



**OUT & ABOUT IN THE VILLAGES | A4**  
Senior writer James Dinan shares observations from a day in The Villages.

6 a.m. 9 a.m. 12 p.m. 3 p.m. 6 p.m. 9 p.m.  
61° 65° 77° 84° 81° 72°

**VERONICA WERNICKE ON AREA NEWS | D1**  
Baker House tours return Oct. 23-24 with Spirited Ladies and Gents at the Baker House.



IN SPORTS | B1

**Sam Darnold refused to get greedy this time around and Seattle dominated both lines of scrimmage against the Jaguars on Sunday.**



IN LIFESTYLE | E1

**Head out to Brownwood Paddock Square to check out cars presented by The Villages Mini Cooper Club during the Monday Night Car Show.**

The car show is from 5 to 8 p.m. during regularly scheduled nightly entertainment. Eighteen87 is set to perform, and the Mini Cooper Club will present vehicles around the square starting at 5 p.m.

# Churches Welcome Fall With Fellowship



Rachel Govola | Daily Sun

**Linda Standifer, a church volunteer, leads Fruitland Park Elementary School students around the pumpkin patch last year at Community United Methodist Church in Fruitland Park. This year's pumpkin patch is open daily until Oct. 31.**

By **CHASITY BOATMAN** | Daily Sun Staff Writer

From line dancing lessons and barbecue dinners to pumpkin patches and inflatable bounce houses, churches across The Villages are hosting fall festivals aimed at building bonds and giving back.

While each event offers a unique experience, they all share a common goal of welcoming neighbors, fostering joy and reflecting the faith communities' missions of service.

Lake Deaton United Methodist Church is switching things up this year, replacing its usual Oktoberfest with a Fall Fest BBQ featuring slow-smoked pork and country tunes.

"What inspired us from the beginning, nearly 14 years ago, was to be a place that reaches out to the community," said Linda Hunt,

Please See **FALL, A7**

IN WORLD NEWS | A2

## IN THE MIDDLE EAST, TRUMP TO MARK CEASEFIRE, RETURN OF HOSTAGES

President Donald Trump is celebrating the U.S.-brokered ceasefire and hostage deal between Israel and Hamas and plans to urge Middle East allies to seize the opportunity to build a durable peace in the volatile region.

IN WORLD NEWS

### ARCTIC SEALS, BIRD SPECIES ON LIST OF THREATENED SPECIES

The 2025 update to the International Union for Conservation of Nature's list of threatened species was released Friday. **A17**

IN HEALTH NEWS

### THERAPY KICKSTARTS IMMUNE RESPONSE TO CANCER CELLS

Researchers successfully boosted immune response to cancer tissue in a study that could improve survival. **A21**

ONLY IN THE VILLAGES

By Taylor Strickland

**Smash Productions will present "Gypsy," the iconic Broadway musical about the life of famed burlesque dancer Gypsy Rose Lee, starting Tuesday night at Savannah Center. The show features a cast of local talent, including a Villages Charter School student and her best friend as sisters Baby June and Louise.**

Please See **GYPSY, A8**

MEDICARE FACTS

6,455

The number of people who received help from Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) in 2024. The free service is offering counseling sessions until the end of the Medicare open enrollment period Dec. 7. People can learn about differences in coverage plans so they pick the right plan for them.

20%

An estimated 20% of Florida's population currently receives coverage from Medicare. There are more than 5 million individuals who receive some form of insurance coverage from the government program. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimates 34 million people will be a part of the program in 2026.

## Medicare Open Enrollment Period Begins Wednesday

By **MADDIE CUTLER** | Daily Sun Senior Writer

Medicare's open enrollment period starts Wednesday for eligible seniors who are ready to sign up or want to change their current plans.

Medicare and Medicaid spending is considered mandatory by the U.S. government, and enrollment and coverage will not be impacted by the ongoing

government shutdown.

More than 5 million Floridians are enrolled in Medicare, or about 20% of the population.

Organizations like Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders, sponsored by the Florida Department of Elder

Please See **MEDICARE, A6**

INSIDE TODAY'S DAILY SUN

TEST YOUR NEWS IQ

## AN ENDANGERED RHINO, AN AEROSPACE SAFETY OFFICER AND ARTHRITIS DETECTION

**1.** A 120-pound critically endangered baby rhino made his public debut Friday at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo in Ohio. Which of the following is not one of the names people can choose from in a calf-naming contest the zoo is holding? **Page A15**

- a) Makena c) Kibibbi  
b) Kamari d) Kenza

**3.** A study found that blood tests may be able to detect who will get which disease? **Page A21**

- a) Rheumatoid arthritis  
b) Lupus  
c) Lyme disease  
d) Osteoarthritis

**4.** Which is not a way to teach children about investing to set them up for success? **Page C10**

- a) Teach them to save  
b) Give stock as a gift  
c) Start an investing account  
d) Increase their allowance



**2.** Aircraft manufacturer Boeing created the role of chief aerospace safety officer in 2021 following two deadly Boeing 737 Max crashes. **Page A16**

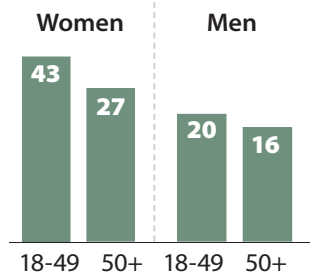


Make it a Great Day!

Weather	D2
Recreation Listings	D10-11
Recipes	E1
Comics	E4
Puzzles	E5-6
Horoscopes	E7
Advice	E8

BY THE NUMBERS

Percent of U.S. adults who believe in astrology, 2025



**28% of U.S. adults say they consult astrology or a horoscope at least once or twice a year,** according to a Pew Research Center survey. Younger adults — especially younger women — are more likely to believe in and consult astrology or horoscopes, the survey revealed.





from the front page

GYPSY

Continued from A1

“Gypsy” is a Tony Award-winning musical about an overbearing stage mother named Rose who is constantly pushing her two young daughters, the talented June and the shy Louise, towards stardom.

It is a tale of ruthless ambition and the rocky road to stardom, where families are dysfunctional and friends are fair weather. But behind the curtain, the actors portraying the cast of fame-hungry entertainers couldn’t be farther from their on-stage counterparts.

The Smash Productions iteration of the musical stars many familiar faces, including Deborah Gibbons as Mama Rose, Dawn DiNome Wetzel as adult June and Pinky Bigley as adult Louise, or as history will remember her, “Gypsy Rose Lee.” It also features talented child actors like newcomer Aven Wood, 11, who plays Baby June, and Sofia Sallee, 11, who plays young Louise.

“The girl who plays Baby June won all kinds of dancing awards and truly, truly she could have done the part on Broadway — she’s that good of a dancer,” said Bob Stehman, the director for the show. “Our young Louise was in ‘The Sound of Music’ and she jumped at the chance to try out for another show.”

Not only are the two young actresses talented, Stehman said, but they are also best friends and neighbors.

Sofia and Aven met in July 2017, when Sofia’s family moved next door to Aven’s family in Oxford. The girls were 3 and 2 years old, respectively, at the time. Their adventures started with swim lessons and mini Jeep rides, and continued when Sofia joined the Girl Scout troop led by Aven’s mother, Ashley Wood.

Eventually, the girls’ paths and interests began to diverge. Sofia, who is a few months older and a grade above Aven, attends St. Paul Catholic School in Leesburg and devotes much of her time to theater and softball. Over the years, she’s participated in The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Academy, appeared on the Scarlett O’Hara stage at Savannah Center and went on to win several travel softball tournaments.

Meanwhile, Aven, who attends The Villages Charter Elementary School, discovered her love for dance, with her team going on to win national titles.

The girls still spent most of their limited free time together, creating dances and performing scenes that they wrote and directed. In 2022, Aven got to see Sofia perform in “The Sound of Music” at Savannah Center, prompting her to consider trying out theater as well.

“We are leaders of their Girl Scout troop together, and we were planning some meetings,” said Meghann Sallee, Sofia’s mother. (Ashley) said, ‘Oh, what are you doing this weekend?’ I said, ‘We’re auditioning for ‘Gypsy,’” and that’s how it all started.”

Baby June and young Louise start out as vaudeville stars, and the roles combine Aven and Sofia’s individual talents. Aven said she was surprised to discover that Sofia can dance, and Sofia, in turn, said she was surprised to discover that Aven can act.

Stehman describes the girls as consummate professionals, and their mothers often over-hear them imitating his directions during their playdates. Aven is also more interested in theater now, and she recently



Our young Louise was in ‘The Sound of Music’ and she jumped at the chance to try out for another show.”

BOB STEHMAN  
director of “Gypsy”

of them was ‘Gypsy,’” Aven said. “It was cool seeing like, me on stage, but it was not me on stage because I was in the audience, but that was my part on stage.”

The girls are very excited about their roles and plan to continue pursuing acting and theater, but most of all, they are excited to take their next big adventure together.

“It’s a lot of fun knowing that I get to spend time with her,” Sofia said.

Residents can see Sofia, Aven and the rest of the cast of “Gypsy” starting at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Savannah Center. Other showtimes are at 2 and 7 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday.

Tickets for the show are \$38 and up. To purchase, go to thevillagesentertainment.com or visit the nearest Villages Box Office location.



Eleven-year-old Aven Wood, center, and best friend Sofia, 11, right, star in “Gypsy,” presented by Smash Productions at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Savannah Center.

Taylor Strickland,  
Daily Sun

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