

# It takes a village to spread creativity



SUN PHOTOS BY TOM O'NEILL

Peace River Woodturners member David Smith gives a demonstration during the Sunday Market & Artisans Village June 18 at History Park, 501 Shreve St., Punta Gorda. Smith is turning a coffee scoop out of oak. The market is open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. on Sundays.



Item in the Peace River Woodturners shop in the Price House at the Sunday Market & Artisans Village.



Mikayla Phillips looks through a mini kaleidoscope inside the Peace River Woodturners shop in the Price House. Mikayla is from Illinois and was visiting her grandparents in Punta Gorda.



The Pottery Shop, part of the new Artisans Village, is in the Trabue House at History Park at 501 Shreve St. in Punta Gorda.



A fish on display at the Pottery Shop in the Trabue House at the Sunday Market & Artisans Village.

## Artisan groups are working together at History Park in Punta Gorda

By ED SCOTT  
STAFF WRITER

PUNTA GORDA — Every week, local artisans gather in camaraderie to demonstrate their crafts and sell their wares at History Park.

“Whatcha makin’ David?” Cheri Bauer asked David Smith on a recent Sunday.

“Oh, I don’t know,” Smith replied musically as he pondered a piece of oak firmly attached to a lathe. “It depends on the wood.”

Bauer posited that what started as a small log, that had been picked up on the side of a road, might end up “as a scoop or a salt spoon.

Who knows?” Several examples, including a small scoop, rested on the table near the lathe, for inspiration.

The mystery of what to make unfolds gradually.

“That’s the thrill of it,” Smith said.

“You don’t know what you have until you start working

with it.” “Get the bark off,” Bauer added. “Get down to the interior of the wood.”

Bauer serves as president and Smith as treasurer of Peace River Woodturners.

Smith was demonstrating expert woodturning at The Sunday Market and Artisans Village at Punta Gorda History Park at 501 Shreve Street.

Every Sunday the park walkways are lined with food and arts/crafts vendors. Live music is playing. Historical buildings that are open to the public — and full of wood, fiber and pottery arts — comprise The Artisans Village.

**“What’s really nice about it is we can bring all of the fiber studio instructors here, different mediums.”**

Lisa Gallucci  
VAC executive director

### REALIZATION OF A VISION

It took 18 months for the Punta Gorda Historical Society to create an artisan village with the park as an historical backdrop.

The vision was realized in April, said Sandy Moon, Punta Gorda Historical Society executive director. To explain the vision and the significance of The Artisans Village, she harkened back to a time more than a century ago.

“What arts did we rely upon in the late 1800s, early 1900s to live our daily lives? Wood, ceramics or pottery and things made from fibers, cloth or yarn,” she said.

Smith, a retired industrial arts teacher from Buffalo, N.Y., was demonstrating woodturning in The Peace River Woodturners Gallery. Its located in the Price House (brown building) at the park, which has a three-room display/sales area with intricate, member-created woodturned items (big and small, artistic and utilitarian, such as pepper mills and lazy Susans). Many items are for sale. In the back is a lathe room and a wood-working tools shop.

The club, which previously had meetings, classes and demonstrations in the now closed Cultural Center of Charlotte County, offers

### VISIT THE MARKET

The Sunday Market and Artisans Village is at Punta Gorda History Park at 501 Shreve St. The market is open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. every Sunday, with parking next door at the Punta Gorda Charlotte Library at 401 Shreve St.

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SUN PHOTOS BY TOM O'NEILL

The Fiber Arts Studio, part of the new Artisans Village, is in the the Quednau-Hindman House at at History Park at 501 Shreve St. in Punta Gorda. The Sunday Market & Artisans Village is open 9 am-1 pm on Sundays. Musicians and food vendors also are at the event.



Sandy Moon, Executive Director of the Punta Gorda Historical Society, attends the Sunday Market & Artisans Village.

**"We started the guild because there are so many potters in this area. ... We were all throwing at different places. This brings us together and gets our craft out to the people, because pottery is our passion."**

Claire Jubb  
guild facilities director



At left: Sola Wood Fragrant flowers displayed at the Peace River Woodturners shop in the Price House at the Sunday Market & Artisans Village.



At right: Cheri Bauer, President of Peace River Woodturners, talks with visitors at the Sunday Market & Artisans Village on June 18.

## ARTISAN

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woodturning demonstrations and lessons. (You can purchase a block of wood and be trained to turn it, all on site.)

"It's made from wood that would have gone to the landfill otherwise," Bauer said of some of their projects. "We will teach you the tools and the techniques, and we will show you ideas on how to let what you have in your head translate itself into something that you can create."

The Fiber Arts group, part of the Visual Arts Center, is in the Quednau-Hindman House (yellow building) and offers displays and classes through

### LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ARTISAN GROUPS

**Southwest Florida Potters Guild**  
swfpottersguild.com

**Visual Arts Center of Punta Gorda**  
visualartcenter.org

**Peace River Woodturners**  
peaceriverwoodturners.org

**Punta Gorda Historical Society**  
puntagordahistory.com

the VAC.

"What's really nice about it is we can bring all of the fiber studio instructors here, different mediums," VAC executive

director Lisa Gallucci said. "So we have fabric dying, (pine needle) basket weaving, looms and weaving, we have felt and we have a person who makes wearable art. So (we have) all of the different kinds of uses for textiles."

The SWFL Potters Guild, which is only about five months old, recently moved into the Trabue House (white building) which features a three-room pottery sales gallery.

"This (building) is a way to bring pottery to the people," guild facilities director Claire Jubb said. "We started the guild because there are so many potters in this area. ... We were all throwing at different places. This brings us together and gets our craft out to the people,

because pottery is our passion."

### A WIN-WIN

Moon said supporting the three artisan tenants is "important because each one is a nonprofit, as we are. When nonprofits can support each other to bring something to the community, that's what counts."

It's a win-win for the community. While the organizations now have new venues, the historical buildings have new purpose.

History Park opened in 1999 as an outdoor museum of historical structures in a garden setting.

"Every building has its own significance," Moon said. "To

save these buildings from being demolished ... and to keep them from being torn down, we had to bring them somewhere.

"For years it's been a struggle to maintain the buildings, especially after the hurricane (Ian). So we put in a lot of work. We're grateful for the people we have in each building because they have all helped in preserving, restoring" and rehabilitating the structures.

The Punta Gorda Historical Society also owns the Historic Punta Gorda Train Depot at 1009 Taylor Street and the Punta Gorda Woman's Club at 110 Sullivan Street, which serves as the society's headquarters and offers a community center in the heart of downtown Punta Gorda.



The Cigar Cottage is one of the historical buildings that make up the outdoor museum at History Park, 501 Shreve St., in Punta Gorda.



Claire Jubb inside the Pottery Shop at the Trabue House.



Marlene Jones displays her work at the Pottery Shop in the Trabue House.



At right: Mini kaleidoscopes on display at the Peace River Woodturners shop in the Price House.



Pottery Shop display in the Trabue House.