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AVANI MAHARAJ ON NEARBY NEWS | D1
A local library's Book Club In a Bag program helps groups start their own book clubs.



TOP WORLD AND NATION NEWS

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SPORTS NEWS

GATORS LOSE LATE LEAD, GAME TO GAMECOCKS

No. 18 South Carolina overcomes a 10-point deficit in the final 12 minutes en route to an 82-76 victory over No. 24 Florida. **B1**

LOCAL NEWS

CLUB BRINGS DISNEY MAGIC TO LOCAL SCHOOL

The Mickey's Fanatics Club of The Villages helped bring a professional Disney chalk artist to Stanton-Weirsdale Elementary School. **D1**

LOCAL NEWS

CEREMONIES HONOR VETERANS IN HOSPICE CARE

Cornerstone Hospice's volunteer program, Cornerstone Salutes, provides final honors to veteran patients in their final days. **D9**

Spring Tournaments Benefit Local Schools

The month of April is full of golf events raising funds for student scholarships.

By **GARRETT SHIFLET**
Daily Sun Staff Writer

Organizations in the tri-county area are teeing off all around the community for schools through scholarships. Three golf tournaments are around the corner with registration open for each. These tournaments include The Villages Dollars for Scholars "Swing into Spring" Golf Tournament on April 13 at Stonecrest Golf Club, The Villages 24th Annual Charter School Golf Tournament on April 20 and the 40th Annual Sumter School District Scholarship Golf Tournament on April 27

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Right: Rob Schafer, of team Grant Electric, tees off as his teammate Craig Griffin watches the flight of the ball during The Villages 23rd Annual Charter School Golf Tournament at Palmer Legends Country Club.

Daily Sun file photo



Dining in the Dark Fundraiser Offers A New Visual Perspective

New Vision For Independence held the 14th annual event where guests dined in complete darkness.

By **MADDIE CUTLER**
Daily Sun Senior Writer

When the world goes dark, things get loud. Guests came to this realization at the 14th annual Dining in the Dark fundraiser held by New Vision for Independence.

The fundraiser was held Thursday at the Venetian Center in Leesburg, raising money for the nonprofit that provides services for people with vision loss.

The goal of the event is to make people realize that blindness can be navigated, according to CEO Chantel Buck.

"People who are blind can still feed and care for themselves," Buck said. "Things

might be a bit different, but they still live fulfilling lives."

The way to give non-visually impaired people that experience is by putting them in complete darkness. Guests had to eat their salad and entree course without seeing their utensils or food.

Brandy Carter, of Ormond Beach, attended Dining in the Dark last year and returned Thursday night with friends who were new to the experience. She gave them tips on how to stay comfortable and navigate their plates.

"It was a little intimidating at first. It felt like the room was closing in on you," she said. "But once you get comfortable it's a really interesting experience."

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ONLY IN THE VILLAGES

By Taylor Strickland

Rick Springfield takes great pride in the fact that he's not a total nostalgia act. The Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter and musician continues to release new albums and tour nationwide.

This prompted Rolling Stone to dub this era of his career "The Ricknaissance."

Springfield will perform at 7 p.m. March 12 at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center. Tickets are \$90 and up at thevillagesentertainment.com.

Outside of the fact that he's written some killer songs over the years, Springfield himself has no idea how he's managed to

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RISE & SHINE

COMMUNITY COVERAGE

Inside Today's Daily Sun



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A national roundup, Golf Central and sporting events worth watching. **B1**

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Expanded color comics and coupons.

LOVIN' THE LIFESTYLE

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from the front page



SPRINGFIELD

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stay relevant for so long.

"No one goes into this with a detailed game plan," he said. "How people perceive you is more or less out of your control."

Over the past four decades, Springfield sold 25 million albums and scored 17 U.S. Top 40 hits. But he started out as a 14-year-old Australian military brat writing, by his own admission, bad poetry in his bedroom as his family moved back and forth between Australia and England.

Inspired by bands like The Beatles, he spent his teenage and young adult years in bands with names like

Moppa Blues, Wickedly Wak and Zoot.

Shortly before moving to the U.S. in 1972, Springfield released his debut single, "Speak to the Sky," and his debut solo album, "Beginnings." Despite the relative success of "Speak to the Sky," which reached No. 14 on the Billboard Hot 100, Springfield didn't get his big break until the release of his fifth studio album, "Working Class Dog," in 1981. The album spawned his one and only No. 1 single, "Jessie's Girl," which won him a Grammy Award for best rock vocal performance.

At the time of its release, Springfield felt "Jessie's Girl" was too complicated for a

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Rick Springfield, known for hits like "Jessie's Girl," "Love Somebody," "Don't Talk to Strangers" and "Affair of the Heart," is set to perform in The Villages at 7 p.m. March 12 at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

Rob Grabowski, The Associated Press

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single and didn't think it would do as well as it did.

"I didn't think it was the best song on the album," Springfield said. "I thought there were better songs, but I was wrong, and I was happy to be wrong."

Springfield thought "Carry Me Away," "Everybody's Girl" and "The Light of Love" were equally if not more deserving.

In addition to his successful music career, Springfield is an accomplished actor, author and radio host.

Prior to the release of "Jessie's Girl" and the "Working Class Dog" album, Springfield was supporting his music career with acting jobs. One of his earliest roles was Dr. Noah Drake on "General Hospital."

Springfield said when he was hired to play Drake, the showrunners of "General Hospital" didn't really know he was a singer. The release of the album changed all of that.

"Of course, success changes how people see you," he said. "Suddenly, I was the breakout guy from the show."

Everyone on "General Hospital" was very happy for Springfield, and even though the show already was the biggest thing in daytime TV at the time, they welcomed being able to ride the wave of his success. There were even a few discussions about turning Noah Drake into a singing doctor, which Springfield ultimately rejected.

"I was already having problems with being on the show and struggling to have a rock career," Springfield said, referring to early accusations that he was "selling out" by being on the soap opera.

Although Springfield refused to sing as Drake during his primary run on the show, he did sing as Drake's rock star look-alike, Eli Love, and made an appearance as himself during the show's 50th anniversary in 2013.

In recent years, Springfield has noticed a change in demographics among those attending his concerts.

"A lot of guys come now," he said. "I went to Japan a couple of years ago and there were mostly guys there."

It's a far cry from his shows of the past, which were thought to be mostly for women. Springfield attributes the shift to the enduring quality of his music, while being "cute" doesn't last forever.

Springfield's latest release, "Automatic," came out in late 2023 and features all new songs that he describes as stylistically somewhere between previous albums "Working Class Dog" and "Tao." It was one of the last projects he worked on with Matty Spindel, Springfield's friend and sound engineer for more than 25 years, who passed away in 2022 from pancreatic cancer.

As for what's next, Springfield has a few more tours coming up, a vacation planned and a script he is considering. He can't say if he has any new albums currently in the works, but he did say he never plans to stop writing.

"Writing is my core," Springfield said. "If I'm not doing that, I feel unfulfilled."

For the upcoming concert in The Villages, Springfield will perform a few songs from "Automatic," but most of the set list will feature hits fans know and love. It's a high energy show where people can relax and have a good time, he said.

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

TOURNAMENTS

Continued from A1

at Evans Prairie Country Club.

The Villages 24th Annual Charter School Golf Tournament helps support the charter school and has since its beginning 24 years ago.

Proceeds from the tournament benefit Buffalo HERD, the parent organization of The Villages Charter School, which gives funds to help various things on campus.

Director of Education Randy McDaniel highlighted the great support the event has had over the years.

"It is just a humbling," McDaniel said. "This event has been going on since the very beginning."

The tournament and other events Buffalo HERD holds fund various things throughout the school year.

"It allows us to do things that are outside out normal budgeting like field trips or science kits, books," McDaniel said. "It allows us to do things that are usually first to be cut in our budget. Buffalo HERD fundraisers really are meant to be helping the school as needed."

The tournament's format is a four-person 18-hole scramble with room for 45 teams, many made up from sponsors.

April 12 is the application deadline for the The Villages 24th Annual Charter School Golf Tournament with only the first 45 teams paid being accepted.

There are plenty of sponsorships available and range from \$300 to \$3,500.

For more information about the tournament, contact PGA Professional Mark Verkey of Palmer Legends Golf Club at 352-753-5300.

The Villages Dollars for Scholars "Swing into Spring" Golf Tournament is the third scholarship golf tournament that has been put on by the nonprofit organization.

"So far, we have 40 spots left and are anxious to fill them," said Joyce Gillette, president of The Villages Dollars for Scholars. "We are still looking for sponsors, and any help they may give us is a blessing."

The tournament will have a maximum of 92 golfers total. There are prizes for team winners, men, women and couples who participate along with prizes for any hole-in-ones recorded, closest to the pin and longest drive.

Gillette is looking for as much support as possible, whether that's through sponsoring with a sign, being a golfer or making a donation to its cause.

"We understand there are so many worthy charities in The Villages," Gillette said. "So any donations we receive, we gratefully appreciate."

Since 2008, The Villages Dollars for Scholars has raised more than \$650,000 through fundraising and donations. Last school year, it awarded \$56,000 in scholarships to students.

For more information and to sign up, visit swing-into-spring.perfectgolfevent.com

Finishing out the tournaments for April is the 40th Annual Sumter School District Scholarship Golf Tournament.

The tournament is a long-time supporter of public high school students in Sumter County, through raising scholarship funds for students who are looking to attend Lake-Sumter State College. Last year, the tournament raised \$28,000 in scholarships for 11 students, according to the district website.

"The number is always dependent on the funds raised," said Debbie Moffitt, assistant superintendent of the Sumter County School District. "We try to provide a scholarship to all that apply and qualify."

New Covenant United Methodist Church, Villages Technology Solutions Group, Nicholas Rizzi Foundation and RoMac Building Supply

Stephen Meek putts during the 39th Annual Sumter School District Scholarship Golf Tournament in April 2023, at Evans Prairie Country Club. The tournament supports public high school students in Sumter County by raising scholarship funds for students who plan to attend Lake-Sumter State College.

Daily Sun file photo

have already pledged their support through sponsorship for the tournament, but Moffitt said more sponsors are always needed.

"It is a great investment toward our future," Moffitt said. "All of the profits go to students to further their education."

Around 72 golfer spots are available.

For more information, contact Moffitt at 352-793-2315, ext. 50247, or by emailing deborah.moffitt@sumter.k12.fl.us.

Staff writer Garrett Shiftlet can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5367, or garrett.shiftlet@thevillagesmedia.com.



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