 p.m., parade starts at 7:30 p.m., fireworks at 9 p.m., Port St. Lucie Civic Center, 9221 S.E. Civic Center Place, Port St. Lucie.

