



LOCAL NEWS

To report local news:

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CONSUMER NEWS

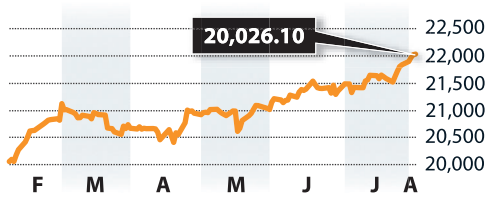
GIFT CARDS AN EASY WAY FOR CRIMINALS TO SCAM VICTIMS

Gift cards are the perfect surprise to slip into a birthday card, but also have become attractive to scammers. Scammers often ask victims to pay with gift cards, which can't be traced. Crooks have people buy gift cards and share its numbers. The money is then accessible with no way to trace it. **Complete story, C6**

MARKET NEWS

Declines in energy and technology companies led the major U.S. stock indexes mostly lower Thursday, offsetting gains in the industrial and health care sectors. **Full report, C7**

Dow Jones Industrial Average



Dow



+ 9.86
Close:
22,026.10

Nasdaq



- 22.31
Close:
6,340.34

S&P 500



- 5.41
Close:
2,472.16

Our Town

WHERE WE LIVE AND WHO WE ARE



Michael Johnson | Daily Sun

Paws Therapy Dog Riley, owned by Roy and Kathleen Shumar, of the Village of Collier, lets 5-year-old Chloe Cmar and her mother, Renee Savoie, of Fruitland Park, pet him during a Paws for Therapy dog group meeting Thursday at the Leesburg library.

Four-Legged Volunteers Help in Various Ways

Local therapy dogs give comfort to humans of all ages who need a non-judgmental friend to lean on or a happy personality to bring a smile.

my mother liked dogs. They all just wanted to touch the dog and cuddle the dog," said Tedrick, of the Village of Osceola Hills.

Sassafras wasn't registered as a therapy dog at the time, but she became one soon thereafter. Now, Tedrick has her fourth therapy dog — a border collie named Sadie.

Tedrick and Sadie are a therapy team with the Dynamic Dog Club, which has more than 90 registered therapy dogs in The Villages. Through the club, Tedrick and Sadie make regular visits to assisted-living communities and memory care units in the area.

Canine Therapy Teams of The Villages, an organization run by Howard Horwitz, of the Village

Please See THERAPY DOGS, C8

By VALENTINA BORE
Daily Sun Staff Writer

Murray, a goldenoodle living in the Village of Hadley with his human parents, Sara and Mike Morgan, has his very own book.

It serves to establish a connection between Murray and the children he works with through the Reading Education Assistance Dogs program.

It's just one example of

four-legged workers volunteering in the community.

Through various organizations, therapy dogs and their handlers are jumping in paws first to make a difference for humans of all ages.

Assisted-Living Facilities

Carmen Tedrick first noticed the difference a dog could make while visiting her mother in 1993, when she brought her dog, Sassafras, to her mother's facility.

"I just did that because I knew

WANT TO BE A THERAPY TEAM?

Anyone interested in becoming a therapy team can contact Carmen Tedrick, tester/observer for the Dynamic Dog Club at 352-561-2345, or Howard Horwitz, tester/observer for Canine Therapy Teams at 352-750-1130.

4 WOMEN ARRESTED AFTER GROUP RETAIL THEFT

The Lady Lake Police Department apprehended four women in their 20s Wednesday after they allegedly ran out of a store with almost \$700 in merchandise. **Public safety, C4**

TOP OF THE NEWS

TAX-FREE WEEKEND LAUNCHES TODAY

Annual event offers shoppers deals on many back-to-school supplies.

Florida's tax-free weekend kicks off today. Items exempt from sales tax include most school supplies costing less than \$15, along with clothing, footwear and accessories under \$60. Personal computers and computer accessories under \$750 also are eligible. The tax break ends at 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

— Ethan Palmer, Daily Sun



Talking With... Larry Green, on the new construction program at The Villages High School.

Interview, C3

THIS & THAT

Famous Villains From a Land Far, Far Away Make Time For Respite Care Group



Ciara Varone

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My Time for Free Time ventured to a galaxy far, far away during last week's meeting. Darth Vader and a stormtrooper arrived at Hope Lutheran Church on July 27 to entertain the respite care group. Attendees posed with cardboard cutouts of the infamous pair. Members also showed off their out-of-this-world knowledge during a round of space trivia. After a snack break, they returned to Earth, finishing up the papier-mache globes they started last week. Members finished off the meeting by tapping their feet along to a performance by the Hometown Cloggers. My-Timers enjoyed a change of scenery this week, heading to the tropics with a Hawaiian theme.



Billy Farrow | Village of Pine Ridge

Moment of Zen
The setting sun can create stunning scenes across The Villages.

Share a photo: Email photos@thevillagesmedia.com with "Moment of Zen" as the subject. Include your name and village/city. Photos should be from our community.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

Stepping in as caregiver for a parent is a role reversal for children. Parents in the Home is a support group for Villagers who are experiencing challenges unique to children who become caregivers. The club is looking for more members. It meets from 2:30 to 4 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of each month at Hibiscus Recreation Center, 1740 Bailey Trail. Call Marion Getzes at 352-396-1679 for more information.

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR ALZHEIMER'S WORKSHOP

Alzheimer's disease can be financially draining and legally complicated, but planning ahead can help. The Alzheimer's Association of North and Central Florida will present a program on legal and financial planning from 1 to 2 p.m. Tuesday at Mulberry Grove Care Center, 8877 SE 165th Mulberry Lane. Space is limited so pre-registration is required. Visit thevillageshealth.com/learningcenter or call 352-753-6214.

local news

THERAPY DOGS

Continued from C1

of Chatham, serves a similar function in the community.

Dubbed “the blue shirts” by their fans — as opposed to the red shirts worn by the Dynamic Dog Club — Horwitz, his dog, Dice, and the other teams visit facilities in the area.

“(Dice) enjoys doing it, I enjoy doing it and we see the rewards of the program by virtue of the residents and how they look forward to visits,” Horwitz said.

Tedrick said her favorite places to visit are memory care units, because the residents always think the tricks are new and they never get tired of seeing them.

“There’s an innocence about many of the residents in memory care,” she said. “And it’s so beautiful to see the reaction to the dogs.”

Robin Brackeen, director of life enrichment at Elan Spanish Springs, said many of her residents enjoy the visits from the animals.

“Who wouldn’t smile when a dog gives you attention? There are proven physical and emotional health benefits in having dogs around,” Brackeen said.

Her motivation to continue working comes from her late mother, who died at 93 after two major strokes, Tedrick said.

Her mother couldn’t talk to her — but Tedrick could see her smile when the dog was cuddling up with her.



Dynamic Dog Therapy Team member Gloria Taylor, left, of the Village of Gilchrist, hands her Chihuahua named Angel to Eva Hall while visiting assisted living patients Thursday at The Willows in Oxford.

Michael Johnson | Daily Sun

“Her question to me was, ‘If so-and-so gets up and tries to hurt me, is Newman going to protect me?’” Hart-Rittenhouse said. “I don’t know if he would do anything, but if that made her feel protected and it empowered her, then yes, he will protect her.”

Companions for Courage is a nonprofit organization that was formed in 2012 and works with the 5th, 9th, 10th and 18th judicial circuits.

Previously, the law allowed dogs to accompany only the victims of sex offense cases or children with disabilities.

The new law, which took effect July 1, increased the scope of when therapy animals can be used, according to Walter Forgie, division supervisor for the State Attorney’s Office in Lake County.

“We have found it to be a very effective asset in providing comfort to victims of crime,” Forgie said.

Sumter County mostly uses therapy animals to comfort witnesses before they go into a deposition or hearing, according to Angelina Rodeo, supervisor for the State Attorney’s Office in Sumter County.

“There’s a great value in having them for younger victims. They’re going through a very scary time, but having a dog there makes them feel safe,” Rodeo said.

While Companions for Courage works with Sumter, Lake and Marion counties as part of the 5th Judicial Circuit, Marion County has taken a different approach to therapy

dogs in the judicial process. Janeen Henley-Freeman, a detective with Marion County Sheriff’s Office and the liaison with the Department of Children and Families, underwent training to become a therapy team with Lilly, a corgi-beagle mix.

Marion County Sheriff’s Office plans to use Lilly to comfort children during the initial testimony, in order to avoid children going to the courtroom in the first place.

The program is inspired by Brevard County’s Paws and Stripes College program to work with children who are victims or witnesses to violent crimes.

By having a therapy dog work with the sheriff’s office, Henley-Freeman hopes to help children give detectives a solid initial testimony during the investigation, keeping them off the stand.

While Lilly waits for her work with the sheriff’s office to begin, she practices her people skills at

the Department of Children and Families, where she and Henley-Freeman work with children who have been removed from their parents’ home.

“If we can get the kids out of the courtroom and let them know that law enforcement and the judicial system are on their side, this will be a great program,” Henley-Freeman said.

Working With Children

A reluctant reader came out of his shell thanks to Murray and his handler, Sara Morgan.

It took him some time and, at first, he refused to take his turn to read to Murray, telling Morgan he couldn’t read.

The student and Murray formed a connection when the student started describing the pictures in books while cuddled up on Murray’s blanket.

After finishing the school year, moving away and moving

back, the boy was struggling, so Morgan set up a visit with Murray to help him.

“As he turned the corner, Murray saw him and his tail started wagging,” Morgan said. “The boy was hugging him and petting him. For the first time in that school year, he was smiling.”

Morgan asked the child if he’d like to read to Murray again — and the student said he would love to.

“Seeing a child who you know is a reluctant reader pet and stroke a dog, and that petting and stroking becomes a rhythm as they read — it’s magical,” Morgan said.

Murray plays a very special role in schools, where he helps students practice through the Dynamic Dog Club’s READ program.

“Our main focus is to motivate reluctant readers,” Morgan said. “We’re always talking through our dogs. The dog does the work motivating the kid.”

Judicial System Dogs

Newman, Joanne Hart-Rittenhouse’s 11-year-old boxer, might look intimidating — but he’s not.

Through his work as a therapy dog for Companions for Courage, Newman makes children testifying for court or a deposition feel safe and empowered.

A child in one of their cases knew she would have to face the person who hurt her — but her parents couldn’t be by her side.

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