

## Special Events

# Anchors up in Fort Lauderdale

By Jaye Abbate

## Annual Pirate Festival and River Raft Race Anchors up on April 20th AHOY, MATES!

**P**irate Fest anchors up once again in Fort Lauderdale's Riverwalk Esplanade Park Saturday, April 20th. This FREE family festival has become a spring season signature event offering food, games, canons, costumes and pirate themed fun for folks of all ages. Presented annually by the Downtown Rotary and sponsored by YELLOW CAB, proceeds benefit Rotary scholarships for students and other community projects.

Big pirates will revel in the beer garden, rum tasting, and exciting rides. Pirate kids and teens will enjoy everything from arts and crafts to a pirate themed bounce house. Companies, schools, neighborhood and non-profit groups can have fun competing in the rowdy river raft race, while everyone can be a contender in the costume contest as they groove to the live music.

The Raft Race has a long tradition bringing out crowds to cheer on their teammates along the New River. "Adding the paddleboard contest has kept up with the times as paddle boarding has become so popular," notes Kat Martin, this year's Pirate Fest committee chair for the Downtown Rotary. "It's the perfect team building exercise for businesses and community groups, and it's all to benefit the great local and global projects that Rotary supports including scholarships for students, plane rides for kids with special needs, holiday meals for those who would go without, hurricane assistance for devastated communities, clean water projects around the globe, mentoring and so much more."

"The river raft race was one of the most fun events in Fort Lauderdale when I first moved here years ago," recalls



Rotary speaker chairperson Jaye Abbate. "Now, it's even better. The river bank gets packed with crowds who come out to cheer on the crazy but cool floating vessels each team creates. Groups get super competitive and everyone has a blast. It's a fantastic, absolutely free festival with food, drinks, music, and games and proceeds go to make our community a better place. It doesn't get any better!"

So, yo ho ho and shiver me timbers! There's still time to sign up your team to compete in a race to the finish, or at least to stay afloat. Landlubbers and seadogs alike have time to pull out and press their best pirate gear, and everyone should save the date.... or walk the plank! **HB**

AAARRRGHH!

### IF YOU GO:

**Pirate Festival presented by  
Downtown Fort Lauderdale Rotary**

**Date:** Saturday, April 20

**Time:** 11am – 5pm

**Place:** Esplanade Park, along the Riverwalk,  
Downtown Fort Lauderdale

**Contact info:** 954.424.0731

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FTLPirateFest.com