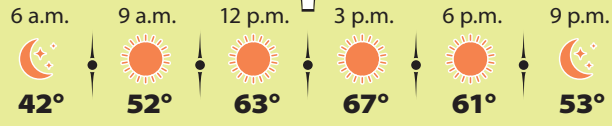




BEFORE THEY WERE VILLAGERS | D5
Don Buckley played for the New York Jets and was on the cover of Sports Illustrated.



GARRETT SHIFLET ON SCHOOLS | D1
Sign up now for Lake-Sumter State College's Shamrock Shuffle 5K race in Clermont.



TOP WORLD AND NATION NEWS

WILLIAM BYRON CLAIMS DAYTONA 500 VICTORY, B1

Around the World: California braces for more storms, flooding. **A3**

Across the Nation: New industrial park being considered in Kentucky. **A4**

In Florida: Sumter schools plan for annual golf tournament. **D6**

SPORTS NEWS

WILDWOOD TRACK & FIELD OFF TO GREAT START

The girls team finished in second, while the boys team ran for third after Friday's preseason meet at Wildwood Middle High School. **B5**

LOCAL NEWS

VHS CLUB RAISES MORE THAN \$7K FOR HOSPITAL

The Villages High School's Key Club partnered with the University of Florida to host a dance marathon to benefit UF Health Shands Children's Hospital. **D1**

LOCAL NEWS

CLASS TEACHES WEST COAST SWING TO BEGINNERS

Sherree Klein's Enrichment Academy course helps set the foundation for participants as they learn the basic moves and variations. **D3**

OUR TOWN | PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVES



Rachel Stuart | Daily Sun

Officer Garth Layne, with the Wildwood Police Department's traffic unit, uses radar to track the speed of traffic on U.S. Highway 301 in Wildwood. This is one of the ways the agency is working to keep the community safe and ensure drivers are following the rules of the road.

Area Law Enforcement Push Safety Forward

BY VERONICA WERNICKE | Daily Sun Senior Writer

Local law enforcement agencies are taking measures to increase safety and accountability in the community with new equipment, new programs and increased enforcement.

The Wildwood Police Department is increasing its traffic enforcement in areas where speeding and related aggressive driving are prevalent. The Lady Lake Police Department recently implemented body cameras and other new technology. And the Florida Department of Transportation

recently awarded grant money to the Sumter County Sheriff's Office for enforcement and education programs.

"We need to be prepared and have the best training, the best equipment and best department we can to have the best practices and acceptable standards for professional policing in 2024," Lady Lake Police Chief Steve Hunt said.

Please See SAFETY, A5

Today Is the Final Day To Register to Vote For Florida's Primary

Elections offices around the state are busy getting ready for the first election of 2024, which is next month.

By LEAH SCHWARTING | Daily Sun Specialty Editor

Floridians are running out of time to register for the presidential preference primary.

Today is the final day to register to vote in, or change your party affiliation for, the March 19 election. The deadline is the first big touch point on the way to the ballot box for the state's voters, but it's far from the first for elections supervisors and their staff.

In-person voting starts March 7 in Lake County and March 9 in Marion and Sumter counties. About 602,000 registered voters

lived in the tri-county area as of Dec. 31, according to the Florida Division of Elections, and about 51% of them can vote in the presidential preference primary as registered Republicans. Over the next few weeks, elections staff must count vote-by-mail ballots and assist in-person voters through day-of and early voting.

To get ready offices must perform a variety of tasks. Here's a look at some of the steps local elections offices

Please See VOTE, A10

ONLY IN THE VILLAGES

By Taylor Strickland

A group of local performers are on a mission to change the world, one song at a time. Around 200 singers and musicians have mobilized for "Change the World: Songs of Inspiration, Love, and Hope for World Peace."

The benefit concert for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society was created by maestro Bill Doherty, director of the Central Florida Lyric Opera, and his longtime friend and collaborator, Angie Rose.

"The show is about change and growing together and fostering hope for world peace," Doherty said.

The idea for "Change the World" came to Doherty during

Please See CONCERT, A10

EXPLORE & EXPERIENCE

OUT & ABOUT IN THE VILLAGES

Try This Today: Shoot Your Shot At An Air Gun Range In The Villages

Just like it sounds, air guns use compressed air — or other gases or springs — to shoot projectiles metallic pellets. With a steady hand and a keen eye, Villagers can take aim and practice shooting air guns at the Rio Grande, Soaring Eagle or Sugar Cane Air Gun Ranges. Participants must be a minimum of 13 years old and accompanied by a resident or eligible guest who is 19 or older. Those looking to learn how to shoot can attend Air Gun 101 on Tuesdays at Rio Grande Recreation from instructors like Joel McKenna. For more information visit districtgov.org

— Greg Hughes, Daily Sun



Arianna Bennett | Daily Sun

IN ENTERTAINMENT

Come Out to Spanish Springs for Scooter the DJ

Find out more, E1

Plus: Find the lineup of entertainment at the town squares, theaters and beyond, E3

AT RECREATION CENTERS

Happening near you: From aqua aerobics to Zumba and everything in between, there's fun for everyone, E9-10



Plan your perfect day in The Villages, E1

Recipes	E1
Advice	E2
Comics	E4
Puzzles	E5-6
Horoscope	E7
Poetry	E8



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from the front page



Submitted photo

Bill Doherty, director of the Central Florida Lyric Opera and his long time friend, Angie Rose, are debuting a new show in The Villages. "Change the World: Songs of Inspiration, Love, and Hope for World Peace" has two shows at 3 and 7 p.m. March 15 at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

CONCERT

Continued from A1

the pandemic. Moved by all the fear and uncertainty in the world, Doherty and Rose wrote a song by the same name about the world coming together to make a difference. "The good thing about writing it is that it kept us framed in a positive mindset and that during this time of turmoil, what we had inside of us was this hope and positivity," Rose said.

After Doherty and Rose composed the song, they posted a recording of it on YouTube and sent the links to friends and family on Facebook. The response was more than Doherty expected.

People kept messaging Doherty praise for the song, telling him how much they appreciated its message and how it was something they thought the world needed to hear.

Inspired, Doherty once again enlisted Rose to create a show based on the song. The first adaptation was called "Requiem for Peace," which they performed along with members of the St. Timothy Catholic Church choir at the 2022 Salzburg Festival in Austria. "Change the World" is the second adaptation, and it is much larger in size and ambition.

"It's a big show," Doherty said. "It's so interesting — when Angie and I came up with the idea for the show, all of my colleagues said 'oh, I want to be in that' and it just grew from there."

"Change the World" features many names familiar to The Villages audiences, like Mary Jo Vitale, Clark Barrios, Kathleen Kane, Donna Moore and many others. Students from The Villages Elementary School choir and other children's choirs in the surrounding communities will perform, as will members of St. Timothy's Catholic Church's and New Covenant United Methodist Church's respective choirs.

The show features a huge set list of inspirational songs, including ballads like "What The World Needs Now Is Love," "Imagine," "Over the Rainbow," "The Greatest Love of All," "True Colors," "The Prayer," "You Raise Me Up," "You've Got

a Friend in Me" and of course, "Change The World."

Doherty said the concert is a bit outside his wheelhouse. "I've built my reputation on opera and musical theater," he said. "When it comes to my singing, I'm an opera singer and I've never written any pop-y sort of tunes, but I certainly always dreamed of making some."

Despite not being accustomed to writing pop songs, Doherty is pleased with what he and Rose created and can't wait to share it with the world.

"I'm hopeful that if people enjoy it as much as I think they will, then we will get to do it on an annual basis," Doherty said.

Part of the proceeds for "Change the World" will go to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, which Doherty and Rose chose in honor of Mary Jo Vitale, who does annual benefit concerts for the MS foundation.

The "Change the World" concert is at 3 and 7 p.m. March 15 at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. Tickets are \$25 and up. To purchase, go to thevillagesentertainment.com.

Senior writer Taylor Strickland can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5334, or taylor.strickland@thevillagesmedia.com

VOTE

Continued from A1

took, and are taking, to make sure everything is ready for voters to cast their ballots:

Election Worker Training

Elections offices need hundreds of poll workers to ensure an election runs smoothly. In the upcoming election, tri-county area voters will be served by about 2,100 poll workers, all of which underwent training.

Sumter County recently wrapped up training its poll workers. Veteran workers were given the option of training online, but new workers were required to attend in-person sessions. Several sessions took place locally in recreation centers.

Workers' training varies depending on their position. While some workers have similar duties, a lot of them are very different, said Bill Keen, Sumter elections supervisor. The result is individualized training for each position.

Preparing the Ballot

Elections offices began putting together the ballot after receiving candidates' names in December. This allows them to make sure ballots are printed on time.

However, a lot can happen in a few months in politics. As a result, voters may see some Republican candidates on their ballot who, after their names were submitted, dropped out of the race.

"And we will produce results for all seven of those candidates," said Wesley Wilcox, Marion elections supervisor.

The Republican ballot is the only ballot voters will receive in March. There is no Democratic preference primary, as

President Joe Biden is running unopposed in Florida.

The presidential preference primary, like all Florida primaries, is also closed. Voters can only vote for the nominees of the party they are registered with, so registered Republicans can only vote for Republican candidates.

Vote-By-Mail Ballots

Anyone who asked for a vote-by-mail ballot should receive it fairly soon, as Lake, Marion and Sumter counties recently mailed out their initial vote-by-mail ballots.

March 7 is the last day voters can ask to get a ballot mailed to them for the presidential preference primary. To get a vote-by-mail ballot, fax, email, mail, call or visit your elections office, or see lakevotes.com, sumterelections.org, or votemarion.gov. Ballots must be returned by 7 p.m. March 19.

Logic and Accuracy Testing

On Feb. 13, Sumter County conducted their Public Logic and Accuracy Testing. Lake and Marion counties will run their testing later this month.

The event, which is open to the public, allows offices

to ensure their equipment is working and ready for when polls open. Staff run different types of ballots, such as mail ballots which are folded, through the machines to make sure everything works.

"Any scenario that can possibly happen on Election Day, or throughout the whole election, you try to replicate it," Keen said. "You try to demonstrate it on your machine and that everything tabulates correctly in those scenarios."

Voter Registration

After today, the state will close the books on voter registration for the presidential preference primary. Eligible voters who want to register in person can visit their elections office, a driver's license office, a tax collector's office that issues licenses or Florida ID cards or a voter registration agency. However, local residents should check office hours so they can go before the office closes.

Local supervisors aren't expecting a huge crowd today. About 10 years ago the last day to register was very busy, Wilcox said, but now people can register online. To do so visit registertovoteflorida.gov/home, or see your local

elections office website. "They can register to vote right there on the website, and as long as they've got it done by midnight that night, they'll be registered if their application is complete," said Alan Hays, Lake elections supervisor.

Specialty Editor Leah Schwarting can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5375, or leah.schwarting@thevillagesmedia.com.

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