

LET'S GO

Looking for something fun to do today? Try shuffleboard! **D1**

THE WEATHER TODAY, C2

8 a.m. 47° Noon 62° 4 p.m. 67° 8 p.m. 55°

Jaguars Confident After Another Win

Cornerback Jalen Ramsey tells fans the team is destined for the Super Bowl. Sports, B1

Top of the News

INSIDE THE ISSUES SHAPING OUR COMMUNITY

Exercise Groups Find Strength in Numbers

Research finds that working out with a group increases the likelihood of success.

By CIARA VARONE
Daily Sun Staff Writer

Shaping up can leave you feeling run down.

A single tip is helping some people find the strength to meet their fitness goals: Don't go it alone.

Group training is a growing trend nationwide, and research suggests that people who take fitness classes reap more benefits than those who exercise solo.

Group fitness is a longtime fixture in The Villages, with the number and variety of classes continuing to expand with the population.

Please See EXERCISE, A17



Photos by Erin Williams | Daily Sun

Frank Rodriguez, of the Village of Lynnhaven, participates in Group Ride at MVP Spanish Springs.



Luz Sweetland, of the Village Santo Domingo, stands up on her bike at MVP Spanish Springs.



Sara Kallioinen, of the Village of Sanibel, leads an exercise class at Colony Cottage Recreation Center.

BY THE NUMBERS

140

The Recreation and Parks Department currently offers more than 140 weekly exercise classes, which are all run by volunteer instructors.

No. 2

The American College of Sports Medicine recently ranked group training as the No. 2 fitness trend for 2018 in its annual survey. That's a leap from last year, when group fitness reached No. 6.



The Associated Press

Sen. Marco Rubio will attend the 32nd annual Lincoln Day Dinner on March 3 at Savannah Center.

LOCAL NEWS

SEN. MARCO RUBIO ACCEPTS INVITE TO LINCOLN DAY DINNER

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Miami, will be the guest speaker March 3 at the 32nd annual Lincoln Day Dinner sponsored by the Sumter County Republican Executive Committee, the Daily Sun learned in an email sent late Monday evening to county Republican club leaders.

The senator's appearance speaks volumes about The Villages' importance as a voting bloc, committee chairman John Calandro said.

"We are pleased that Sen. Rubio will be our speaker at this year's Lincoln Day Dinner," said Calandro, of the Village of Sabal Chase. "His joining us is a recognition of the importance that The Villages and Sumter County play in Florida and national elections."

Rubio issued a statement attributed to him in the email.

"I am honored to accept this invitation and look forward to meeting with the Sumter County Republicans about the work we are doing in Washington to cut taxes, strengthen our standing in the world, confirm conservative judges and improve the regulatory climate for job creation," he said.

The dinner will be from 6 to 9 p.m. March 3 at Savannah Center. Tickets are available online at goo.gl/Kpb8pz, and the website address is case sensitive.

— David R. Corder, Daily Sun

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We support our men and women in uniform.



NATIONWIDE, THOUSANDS HONOR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

At gatherings, parades and speeches across the U.S., activists, residents and teachers honored the late civil rights leader on what would have been his 89th birthday.

National News, A7

COMMUNITY & CONNECTIONS

Only in The Villages

LIFE IN FLORIDA'S FRIENDLIEST HOMETOWN

Fencing Club Members Show Their Strength Through Their Sabres

By LURVIN FERNANDEZ
Daily Sun Staff Writer

Competitors were not the only ones "en garde" at the By the Sword Fencing Expo, a collaborative event hosted Monday by The Villages Fencing Club and the Recreation and Parks Department.

Spectators got a firsthand look at the art of fencing at Rohan Recreation Center.

This was not the first time the department partnered with a resident lifestyle group to host a large demonstration. Events like this not only educate residents about available activities and sports, but also highlight the recreational offerings within The Villages, said Todd Phillips, recreation supervisor at Odell Recreation Center.

Please See FENCING, A18



Cindy Skop | Daily Sun

Hap Holden, of the Village Santiago, lunges at Larry Bailer, of the Village of Chatham, during a demonstration Monday by The Villages Fencing Club.

THE DIGIT

\$1,100

Donated

The total amount of money The Villages Gold Wing Association contributed to local charities in 2017. The group has more than 80 members who enjoy cruising around together on their Honda Gold Wing motorcycles.

— Lisa Lawson, Daily Sun

TONIGHT'S EVENTS ON THE SQUARES

Entertainment runs from 5 to 9 p.m.

Spanish Springs Town Square
Vito Ameruoso
Happy hour, 5-7 p.m.

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

Brownwood Paddock Square
Mpire
Happy hour, 5-6 p.m.

from the front page



Erin Williams | Daily Sun

Leigh Nichols, of the Village of Harmeswood of Belle Aire, holds tight to her bike while participating in Group Ride on Thursday at MVP Spanish Springs. Group exercise check-ins accounted for a little more than half the total of check-ins in 2017.

EXERCISE

Continued from A1

Stretching Out

The American College of Sports Medicine recently ranked group training as the No. 2 fitness trend for 2018 in its annual survey.

That's a leap from last year, when group fitness reached No. 6 — the first time it ranked in the top 20 since the survey debuted more than a decade ago.

The rise across the country can be attributed to an influx of boutique studios that offer classes catering to the specialized interests of their clients, said Grace DeSimone, chairwoman of the ACSM-certified group exercise instructor subcommittee.

"It's prolific right now in the urban environments," she said. "There are so many of them."

In The Villages, residents flock to classes at recreation centers and gyms.

The Recreation and Parks Department currently offers more than 140 weekly exercise classes, ranging from cardio drumming to Walking Away the Pounds, all of which are run by volunteer instructors.

Group classes at the MVP Athletic Club locations in Spanish Springs and Brownwood garnered more than 242,000 check-ins last year. Gym members check in when they come into the gym and before the classes. Group exercise check-ins accounted for a little more than half the total in 2017.

"I think it's really big right now," said Ryan McKenzie, fitness manager at MVP Brownwood.

Seeing so many people stay active with a little help from their friends is heartening, DeSimone said.

"People are finding their way to a community where they're encouraged to work out, and that's great," she said.

242,000

The number of check-ins for group classes last year at MVP Athletic Club locations in Spanish Springs and Brownwood. Gym members check in when they come into the gym and before the classes.

Added Benefits

Regular exercise is a key component of a healthy lifestyle, but working out with others may be even better.

By becoming part of a class, DeSimone said, attendees are more likely to hold themselves accountable for missed days.

She also said looking around the room at hard-working people can give participants that push to power through.

"You're motivated," DeSimone said. "You're kind of thinking, 'I don't really feel like doing any more of those, but then you're looking around, everybody else is.' 'OK, I guess I can push out a few more.'"

Focusing on the exercise at hand can help clear the mind, she said.

"There's not only the physical benefits, but the mental and emotional benefits from exerting yourself or getting your mind busy doing something else," DeSimone said. "That's a wonderful little vacation for your mind."

The social opportunity of taking part in a group also can benefit mental well-being.

A small study published in November in the Journal of the American Osteopathic Association found that medical students who participated in group exercise classes reported less stress and a better quality of life than those who exercised alone or not at all.

Sara Kallioinen, who has

taught interval training classes in The Villages for nearly 10 years, said the fellowship of the classes encourages members to come back.

"I think there's always a

social aspect," the Village of Sanibel resident said.

Kallioinen and her co-instructor, Deb Zaranti, of the Village of Amelia, agreed that seeing the dedication of

others to achieving their fitness goals benefits them as teachers. "We want to be a part of helping them stay healthy and stay well," Kallioinen said. "And it keeps us fit, too," Zaranti added.

Finding The Right Fit

Watching your peers, a motivator for some, can keep others away.

"A lot of people feel they want to get in shape before they join the group because they don't want to be not able to keep up," DeSimone said.

But those newcomers appear to get the most benefits from group training, McKenzie said.

"The ones who see the best success are the ones who are part of a class or working with a trainer," he said.

Feelings of intimidation should dissolve once you have found a comfortable setting, DeSimone said.

Kallioinen said they show low, moderate and high-level versions of exercises in the interval training classes so members can choose what

works best for them. "We have all levels here," she said.

Old stereotypes about group exercise also can be a turnoff.

DeSimone, who has taught group exercise for 30 years, said the days of leg warmers and overly choreographed moves are long gone.

From yoga to cycling, she said there is a class out there for everyone, with music preferences to match.

"We've come such a long way and there are so many different types and styles of classes now that did not exist then," she said.

Whatever your background, group fitness is worth a shot, said Summer Yoder, fitness manager at MVP Spanish Springs.

"Even if group exercise is not your thing, it is essential to your fitness journey that you branch out and try new things," she said. "Hate it or love it, there's no harm in trying."

Ciara Varone is a staff writer with The Villages Daily Sun. She can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5395, or ciara.varone@thevillagesmedia.com.

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