



BEFORE THEY WERE VILLAGERS | D5
Michael Domino is a published author and a globally recognized award-winning filmmaker.

6 a.m. 9 a.m. 12 p.m. 3 p.m. 6 p.m. 9 p.m.
58° 61° 73° 80° 75° 66°

VERONICA WERNICKE ON SERVICE | D1
Tri-County Women Veterans is hosting an education expo for women next month.



IN SPORTS | B1

Sterling Sharpe will join his brother Shannon, as the first siblings in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Antonio Gates, Jared Allen and Eric Allen also were elected.



IN LIFESTYLE | E1

Head over to Rohan Recreation this afternoon for the Spring Fashion Market, presented by The Villages Fashionistas, to find some new attire.

Browse through an assortment of hand-crafted jewelry, clothing, bags, accessories, a variety of makeup and more at the market. Admission to the event is free and open to all Villages residents.

IN NATIONAL NEWS | A5

WINTER STORMS BRING 'THUNDER ICE,' FLOODING IN SEVERAL U.S. STATES

Storms caused flash flooding and sent creeks over their banks in portions of West Virginia and Kentucky, while a wintry mix coated trees and roads in ice and even dropped "thunder ice" in several states.

IN NATIONAL NEWS

DEMOCRATS OVERTAKE SENATE FLOOR TO PROTEST NOMINEE

Democratic lawmakers held the floor overnight Wednesday to protest President Donald Trump's budget pick. **A3**

IN WORLD NEWS

TURKISH EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS STRUGGLE TWO YEARS LATER

The 2022 earthquake killed more than 53,000 people in Turkey, considered one of the nation's worst disasters. **A10**

ONLY IN THE VILLAGES

By Taylor Strickland

Significant Productions, the creative force behind The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center and The Studio Theatre Tierra Del Sol, will celebrate The Sharon's 10th anniversary with an inaugural fundraising gala in April.

Please See **GALA, A7**

GIVING IN FRUITLAND PARK

\$60

The cost of the "A Night on the Town" dinner event Feb. 14. The event includes appetizers, dinner, dessert and a comedy show at various places throughout Fruitland Park. This is the second year Bless Fruitland Park included the dinner as part of Love Week. Tickets can be purchased until Monday at fruitlandpark.org.

200

The number of packs of diapers Community United Methodist Church hopes to receive during its diaper and formula drive. Diapers and pull-ups of all sizes including adult will be donated to the food pantry and Fruitland Park Elementary School. For more information about the drive, call Melinda Milhorn at 352-408-7558.

Fruitland Park's Love Week Showcases Kind Acts in the Community

By CHASITY BOATMAN | Daily Sun Staff Writer

Love isn't just in the big gestures, but also in the small, everyday acts. Bless Fruitland Park's annual Love Week, which showcases that little acts of kindness really aren't all that small, begins Saturday with events promoting compassion, fostering connections and improving the lives of

community members. Bless Fruitland Park is a community effort that began in 2015 by churches, businesses and civic groups to create a culture of generosity and kindness within "The Friendly City." Love Week is one of its biggest events

Please See **LOVE WEEK, A7**

INSIDE TODAY'S DAILY SUN

TAKING FLIGHT

READY FOR 156 SPACE COAST LAUNCHES THIS YEAR, THE SPACE FORCE TARGETS BOTTLENECKS

The Space Force is prepped to support an average of 13 launches each month from the Space Coast in 2025, but it's a juggling act that has the world's No. 1 space-port running up against infrastructure roadblocks.

Brig. Gen. Kristin Panzenhagen, who leads the Space Force's Assured Access to Space program as well as heads Space Launch Delta 45 based in Brevard County and oversees the Eastern Range, spoke about the challenges at the one-day Space Mobility Conference, part of Commercial Space Week at the Orange County Convention Center last month.

"We've been going up pretty steadily in about a 25-30% increase per year, and I think we'll continue to increase at that rate for at least the next couple years," she said. There's potential to hit as many as 156 launches from the Space Coast in 2025.

The pace has been demanding, she said. But it also has brought infrastructure shortcomings to the forefront causing backups for national security launches.

— Tribune News Service



The Associated Press

INCREASED LAUNCH CADENCE COMES WITH CHALLENGES

"The bottleneck itself is that really we just don't have enough payload processing space," Panzenhagen said. "We, with our government payloads, are using the same payload processing space that the commercial payloads use." In 2024, the Space Force was able to get extra congressional funds to pursue commercial solutions to a similar bottleneck in California. That solution could mean more square footage or new ways to process satellites. She said a similar request for the Space Coast will be made for 2025.



Make it a Great Day!

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Weather | D2 |
| Recreation Listings | D8 |
| Recipes | E1 |
| Comics | E4 |
| Puzzles | E5 |
| Horoscopes | E7 |
| TV Tonight | E8 |

BY THE NUMBERS

5+

4 in 10 adults under 30 are spending an average of 5 or more hours a day on social media, according to a new YouGov survey. Only 13% of older adults say the same. In a March 2023 survey by the global public opinion company, fewer adults under 30 (32%) spent an average of five or more hours daily on social media. Facebook is the social media platform used by the greatest share of Americans, with 73% saying that they've used the social network recently.

from the front page

GALA

Continued from A1

The gala, “Celebrating a Decade on Stage,” will give guests the opportunity to meet the who’s who of SigPro, including founders Jason Goedken and Whitney Morse, who will serve as hosts for the evening.

“Guests can expect an elevated and artistic experience,” said Morse, SigPro’s artistic director and the granddaughter of The Sharon’s namesake. “We will have items up for auction, fun games and, of course, the chance to mix and mingle with the SigPro staff. I know I am very much looking forward to this event, and I really hope all our fellow art lovers will join us to toast our accomplishments and look to our future together.”

Gala guests will have the chance to win exclusive luxury prizes and get-away experiences. They also will have exclusive first access to the variety of live and silent auction items donated by SigPro’s business partners.

For entertainment, The Fabulous Equinox Orchestra will provide a backdrop of jazzy melodies throughout the night, while singing servers dish out tasteful performances during dinnertime. Other acts will take place over the course of the gala, but they will be revealed only to those who attend.

The gala also will give guests the opportunity to take a peek behind the curtain and explore parts of The Sharon that audiences don’t often get to see.

“Without giving too much away, we’re going to be doing portions of the gala on the stage itself,” said Goedken, SigPro’s executive director. “It



Submitted photo

The Fabulous Equinox Orchestra will provide live entertainment for Significant Productions’ inaugural fundraising gala at 5:30 p.m. April 26 at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center, which also serves as the theater’s 10th anniversary celebration.

will give a different perspective to people who have only really been to the theater and sat in the audience.”

The Sharon first opened its doors April 30, 2015. Since then, the venue, previously known as Church on the Square, blossomed into one of Central Florida’s premier performing arts centers.

Morse and Goedken founded SigPro in late December 2022. The not-for-profit is predominantly made up of the same people who stewarded the two theaters before, give or take a few new hires, and remains committed to the same mission.

“Many ask why we decided to become a nonprofit, and it was to advocate and create an environment that is in the best interest of art, artists and audience,” said Yasmeen Stogden, SigPro’s development director. “It’s a challenging endeavor, and we are proud to share the ‘how’ behind what we do by hosting our inaugural fundraising gala, welcoming our community to go beyond the audience in support of our venues and Significant Productions.”

The gala doubles as both a celebration and a fundraising event for SigPro and, by extension, The Sharon and The Studio. Every bid, every donation and every sponsorship made during the event will directly support future live performances and artist-driven storytelling at the theaters.

Stogden said those who contribute do more than just fund the venues.

“Donors help bring incredible talent, including directors and designers, to our stages,” she said. “They also allow us to run workshops, classes and outreach programs that nurture the next generation of artists. The generosity of our community and partners allows us to provide inclusive programming, making theater accessible to all.”

The gala will take place at 5:30 p.m. April 26 at The Sharon. Tickets go on sale Wednesday and are \$150 per person. There will be eight seats available at each table. To purchase tickets, go to signifcantproductions.org/gala.

LOVE WEEK

Continued from A1

of the year.

“The week is dedicated to helping meet as many needs in the community as possible,” said Cindy Copen, Fruitland Park’s deputy recreation director. “It’s about loving your neighbor and making a positive impact.”

Love Week kicks off with the 5K Love Run, presented by Fruitland Park, at 8 a.m. Saturday at the Gardenia Center, 205 W. Berckman St.

Day-of-registration for adult runners is \$40, and the kids fun run is free.

Race proceeds benefit Fruitland Park’s Utility Charity Fund, which is available to residents who are in need of assistance with their water bill. Copen said the race gives participants the opportunity to make a positive difference and enjoy the sights of Fruitland Park.

“When you’re running, you really experience the small-town feel with people on their porches waving at you and others cheering,” Copen said. “It’s a different experience than when you’re traveling or in a hurry. Running through the neighborhoods helps you reconnect with the community.”

Copen’s love for the week-long event goes back nine years to her first day on the job when she registered Love Run participants.

“We are here to provide a service to the community, so getting to work with people and help make them happy was a perfect first day,” Copen said. “I really got a sense of the job, and a better sense of the community.”

Even the smallest

community members can celebrate Love Week. Pre-kindergartners are invited from 10:30 a.m. to noon Wednesday at Fruitland Park Library for a Valentine’s Day-themed event including a bounce house, pizza, clowns, face painting and balloon animals.

“Love Week is a time for the community to come together and give back,” said Barbara Fields, Fruitland Park Library children’s librarian. “The kids will have a fun time jumping in the bounce house and interacting with the clowns.”

On Wednesday, seniors can enjoy lunch during the Senior Adult Luncheon. It is from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Fruitland Park Recreation Department.

“We will have the chorus from Fruitland Park Elementary singing for the seniors while they’re eating,” Milhorn said. “The seniors always really enjoy the event.”

Throughout February, Community United Methodist Church hosts a Diaper and Formula Drive. The goal is to receive at least 200 packs of baby diapers, said Melinda Milhorn, Community United Methodist Church community partnership chair.

“We are asking for donations of adult diapers, baby diapers, pull-ups, baby wipes and formula,” Milhorn said. “All of the pull-ups go to Fruitland Park Elementary for children who need them. The baby and adult diapers go to our food bank.”

This is the first year the drive has included formula, Milhorn said. Donations can be dropped off at Community United Methodist Church, 309 College Drive.

“Baby formula is essential for many babies,” Milhorn said. “It’s expensive and our community has a huge need

for baby formula donations.”

A year’s supply of formula costs a family between \$760 and \$2,280 a year, according to Yale School of Medicine.

“Love Week is about different churches and groups having programs to help meet as many community needs as possible,” Milhorn said.

Also throughout February, Fruitland Park Police Department is collecting shoes, underwear and winter gloves for boys and girls for Fruitland Park Elementary School. Items can be dropped off at Fruitland Park City Hall, Fruitland Park Community Center and Fruitland Park Library.

Love Week ends Feb. 14 with the second annual Valentine’s Day “A Night on the Town” progressive dinner at City Hall. Tickets are \$60 per person and available for purchase until Monday.

Dinner begins at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall with savory appetizers. The main course is served at 6:15 p.m. at the Gardenia Center. Desserts are at 7 p.m. at the Fruitland Park Library. The evening concludes with a comedy show at 8 p.m. at the Gardenia Center.

Copen said the purpose of Love Week is to inspire people to continue kind acts throughout the year.

“The bigger picture is that we should each be purposeful and generous with our time, words and energy,” Copen said. “Continue to check on your neighbor, smile at a stranger and consider others.”

For more information about the 5K Love Run or to purchase tickets for the dinner, visit fruitlandpark.org/parksrec.

For more information about Love Week, call Milhorn at 352-408-7558.

Anthony's

130 YEARS OF FLORIDA STYLE

RESORT WEAR 2025

SEE THE COLLECTION



celebrate FASHION



Take 25% OFF ENTIRE STOCK OF REGULAR* AND REDUCED MERCHANDISE! PLUS, IN-STORE ONLY, TAKE AN EXTRA 40% OFF CLEARANCE MERCHANDISE!



CELEBRATE WITH US THRU FEB 9, 2025

*EXCLUDES AVALIN, BALI, CHARLIE B, ESCAPE BY HABITAT, FOXCROFT, G LIFESTYLE, HABITAT, IBKUL, LOOK MODE, M AND M, PBJ BLUES, RBX, ROBELL, SEA BREEZE, SPANX, TERRA, TOPANGA, TRIBAL AND VOGO.



COLONY PLAZA

341 Colony Blvd., The Villages, FL 32162 • 352-391-5174

STORE HOURS: MON - FRI 10-7 • SAT 10-6 • SUN 11-5 • anthony'sfla.com