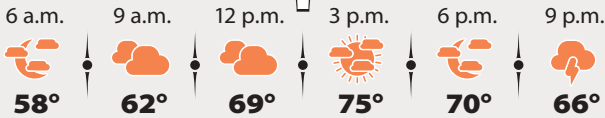




HINTS FROM HELOISE | E11

Rather than tapping on the lid to open a jar, just purchase a jar opener at the store.



AVANI MAHARAJ ON FAITH | D1

St. George Episcopal Church will host Mary Jo Vitale for its last concert of the season Feb. 2.



IN SPORTS | B1

The Chiefs' pursuit of a 3rd consecutive Super Bowl begins today against the Houston Texans, ending a 24-day layoff for Kansas City's starters.



IN LIFESTYLE | E1

Come out to Spanish Springs Town Square today from 4 to 9 p.m. for the January Cruise In. The event is a great opportunity to take in a variety of classic cars.

Featured clubs at this event include the Tin Lizzies of North Central Florida and Heart of Florida Model A Restorers. Residents can enter a model 30 years or older into the show.

IN NATIONAL NEWS | A5

BIDEN SETS RECORD BY COMMUTING NEARLY 2,500 NONVIOLENT CONVICTIONS

The round of clemencies for people convicted of nonviolent drug offenses announced Friday gives President Joe Biden the presidential record for most individual pardons and commutations issued.

IN NATIONAL NEWS

DONALD TRUMP'S SWEARING-IN MOVED TO CAPITOL ROTUNDA

President-elect Donald Trump will take the oath of office inside due to forecasts of intense cold weather. A6

IN VILLAGES NEWS

AREA CHURCH PACKS MEALS TO FEED CHILDREN IN NEED

The three-day event at Live Oaks Community Church saw 303,264 meals packed for Feed My Starving Children. D1

ONLY IN THE VILLAGES

By Chasity Boatman

When you have limited funds, you become creative with the type of food you can afford — cheese on toast, beans on toast and sometimes an egg on toast. That's if you can afford a loaf of bread. For residents of the surrounding area who lack the money to buy enough food to meet their needs, hunger is a constant companion.

Please See FOOD, A2

# Comedy Stars to Hit The Villages This Year



Daily Sun file photo

Comedian Howie Mandel is set to return to The Villages for a show March 12 at The Tracy.



Daily Sun file and submitted photos

Above left: This year's comedy season kicks off with comedian Vicki Lawrence making a return to The Villages during her show "Vicki Lawrence and Mama: A Two-Woman Show" at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center on Jan. 31. Above right: Kevin Nealon, known for his time as a cast member on the sketch comedy show "Saturday Night Live" from 1986 to 1995, will perform Feb. 27 at The Tracy.

By TAYLOR STRICKLAND | Daily Sun Senior Writer

The Villages comedy scene always brings the laughs, but this year, it's bringing some big-name standup stars to the community.

Every year, The Villages Entertainment and Significant Productions strive to bring in premier comedy acts, and the 2025 lineup is nothing to laugh about.

"We've got quite the lineup of comedians coming," said Sarah Higby, marketing manager for The Villages Entertainment. "Many will recognize famous comedian Kevin Nealon from his

nine years with NBC's 'Saturday Night Live,' and, of course, we are super excited about Howie Mandel's return to The Villages this spring."

From comedy legends to rising talent in the open-mic and social media circuits, each month is jam-packed with hilarious comics guaranteed to tickle residents' funny bones.

Please See COMEDY, A3

INSIDE TODAY'S DAILY SUN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 6

## VOTERS IN LAKE AND MARION COUNTIES HEAD TO POLLS TO BEGIN EARLY VOTING FOR SPECIAL ELECTION

One of the biggest issues for voters in November was knowing their ballots were lengthy. As early voting starts today in Congressional District 6, local residents only have one race to remember. "It will probably take people longer to walk to their car or from their car than it will to vote," said Wesley Wilcox, Marion County elections supervisor. The district — which includes Flagler and Putnam counties and parts of Lake, Marion, Volusia, Flagler and St. John's — is holding a special primary after U.S. Rep. Mike Waltz announced he was leaving to serve in the Trump administration. Two Democrats and three Republican candidates are running, meaning members of both parties can participate in the closed primary. "We're ready for everybody and we hope they all take the elections seriously and come out and vote," said Alan Hays, Lake elections supervisor.

— Leah Schwarting, Daily Sun



### WHERE TO VOTE IN THIS MONTH'S ELECTION

Early voting starts today and runs 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. through Jan. 25 in Marion and Lake. Voting sites will not be the same as they were in November since the Jan. 28 primary is not a county-wide election for either county. However, the closest site to The Villages in Lake is still the Lady Lake Community Center and the closest in Marion is still Mulberry Grove Recreation.



### HOW TO VOTE BY MAIL IN THE PRIMARY

The deadline for voters to request mail ballots be sent to them has passed and anyone who has a mail ballot should send it in soon. The United States Postal Service recommends mailing ballots at least a week before the deadline, which is 7 p.m. Jan. 28 in Florida. Voters can also use the secure ballot intake stations at their county's early voting sites to turn in their ballots.

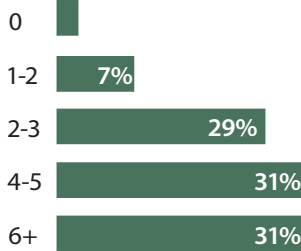


### Make it a Great Day!

Weather	D2
Recreation Listings	D10
Recipes	E1
Comics	E6
Puzzles	E7
Horoscopes	E8
TV Tonight	E10

### BY THE NUMBERS

AI-powered products used in the past seven days



Nearly all Americans use at least one AI-powered product weekly without realizing it, according to a new Gallup survey. Despite this, most Americans view AI's potential impact negatively, particularly in job opportunities and the spread of false information.



COMEDY

Continued from A1

The Sharon

Comedy legend Vicki Lawrence kicks off the comedy season at 7 p.m. Jan. 31 at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

Lawrence is famous for her role as Thelma Harper, better known as Mama, a character she originated at the ripe old age of 24 on “The Carol Burnett Show” and the spinoff “Mama’s Family.”

Now, the Emmy Award-winning comedienne is taking Mama out on the road and into 2025 in “Vicki Lawrence and Mama: A Two-Woman Show.”

“My show is not a retrospective,” she said. “The show is a mixture of stand-up comedy, music and my observations about real life.”

During the show, Lawrence shares anecdotes about her time on “The Carol Burnett Show” and “Mama’s Family,” her brief stint as a singer and her life today.

After warming up the audience with jokes about gynecological visits and a rendition of her 1973 hit, “The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia,” Lawrence dons the silver wig and pastel ensemble of Mama, who has much to say about the state of the world today.

Some of the many modern topics Mama touches upon include automatic toilets and their tendency to flush before people are done, same-sex marriage and human cloning.

“Where Mama is concerned, expect the unexpected,” Lawrence said. “She doesn’t always get things right, bless her heart, but she has very strong opinions.”

Tickets for “Vicki Lawrence and Mama: A Two-Woman Show” are \$56 and up. To purchase, go



Daily Sun file photo

Mama, played by Vicki Lawrence, talks to the crowd during her show “Vicki Lawrence and Mama: A Two-Woman Show” at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center in 2018. Tickets are on sale for Lawrence’s Jan. 31 show at The Sharon.

to thevillagesentertainment.com.

Other comics coming to The Sharon:

» Ryan Hamilton is a new favorite in the New York stand-up comedy scene, appearing on “The Tonight Show” with Jimmy Fallon, “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” and opening for Jerry Seinfeld at Carnegie Hall. Now, the star of the Netflix special “Happy Face” is coming to The Sharon at 7 p.m. Feb. 8. Tickets are \$32 and up.

» “Workin’ Man” comedian Dusty Slay will make a pit stop in The Villages at 7 p.m. Feb. 25 at The Sharon. The Nashville-native made his Grande Ole Opry debut in 2019 and has been climbing the comedic ladder ever since, appearing on “The Tonight Show” with Jimmy Fallon, “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” and releasing his first hour-long Netflix special, “Workin’ Man,” in 2024. Tickets start at \$35.

» Comedian Ben Brainard made a name for himself on Tik Tok, where he is known

for poking fun at events happening in the United States by parodying the states and their various personalities. He now tours the country, but the Florida native will make a stop closer to home at 7 p.m. March 1. Tickets start at \$35.

» Lewis Black, the Grammy Award-winning comedic actor known for playing Anger in the Pixar Academy Award-winning film “Inside Out,” stars in the “Goodbye Yeller Brick Road: The Final Tour”

show at 7 p.m. March 6. Tickets start at \$62.

» Former worship leader-turned-comedienne Heather Land will bring her empowering brand of humor and dole out practically hilarious advice at 7 p.m. March 13 at The Sharon. Tickets start at \$35.

» Comedian William Lee Martin, otherwise known as the “King of Cowtown,” and his 10-gallon hat come to The Villages as part of “The Funny Life Tour” at 7 p.m. March 14. Tickets start at \$35.

The Tracy and Savannah Center

Middleton’s new performing arts center opened its doors in 2024 to a variety of acts and entertainers, including Caroline Rhea, the actress and standup comic who played Aunt Hilda in “Sabrina the Teenage Witch.”

This year, even more comics are set to grace The Tracy Performing Arts Center’s stage.

Emmy-nominated actor and comedian Kevin Nealon performs at 7 p.m. Feb. 27 at The Tracy. The former “Saturday Night Live” cast member is best known for his nine-year stint as the news anchor on the show’s “Weekend Update” segment as well as for his role as the character Doug Wilson on the Showtime series “Weeds.” Tickets for Nealon’s stand-up show are \$75 and up.

Brad Upton, star of the 2019 Dry Bar comedy special “Boomer Triggers Gen-Z Snowflakes,” performs at 7 p.m. Feb. 15 at The Tracy. Tickets start at \$45.

After Upton, renowned comedian, actor and producer Howie Mandel returns to The Villages at 7 p.m. March 12 at The Tracy. Tickets for Mandel’s show start at \$85.

Jon Lovitz, a comedian and actor known for films like “The Wedding Singer” and guest appearances on TV shows like “Friends,” is the most recent addition to The Tracy’s 2025 schedule. He will perform his comedy show at 7 p.m. March 21 at The Tracy. Tickets start at \$55 and go on sale Wednesday.

In addition to the well-known comedians, there also are a few locally renowned acts returning to Savannah Center.

“At Savannah Center we are bringing back Steve Solomon’s ‘My Mother’s Italian, My Fathers Jewish and I’m in Therapy,’ as Steve discussing his hilarious family is always a hit at Savannah Center,” Higby said. “Also, this March we will have Andy Cooney’s ‘Irish Celebration,’ featuring an all-Irish comedy duo that blends music, laughter and dance, which is sure to bring a smile to your face around the St. Patrick’s Day holiday.”

Soloman returns in “My Mother’s Italian, My Father’s Jewish and I’m in Therapy” at 4 and 7 p.m. Feb. 15 at Savannah Center, and Andy Cooney’s “Irish Celebration” takes place at 7 p.m. March 5. Tickets for both shows start at \$35.

Although The Villages already has an abundance of comedians headed its way, Higby said that’s not all.

“We’ve got more well-known comedians to be announced soon too, so make sure you are signed up to receive emails from The Villages Entertainment on a weekly basis to be in the know on upcoming on sales,” she said.

Tickets for each of the shows can be purchased at thevillagesentertainment.com or at any Villages Box Office location.

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

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