

NATION



The Associated Press

FILIBUSTER'S RACIST PAST FUELS ARGUMENT FOR ITS END IN SENATE

Advocates for changes to the practice say the procedure that allows endless debate is hardly what the founders intended, but rather a Jim Crow-era relic whose time is up. The debate ahead could make or break President Joe Biden's agenda in a Senate split evenly between Democrats and Republicans. **A14**

NATION & WORLD REPORT

Nation: The Biden administration and many states are joining a push to vaccinate older Americans against COVID-19 as the vaccination rate among the vulnerable group has leveled off. **A19**

World: American-born, Princeton-educated Queen Noor is caught up in a royal rift in Jordan, where she had hoped her eldest son would follow the late King Hussein onto the throne. **A20**

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Faces in The News



Hideki Matsuyama
The Japanese golfer shot a 7-under-par 65 for a four-shot lead entering the final round of the Masters.

Sports, B1

Special Report

DANCE IN THE VILLAGES

Dancing Shoes Fit Villagers

Hundreds of groups practice and perform at venues throughout the community as residents join the fun.



Margarita McHugh, of the Village of Briar Meadow, is originally from Spain, where she learned flamenco.



Swing dance instructor Jim Smith, of the Village of Hadley, leads his partner, Debra Johnson, of the Village of Springdale.



Van Bui-Thompson, of the Village Del Mar and a native of Vietnam, leads the Chinese Asian Dance Performing Group.



Diane Vargas, of the Village of Bonita, spent 15 years as a ballerina in the National Ballet of Mexico. Vargas started as a soloist and worked her way up to Prima Ballerina. She is involved in several dance groups and helped start what is now Evolution Dance.

Photos by Cindy Skop | Daily Sun



Violet Ray, of the Village of Hadley, studied hula in Hawaii after falling in love with the form of dance while taking classes in Las Vegas.

S

By **KRISTEN FIORE**
Daily Sun Associate
Managing Editor

Suzanne Crosby and her partner, Donald Wyman, taught dance in Massachusetts for years before moving to The Villages, where a large and flourishing dance scene was waiting for them. "We love teaching," Wyman said. "Coming down here, people were the same. They're wonderful. (The Villages) has the interest and the facilities. So we thought we could come down here and continue doing what we love to do, and that's what it's been." By 2008, they were leading their own group, Social Dance Steppin' Out. Their group is one of more than 300 dance groups in The Villages. Dance classes at recreation centers encompass everything from hula, belly dancing and flamenco to tap, jazz, ballet — and the ever-popular line

Please See **DANCE, A5**

RESOURCES & REOPENING

STATE OF THE PANDEMIC

What's Happening With COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts

FLORIDA COVID-19 CALL CENTER
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Lake: 352-589-6424

Sumter County Health Department resumes vaccinations at Sumter County Fairgrounds on Monday; sign up at myvaccine.fl.gov. Global Medical Response resumes Monday at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, 5323 E. County Road 462, Wildwood; sign up at sumterfl.saferestart.net. In Marion County, register at tinyurl.com/marionCOVIDvax. The Villages Health offers appointments online at tvhvaccine.com. All Florida residents are eligible; ages vary by vaccine maker.

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WHERE AREA VETERANS CAN GET THE VACCINE

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Veterans: North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System at American Legion Post 347. Registered patients can call 352-548-6000, ext. 103755.

THE LATEST COVID-19 VIRUS CASES IN FLORIDA

As of Friday
6,906: New cases of COVID-19 in Florida
6.9%: Test positivity rate
2,118,713: Total infections in state since pandemic began; 34,676 deaths

Tri-County Numbers
Sumter: 16 new cases
Lake: 111 new cases
Marion: 50 new cases

LOVIN' THE LIFESTYLE

Family, friends enjoy life in The Villages. **D1**



DANCE

Continued from A1

dancing. And the hundreds of Villagers who take classes, attend dances and put on performances are reaping the physical, social and mental benefits of the activity.

"It's a great activity for older adults," said Phoebe Hwang, an adjunct faculty member at the University of Hawaii and a research consultant at OmniWorks, through which she works with clients like the Hawaii Falls Prevention Consortium. "You can build an entire culture in a community off of it."

Why Join Now?

Many people join dance groups or classes after moving to The Villages because they didn't have time to do it while they were working, according to Pam Henry, recreation manager for lifestyles, parks and PR.

For others, it's a way to continue a lifelong passion or career.

"Some people come to me and say, 'I used to dance, and I loved it,'" Crosby said. "If you loved it, you shouldn't stop. Bring it back into your life. Or try something new. We've had some people who have tried it, and it opened them up to other kinds of dancing."

There are so many opportunities to dance in The Villages in part due to the 102 conveniently located multi-use recreation centers, said John Rohan, director of Recreation and Parks.

Dance groups take up residence in rooms with hard floors, mirrors and bars.

"The fact that there are a variety of dance programs and levels affords our residents (the option) to find that niche that meets their needs to learn and

grow in that dance program," Rohan said.

Because there are around 40 genres of dance offered in The Villages, residents can learn more about their own culture or the cultures of others through classes such hula, clogging, flamenco, Irish Ceili and more.

The Villages offers opportunities to dance beyond resident lifestyle groups and during the nightly entertainment on the squares. There also are courses through the Enrichment Academy, which allows Villages residents and nonresidents to continue education through hundreds of fee-based extra-curricular courses held at recreation centers throughout The Villages.

Health Benefits

While dance is good physical exercise, a long-established body of research has found that the mental benefits of the activity are just as powerful.

In a 2003 study, Joe Verghese, division chief of the department of medicine geriatrics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, found that out of 11 physical activities, dance was the most associated with less dementia risk.

"We found that mentally stimulating activities were associated with reduced dementia," Verghese said of the study. "When we looked at activities, dancing was significant. People who danced frequently had a 76% reduced risk of dementia."

Participants in the study engaged in physically stimulating activities such as walking, running, swimming and dancing and mentally stimulating activities such as board games, reading and playing music.

"Dancing clearly has a physical component, but it's also mental and social," Verghese said. "I think we're a few

steps away from saying that engaging in dance could prevent Alzheimer's and dementia, but it's something we need to study more carefully."

Dancing and other related activities like tai chi are involved in the Falls Prevention Consortium that Hwang works with.

"Older adults are so prone to falls," Hwang said. "(Dance) physically helps with balance, but it also teaches older adults to be mindfully aware of their body placement. That way, they are ready and able to fall in a certain way."

A fall is one of the most common events that threaten the independence of older adults, according to Sobia Ahmad, a primary care doctor at The Villages Health Pinellas Care Center.

Dancing helps with balance issues because it creates muscle memory and strengthens bones, Ahmad said.

"This can prevent a fall from occurring, and if one does fall, it can certainly prevent a fracture that leads to further complications," she said.

Social Benefits

There are very few exercises as social as dance, said Susan O'Brien, a Village of Polo Ridge resident who teaches dance on cruise ships and with the Enrichment Academy.

"Sometimes in the classes, there's a little laughter," O'Brien said. "When you learn to dance, you're learning to do it to go out and have evenings of fun. It lifts your spirits."

The large dance community was one of the reasons O'Brien and her husband, Mark, chose to move to The Villages.

"We saw the opportunity to dance every night if we wanted to," Susan said. "And it's not really like that in other places. I'm amazed at how

many people are interested in learning here."

Practice to Perform

While some of the dance groups in The Villages provide classes, others work toward performances and events.

"One of the things we've seen that has been very helpful for our program is that we do end-of-semester performances," Hwang said. "It's something people can look forward to. When we put on these big events where they work hard and practice, it improves mental health."

Evolution Dance is one resident dance group that works toward putting on multiple performances a year at Savannah Center and other recreation centers.

For months leading up to the performance, the group tries to perfect choreography and move in sync.

"At the end of it, I feel like, 'Wow. I finally accomplished what I decided I wanted to do from the get-go,'" said Village Santiago resident Rosemary Theiss, assistant treasurer and events manager with the group. "It's such an accomplishment to start and end a product and have the audience enjoy it."

Dancing can help reduce depression and anxiety as well as improve sleep and boost overall wellness and quality of life, according to Catherine Salmons, a movement and behavioral therapist with The Villages Health.

"Dance provides an emotional release that can allow tense muscles to relax, increase

sensation and reduce stress in the body through movements that involve rocking, shaking, swaying and swings," Salmons said.

Salmons teaches movement therapy classes at The Villages Health Colony Care Center, and in a yearlong study conducted in 2019 on her movement therapy groups, Salmons observed a statistically significant decrease in depression and anxiety symptoms among participants, as well as an improvement in scores on a scale measuring self-esteem.

These sessions are now open to the general public. Anyone interested in enrolling should contact wellness education assistant Mandy Bibler at 352-674-2464.

In addition to Salmons' movement therapy class, "Mind in Motion," Salmons also created a movement therapy curriculum for patients living with dementia, which is offered as part of The Villages Health's Dementia Care Coordination program, an eight-week program that offers support and resources for caregivers as well as their loved ones living with the dementia diagnosis.

While caregivers attend a weekly support session, the patients living with dementia receive Salmons' movement therapy intervention as a parallel program.

In the one-hour movement sessions, patients work fine and gross motor coordination through repeated movement combinations and engage in socialization through shared group movement, Salmons said. "We address some of the

specific muscular and motor challenges that can accompany dementia," Salmons said. "For example, we do exercises using marching, running and leg stretches to help with the tendency to shuffle when walking."

The dementia care coordination program expanded its therapeutic activity groups in March to include art therapy and new movement therapy programs. It will expand more in June with a tai chi/kinesiology therapy offering, according to Melissa Denham, dementia care specialist with The Villages Health.

Those interested in the dementia care coordination program must be a primary care patient (caregiver and/or person living with dementia) with The Villages Health. Referrals go to Denham, who will reach out to the caregiver for an assessment with both the patient and caregiver.

Whether people engage in dancing on the squares, taking classes at recreation centers, trying out movement therapy or working on a large-scale performance, it's a fulfilling and worthwhile activity.

"It's so rewarding," Crosby said. "We have people that come up to us off the street and thank us for teaching them because they have enjoyed it for all these years. That is the most wonderful thing."

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Reason #2 Pinpoint Accuracy of the Injections

Dr. Anthony Sancetta D.O. is the staff physician with the Arthritis Relief Centers location in The Villages® community. In addition to helping

hundreds of patients find relief from chronic knee pain, he has also perfected a method that allows him to target his injections with precision accuracy to insure optimal results.

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Research has shown that if injections are performed into the knee joint without this type of image guidance that the injection might miss the right location up to 25% of the time. With the technology used at the Arthritis Relief Centers no expense has been spared to avoid total

knee replacement surgery!

Reason #3 Viscosupplementation Treatment is Covered by Medicare and Many Other Insurances

Medical care can be expensive, and sadly that cost often keeps seniors on a fixed income from getting the treatment they desperately need.

The good news is that the viscosupplementation treatments offered at the Arthritis Relief Centers are covered by Medicare and many other insurance companies.

This has allowed countless patients with knee pain right here in The Villages® community the opportunity to get the best state of the art care without draining their life's savings they've worked so hard for.

That's why the doctors at the Arthritis Relief Centers are offering a special knee pain consultation that is open to anyone in the The Villages® community with knee pain who would like to see if the advanced medical procedures discussed here can help you.

This complimentary consultation is no obligation and allows the doctors to determine if you are a candidate for this treatment...or if things are too far advanced and a knee replacement surgery is your only option.

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Arthritis Relief Centers has staff standing by 24 hours a day to take your phone calls. The number is 352-363-2888, and due to the high demand for these services, space has been set aside for the next 20 people who call to reserve their free knee pain consultation. The number again is 352-363-2888.

special report

DANCE IN THE VILLAGES

Members of Villages Dance Community Reflect

Dancers in The Villages come from all different backgrounds. Many worked in dance professionally before coming to The Villages and continuing to share their skills with others. The Daily Sun spoke with five members of the local dance community about their background and passion for the art form. — Kristen Fiore, Daily Sun

VIOLET RAY

Ray and her husband were line dance teachers in Las Vegas when several of the women in the class invited her to a hula club they went to. "I fell in love," Ray said. After that, Ray moved to Hawaii where she studied hula even further under hula master Johnny Lum Ho. "It was wonderful," said Ray, of the Village of Hadley. "Because that's where hula originated. It's part of their history and culture, and it's very moving. I'm grateful I had the opportunity to do that." When Ray moved to The Villages, she brought hula with her. The nearest hula instructor was in Orlando, so she started her own group in The Villages — Aloha 'O Ka Hula. There are about 24 people in the group, which performs often in The Villages. "I like the way it makes me feel," Ray said of hula. "It just calms you. It makes me happy."



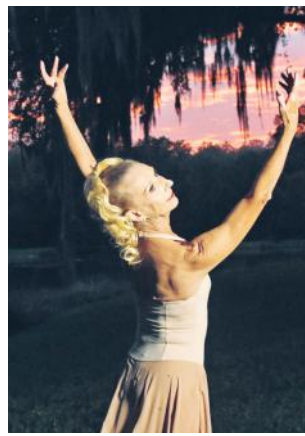
MARGARITA MCHUGH

McHugh grew up in Spain, where she started taking flamenco lessons around the age of 6. "When I left Spain, I left with flamenco music in my heart," said McHugh, of the Village of Briar Meadow. So she brought it with her to the United States, then Germany and then Italy. Eventually, McHugh returned to the U.S. and moved to The Villages, where she saw the opportunity to establish a flamenco class in 2016. The first thing McHugh teaches her students is Sevillanas, which she said is a basic movement. Later, students move onto more complicated dances with shawls, fans and palmas, a type of hand-clapping style. McHugh's class, which is at 3 p.m. Tuesdays at Tierra Del Sol Recreation Center, usually has around 14 people and it is open to any Villages resident. McHugh loves flamenco because it is passionate. "You have to have attitude," she said.



DIANE VARGAS

Vargas was bitten by the ballet bug at a young age, and the resulting itch never really went away. As a young adult, she auditioned for the National Ballet of Mexico and was contracted as a soloist. She performed with the company for 15 years, ultimately working her way up to the title of Prima Ballerina and performing in classics such as "Romeo and Juliet," "Swan Lake" and "The Sleeping Beauty." Vargas did about 205 performances a year, and there was very little time off. "Language was a barrier at first," said Vargas, of the Village of Bonita. "I went down without knowing any Spanish, but I eventually learned to speak it." Vargas left the company to take on an opportunity to run a dance company in Midland, Texas. She eventually opened a child care education facility with her husband, where she worked until moving to The Villages in 2008. "Part of the reason I wanted to be here is because they did have ballet," Vargas said. "You hear of lifestyle communities, but you never hear about performing opportunities and the arts." Vargas immediately started taking ballet classes. She was rusty at first after sitting behind a desk for 25 years, but soon one class a week wasn't enough. She helped start what is now Evolution Dance, and teaches multiple ballet classes at Saddlebrook Recreation Center. During classes, Vargas leads the members through bar and floor work. "It's so different from teaching children or pre-professionals," Vargas said. "They're very gracious and humble about what they can and can't do, but they want to understand it." Vargas loves to watch her students' eyes light up when something clicks. "People watch and enjoy each other's progress," Vargas said. "But there's no criticism."



Photos by Cindy Skop | Daily Sun

JIM SMITH

Smith didn't think he'd enjoy dancing when he started taking lessons in the late '80s, but it blossomed into a passion that led to competing in the United Country Western Dance Council and teaching his own classes in Toledo, Ohio. When he moved to The Villages, he thought he was done with teaching, but people would see him out dancing and ask him if he taught. So, he started teaching West Coast Swing and Swinging Country classes at recreation centers. Smith's passion is for West Coast Swing, which he says is a playful dance. "It's one of the few dances that you can actually create your own feeling about the dance," said Smith, of the Village of Hadley. "I always say it's like telling a story with your dance moves." Smith dances with his fiancé, Linda Angiulli, and teaches classes in The Villages with his dance partner, Diann Elerhling.



VAN BUI-THOMPSON

Bui-Thompson always has loved dance. When she moved to The Villages four years ago, she joined the Chinese Asian Dance Performing Group and was eventually made the group's leader. The group studies and performs routines in different types of Asian dance, from Chinese and Indonesian to Tai and Vietnamese. Bui-Thompson, originally from Vietnam, jokes that she loves Vietnamese dancing best because she can understand all of the words in the music. The group puts on shows for clubs and organizations around The Villages with an array of music and costumes. Members also typically do a performance for the Chinese New Year. "Dancing is more cheerful than just singing," said Bui-Thompson, of the Village of Orange Blossom Gardens. Bui-Thompson's favorite part of it all is the feeling she gets after a show.



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special report

DANCE IN THE VILLAGES



Michael Johnson | Daily Sun

Bonnie Stein, center, of the Village of Poinciana, dances with Betty Pascucci, right, of the Village of Glenbrook, and Migri Lyons, of the Village of Virginia Trace, last July in the Colony Professional Plaza parking lot.

Dance Groups Found Ways To Keep Moving

Resident groups continued practicing when they couldn't meet in their usual ways.

By KRISTEN FIORE
Daily Sun Associate Managing Editor

Last year while recreation centers were temporarily closed, Mac Freeman spent every Wednesday morning moving furniture to clear out space in her living room and dining room. That's when 10 members of her dance group, Hau'oli Hula Halau, came to her house to practice.

"Before it got really hot, we'd do it on the lanai and I'd mark off 6 feet. When it got too hot, I brought it all inside my house," said Freeman, of the Village of Calumet Grove.

Resident dance groups such as Hau'oli Hula Halau, Sugar 'n Spice, Rhythm and Soul Urban Line Dance and the Off-Broadway Dancers found ways to continue practicing safely during the pandemic to stay in shape and keep choreography and friendships sharp.

Sandi Bergheimer, leader of Sugar 'n Spice and Rhythm and Soul Urban Line Dance, had her groups practice outside in recreation center parking lots.

"We spread out socially distanced," said Bergheimer in an interview last summer. "Some people wear a mask, and if someone isn't feeling well, they don't come. After every song, I make sure everyone hydrates."

Bergheimer wanted to continue practicing for the exercise and to provide a way to get people out and socializing.

"We don't want to give up our busy lifestyle, but we have to compromise," Bergheimer said.

Shirley Keith's group, the Off-Broadway Dancers, held practices in parking lots as well, because the group had a show to rehearse.

"We've been fairly fortunate as far as the weather," Keith said in an interview last year. "Sometimes you worry about rain. But we've gotten along fine. The disadvantage is that we can't wear our tap shoes, so we have to do tap and jazz in our athletic shoes."

Meanwhile, Freeman taught her group how to keep their movements small

Resident Groups At Heart Of Special Events on The Squares

By KRISTEN FIORE
Daily Sun Associate Managing Editor

Colorful costumes and sharp dance moves add to the excitement and festivities during special Villages occasions and traditions.

Square events such as the tree lighting festivals, Mardi Gras, Cinco de Mayo and the Strawberry Festival wouldn't be the same without resident dance groups such as The Original Villages Belly Dancers, Sweet & Sassy, Sugar 'n Spice the Mystic Jewels and Aloha 'O Ka Hula.

A lot of time and effort goes into making sure choreography is perfected and in sync for dances on the squares and in parades.

The original Villages Belly Dancers are a staple of special events and parades and have been around for over a decade.

"It gets your heart racing a little bit," said the group's leader, Christina Crispi, in regard to performing at special events. "Everyone is really appreciative and encouraging. We always enjoy getting dressed up and entertaining the community."



George Horsford | Daily Sun

Pearl Kosa, of the Village of Bonita, dances with the Mystic Jewels on Spanish Springs Town Square in February during the Mardi Gras Festival.

Depending on the time of year, the group has between 12 and 24 members, and public performances are encouraged but optional.

"Anyone is welcome," said Crispi, of the Village of Orange Blossom Gardens. "We are a warm and inclusive group."

Aloha 'O Ka Hula has around 24 members who are dedicated to the art of hula dancing, and performing on the squares is a way to share their passion with the community, said the group's leader, Violet Ray.

"It's a lot of fun," said Ray, of the Village of Hadley. "The audience is very welcoming and they seem to really appreciate what we do. It's fun, and I'm glad that we're able to share our love of hula with

people in The Villages."

Sweet & Sassy is a performing line dance group that can be found at events like the tree lighting festivals, Mardi Gras, the recent Blueberry Festival and more.

"The girls enjoy performing," said Faith Schnell, who leads the group. "It's nice to see people sway along with the music and then come up and tell us we did a great job. That's when you know all of the practice was worth it."

Sweet & Sassy, which also has been around for more than a decade, has about 16 members and is always welcoming of new members, said Schnell, of the Village of St. James. Schnell just asks that potential members have a basic to intermediate

understanding of line dancing. Sugar 'n Spice, led by Sandi Bergheimer, of the Village of Hadley, dances mostly to R&B music but changes it up depending on the event.

"We know that (the crowd) enjoys us, and we enjoy them," Bergheimer said of the group's experience performing at special events on the squares. "We work very hard to get all of our different routines ready."

The group has about 20 members and is available to perform at any events in The Villages.

The Mystic Jewels is a dance group that fuses belly dance and jazz-style dance to different cultural music.

"The audience is always very appreciative of our performances," said the group's leader, Village of Sabal Chase resident Karen Snyder. "We've gotten a lot of positive response."

"I like the sisterhood in dance," Snyder said. "We all want to be together and do the same thing. And it's great exercise."

Associate Managing Editor Kristen Fiore can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5270, or kristen.fiore@thevillagesmedia.com.

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