

LET'S GO

Looking for something fun to do today? Try playing samba! D1

THE WEATHER TODAY, C2

8 a.m. 65°
Noon 72°
4 p.m. 71°
8 p.m. 62°

Niblack Returns for Senior Night Win

Kari Niblack leads Wildwood girls basketball to a victory over Vanguard. Sports, B1

NATIONAL NEWS

SHUTDOWN ENDS AS CONGRESS VOTES TO REOPEN GOVERNMENT

Congress sped toward reopening the government Monday as Democrats reluctantly voted to temporarily pay for resumed operations. They relented in return for Republican assurances that the Senate will soon take up the plight of young "Dreamers" and other issues. **National News, A8**



The Associated Press

Following a vote to reopen the government, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, center, was praised for leading the bipartisan effort.

FIVE MISSING AFTER DRILLING RIG EXPLOSION IN OKLAHOMA

Emergency officials said people still are missing after an explosion ripped through an eastern Oklahoma drilling rig Monday, leaving a derrick crumpled on the ground. **National News, A11**

THAT'S AMAZING

BUZZ OFF: SCHOOL WANTS VULTURES TO LEAVE CAMPUS

An Ohio liberal arts college is hanging effigies in trees and using pyrotechnics to move destructive vultures off campus. Local media reports vultures have caused at least \$50,000 damage at Denison University in the last year by picking at roof membranes and at caulking around vents. Vulture effigies hung by the U.S. Department of Agriculture send danger signals, said USDA wildlife biologist Jeff Pelc. Only non-lethal methods can be used because vultures are a protected species. — The Associated Press

Advice	D12
Classifieds	E1
Comics	D6
Lottery	A4
Movie Listings	D3
Obituaries	C4
Television	D10

We support our men and women in uniform.



Top of the News

INSIDE THE ISSUES SHAPING OUR COMMUNITY

Blood Donors Line Up, Roll Up Their Sleeves



Cindy Skop | Daily Sun

OneBlood account manager Annette Prause opens the door to one of six buses Monday for donor Marty Slotnick, of the Village Alhambra, while account representative Casey Serrano ushers him in during the Parrot Head Club-sponsored blood drive.

More than 260 people attended The Villages Parrot Head Club's winter blood drive on Monday morning.

By PATRICIA STEELE and CIARA VARONE
Daily Sun Staff Writers

Six big red buses pulled into District Public Safety Department Station 44 bright and early Monday morning.

By 10 a.m., the parking lot was filled and drivers were circling, waiting for a space to empty.

Inside the station, dozens of Villages Parrot Head Club members served as volunteers. They greeted people, then led them to the sign-in tables, the waiting areas and ultimately to

the red buses to donate blood for the club's winter blood drive.

"This is the most buses that have ever participated at one of our drives. It's also the most people we've ever had," said Skip Todd, coordinator of The Villages Parrot Head Club's blood drive.

More than 260 Villagers made appointments to donate blood Monday, and Todd expected additional residents to show up without appointments.

"You realize with 260 donors, we'll collect more than 30 gallons of blood today," Todd said.

Locally, there is always a need for donors willing to roll up their sleeves.

"The blood donor population continues to decrease as the needs of our patients increase," said Sharon Arbeene, system

Please See BLOOD DRIVE, A18

HOW TO DONATE

Where the Big Red Buses will appear over the next 10 days.

Today

Lowe's Home Improvement: 13705 U.S. Highway 27/441, Lady Lake; 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Outokumpu: 241 West Clarke Street, Wildwood; 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday

Lake-Sumter State College: 9501 South Highway 441, Leesburg; 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

For a complete list of donation locations visit: oneblood.org, then click "donate now."

Thursday

Lake-Sumter State College: 9501 South Highway 441, Leesburg; 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Saturday

The VHA Country Western Hoedown at The Villages Polo Club: 703 N. Buena Vista Blvd., The Villages; 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Tuesday

Walgreens: 400 Colony Blvd., The Villages; 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

COMMUNITY & CONNECTIONS

Only in The Villages

LIFE IN FLORIDA'S FRIENDLIEST HOMETOWN

Jack Hanna Shares Stories and Introduces Animals at The Sharon

By KRISTEN FIORE
Daily Sun Staff Writer

A penguin, a sloth and a cheetah walked into the Sharon — no, literally. Animal ambassador and TV personality Jack Hanna brought dozens of stories and nine animal friends to The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center on Monday night during his show, "Into the Wild Live." Hanna spent the show talking about his experiences with wildlife in Rwanda, Ohio's Columbus Zoo and other places around the world. He showed videos from his travels and introduced the audience to several different animals of both rare and well-known breeds. The show attracted animal lovers, Jack

Please See JACK HANNA, A18



Erin Williams | Daily Sun

A galago returns to a representative from the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium after landing on Jack Hanna's hat during Jack Hanna's "Into the Wild Live" at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

THE DIGIT

80

Authors

Eighty different authors, including Villages residents, are scheduled to appear at the Central Florida Book & Author Expo from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at Eisenhower Recreation Center, 3560 Buena Vista Blvd. Sponsored by Writers League of The Villages, the event is free and open to the public.

— Ethan Palmer, Daily Sun

TONIGHT'S EVENTS ON THE SQUARES

Entertainment runs from 5 to 9 p.m.

Spanish Springs Town Square
Plus 1 Duo
Happy hour, 5-7 p.m.

Lake Sumter Landing Market Square
Steelhorse
Happy hour, 5-6 p.m.

Brownwood Paddock Square
Lee Ann Noel Band
Happy hour, 5-6 p.m.

from the front page

Students Get Lesson In Local Government

Seventh-grade students from The Villages Charter School visited Lady Lake Town Hall for Civics Day.

By RACHEL STUART
Daily Sun Staff Writer

LADY LAKE

There was a little more giggling than usual at Lady Lake Town Hall on Monday.

Seventh-grade students from two civics classes at The Villages Charter Middle School joined town commissioners and department employees for the third annual Civics Day in Lady Lake.

The Town of Lady Lake and the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 347 hosted the event to give the seventh-graders a chance to experience local government outside of school textbooks.

Marie Ray, the education chairwoman with the auxiliary, first suggested the idea to the town three years ago.

Ray was inspired to start Civics Day in Lady Lake after her husband, who passed away three years ago, hosted the event in South Florida for more than 10 years.

"The main purpose is to educate these young people on what is going on in their community and how they can improve it," she said.

Since Ray suggested the idea, the town has continued to host the event to further enhance students' government education.

"They're learning about civics in class, but I think it's good to have them experience it firsthand and have the opportunity to know what it feels like to make decisions," town manager Kris Kollgaard said.

Students learned about the various town departments, such as Parks and Recreation and Public Works, asked questions and suggested ideas to implement changes in the town.

Students also prepared an agenda before attending the event to discuss at a mock commission meeting.

They dispersed into groups — led by different town commissioners and department employees — and they finalized the agenda before the mock meeting.

The students acted as the mayor, commissioners and department employees as they presented practical ideas and asked questions — all while laughing and having fun at the same time.

By participating in Civics Day, Landon Dickerson and Madison Laguna, both 12, said they now understand the several jobs that exist in the town and what each department does.

Sitting in an actual government setting helped the students understand what local government entails.

"Sometimes, it's hard to understand in civics classes how stuff actually works. Here, we go into more detail," said Abi Andal, 13.

Diana Gegaj, 12, said civics was not always her strong suit, but this event has helped her learn more about the subject.

"I think this is a very educational opportunity, and it helped me with some questions I've always had," she said.

As the students engaged in discussions, the two civics teachers sat back and observed, just as they have for the past three years.

"I think it helps them to connect the dots from book learning to actually experiencing the whole thing," civics teacher Christina Ling said. "I think it's just a good program that encourages students to maybe one day become involved in local government."

Robert Trifu, the other civics teacher, said local government is in the school curriculum, but this trip teaches them on another level.

"This is hands-on civics for them — helping them to see what it's like in the real world," he said. "When we talk about it in class, it's one thing. When they actually see it in action... they can appreciate what it takes to run a town."

WILDWOOD

HANNA

Continued from A1

Hanna fans and eager children and adults.

"Jack Hanna is a natural person, and that's something I would like to do," said Dan Webber, of Leesburg. "You want to be able to go up and talk to a lion or something, but if he's hungry, you're lunch. Or it might be nice to pat a rhinoceros."

Gail Anderson and Bob Wilk, of the Village of Dunedin, also came to the show because they like animals and Jack Hanna's Saturday morning TV show on ABC, "Jack Hanna's Wild Countdown."

"I'm looking forward to maybe seeing some cats," Anderson said. "No snakes, though."

Anderson's wish was certainly granted. Hanna brought out baby Geoffroy's cats, which are orange striped and spotted cats about the size of a domestic cat. The cats strutted across the stage and flicked their striped tails.

Hanna also introduced an African penguin, which waddled around the stage while Hanna talked, and an echidna, a quilled egg-laying mammal with a pointy beak.

A camera man joined all of the animals onstage and took a live video of them that played on the screen behind Hanna so that the audience could see the animals up close and personal.

They watched Slopoke the sloth eat a few carrots while



Erin Williams | Daily Sun

Jack Hanna, right, points out nail-like features on an echidna being held by a representative from the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium during Jack Hanna's "Into the Wild Live" on Monday.

hanging from a bar and Sadie the swift fox lie down on the table and yawn.

Kevin the seriema, a long-legged brown bird, had a trick. He picked up a fake lizard and smacked it against a rock.

This is how seriemas eat in the wild, Hanna explained.

Po the galago, a tiny-eyed monkey, kept jumping onto Hanna's hat, which he wasn't happy about, because of a past incident when Po peed on the hat.

In addition to the animals, Hanna also showed videos

from his travels.

In Rwanda, he spotted a gorilla family, which rolled around in the dirt, stole his backpack and built a nest to sleep in.

He also came upon a bear cave with a sleeping bear and a crying bear cub.

In Montana, he visited the Rolling Dog Ranch, a sanctuary for disabled animals.

The last animal Hanna brought to the stage was a cheetah, which ran across the stage and jumped onto the table, where it sat and ate raw meat.

The cheetah didn't want to leave the stage and kept jumping back onto the table.

At the end of the show, Hanna talked about the importance of educating the young generation about animals, which is why he does what he does.

"To learn it, they have to see it," Hanna said.

Kristen Fiore is a staff writer with The Villages Daily Sun. She can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5270, or kristen.fiore@thevillagesmedia.com.

City Commission Approves Changes To Southern Oaks

The commission also approved site plans for development of Phase 8A of Buena Vista Boulevard.

By DAVID R. CORDER
Daily Sun Senior Writer

WILDWOOD

City commissioners took action Monday evening on several Village of Southern Oaks development applications.

Without discussion, the Wildwood City Commission approved site plans for commercial development on about 98 acres within Southern Oaks Phase IV, an area north of County Road 468 and east of Florida's Turnpike.

In a related action, the commission also approved site plans for development of Phase 8A of Buena Vista Boulevard, a total of 40 acres adjoining Southern Oaks Phase IV that eventually would intersect with CR 468.

Following two public hearings, the commission also approved two ordinances that modified development entitlements in Southern Oaks.

Commissioners approved a large-scale comprehensive plan amendment to designate 41 acres in Southern Oaks as suitable for age-restricted development, which would permit residential, commercial and institutional uses.

The 41-acre site has been acquired by an affiliate of Central Florida Health, the nonprofit parent of The Villages Regional Hospital

and Leesburg Regional Medical Center. CFH officials publicly disclosed plans last year to build an emergency department at that site.

At a separate public hearing, the commission approved zoning map amendments that permit the age-restricted development classification on about 1,500 acres on the south side of State Road 44, north of Florida's Turnpike and west of Lake Okahumpka, as well as a noncontiguous site at the southeast and southwest corner of SR 44 and CR 468. The change to that acreage brings it into compliance with the proposed future land use map designation.

Also related to Southern Oaks, the commission at a separate public hearing approved an expansion of Village Community Development District 12, which contains all of the Village of Fenney and parts of Southern Oaks. By state law, the commission oversees CDD 12.

The action expanded CDD 12 by about 300 acres for a total of 1,490 acres. It includes Phase I of Southern Oaks, the area to the southwest of CR 468 and 501; Phase III of Southern Oaks, which extends northwesterly from CR 468 and 501 along the turnpike to a point east of U.S. Highway 301; and an area southeast of CR 468 and 501 and east to the turnpike.

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Baker House Readies For Murder Mystery, Much-Needed Upkeep

The Commission approved using funds raised through Christmas home tours to fund more restorations.

By SARAH WILSON
Daily Sun Senior Writer

WILDWOOD

In between the dismantling of Christmas decorations, volunteers at the Baker House have been carefully cultivating clues to help catch a killer.

Community members will come together to solve the murder on Saturday, as the house plays host to its first murder mystery event.

"We're turning around from Christmas into a murder

mystery," Gidget Gibson, volunteer coordinator for the Baker House, told members of Wildwood City Commission at their meeting on Monday. "... We're looking forward to it. It will be different."

At the meeting, the commission approved using \$14,000 raised from the Baker House's Christmas tours to fund refurbishments to the century-old home's windows and siding.

Gibson said money raised from the interactive murder mystery event also will be invested back into the home's upkeep.

"We just keep putting everything back in to keep up

with what needs to be done," she said.

There will be two "Clue"-style murder mystery events at the house on Saturday, one at 2 p.m. and another at 6 p.m. The 6 p.m. event is sold out, but \$30 tickets still are available for the 2 p.m. event. The house is located at 6106 County Road 44A.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit facebook.com/BakerHouseProject.

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Leesburg Commission Grants Water Franchise to The Villages

South Sumter Utility would provide potable water to the proposed Villages of West Lake.

By DAVID R. CORDER AND RACHEL STUART
Daily Sun Staff Writers

LEESBURG

The Leesburg City Commission adopted an ordinance Monday evening that grants an affiliate of the Developer a nonexclusive water-use franchise on the proposed Villages of West Lake.

Under the ordinance, the affiliate, South Sumter Utility Co. LLC, would provide potable water to the proposed 2,600-acre mixed-used residential development on both the north and south side of County Road 470 along Florida's Turnpike and then south to CR 48 and northwest to the Sumter County line, where it would adjoin the Village of Southern Oaks in Wildwood.

In correspondence with the city, the utility advised the city it would serve residents and businesses within West Lake under a consumptive-use water permit application filed through the St. James Water Management District.

The utility would pay the city a 5 percent fee on water use in exchange for the nonexclusive franchise.

"It is in the best interests of the citizens of Leesburg for the city to adopt this franchise ordinance as it allows the city to grow its economy and tax base, while safeguarding its natural resources and producing minimal impact on the city's infrastructure," according to the newly adopted ordinance.

The franchise agreement is subject to The Villages completing a due diligence review of its pending \$12 million acquisition of the 2,600 acres of surplus land from the city.

At Monday's meeting, the commission also heard the first reading of three proposed ordinances that would guide development of West Lake. Commissioners would take action following tentative public hearings at the Feb. 12 regularly scheduled meeting.

The first proposed ordinance would create a new citywide zoning district classification of large-scale, age-restricted communities under guidelines set by the federal Department of Housing & Urban Development.

The second proposed ordinance would rezone West Lake as a mixed-used age-restricted community under the HUD guidelines.

Both of those proposed ordinances earned unanimous support from the Leesburg Planning Commission at its Jan. 18 meeting.

The third ordinance would authorize the city and The Villages to enter into a West Lake development agreement under Chapter 163 of Florida Statutes.

"(It would provide) for certainty to both parties in terms of current and future development process and entitlements, setting out density, intensity, land uses and processes to be followed for development, clarifying how land development regulations will apply, anticipating and planning for continued future development and establishing design standards and process requirements for development taking place under the age-restricted development, future land-use category and zoning district," according to the proposed ordinance.

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