



LOCAL NEWS

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CONSUMER NEWS

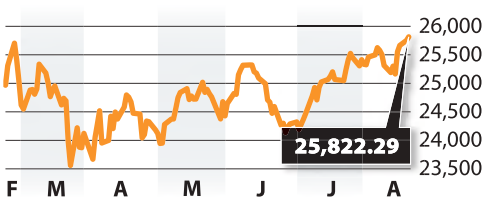
SARASOTA RETAIL BUILDING APPROVED FOR OCCUPANCY

Sumter County Building Services has issued the certificate of final occupancy for the Omni retail building at 328 Heald Way in Sarasota Plaza. Leasing activity has already started for this 9,300-square-foot building across from the Walmart Neighborhood Market.
More construction updates, C10

MARKET NEWS

The market's benchmark index eked out a slight gain, closing a little below January's high mark. Gains were driven by earnings by homebuilders and retailers. **Full report, C11**

Dow Jones Industrial Average



Dow



+ 63.60
Close:
25,822.29

Nasdaq



+ 38.17
Close:
7,859.17

S&P 500



+ 5.91
Close:
2,862.96

Our Town

WHERE WE LIVE AND WHO WE ARE



Michael Johnson | Daily Sun

Debi Vreeland, of the Village Del Mar, adds shredded carrots to several salad meal kits. She started exercising at MVP Athletic Club and has since dropped 50 pounds. She also began planning her meals and is taking part in a 12-step program.

Residents Help Foster Healthier Lifestyles

Community support and adopting an active lifestyle helps Villagers defy national obesity trends.

By **CIARA VARONE**
Daily Sun Senior Writer

Sometimes Debi Vreeland can't help but go out dancing every evening.

At half the size of her heaviest weight, she feels light on her feet.

Vreeland keeps the pounds off by monitoring meals and exercising five times per week.

As someone who has experienced fluctuating weight since

childhood, it is a daily fight.

"I could be back to 327 in a heartbeat," the Village Del Mar resident said. "It's a day at a time."

Obesity is a growing problem nationwide, including in Florida, where half of the population is projected to be obese within 12 years.

Locally, The Villages Health, gyms and lifestyle clubs give residents opportunities to keep off the pounds.

Please See **HEALTHIER, C12**



Max Gersh | Daily Sun

Sandy Simmons, right, of Eustis, watches for technique as Frank Lancione, of the Village of Antrim Dells, works on the dead lift during a group powerlifting training session.

SEVEN ARRESTED IN ONLINE PREDATOR STING OPERATION

The men were all arrested between Aug. 1 and Aug. 5 as part of a sting operation to catch online predators, according to the Marion County Sheriff's Department.
Public Safety, C4

TOP OF THE NEWS

VHS BEGINS FOOTBALL SEASON FRIDAY

The Buffalo will travel to Tavares for their first regular-season game of 2018.

The Villages High School football team will kick off the 2018 regular season at 7 p.m. Friday at Tavares High School. The game will mark the first of 10 regular-season contests for VHS, which is coming off a 27-0 win over Belleview in its Fall Classic pre-season game. The Buffalo also played Tavares in its first game of 2017.

— Tyler Breaman,
Daily Sun



Talking With... Lt. Morgan Alonso, a Lake County Sheriff's Office Explorer, on her experience.

Interview, C3

THIS & THAT

Looking to Play Billiards Or Cards? Check Out Silver Lake Recreation Center

Silver Lake Recreation Center is seldom a quiet place — after all, billiards players who frequent the facility are constantly sending one colorful ball smashing into the next. But there are times when billiards activity is on the light side. Such was the case Tuesday morning when the Bakery Boys, about 10 men, played pill pool. Jim Manzano, of the Village Rio Ponderosa, explained the game is highly competitive — though the players are all kind to one another. The group started about 20 years ago — Manzano, with his 23 years of Villages residency, has been a member since the beginning. Billiards isn't the only activity that livens up Silver Lake. Card games also are played there.



Jill Sherman

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Barb Wise | Village of Bridgeport at Miona Shores

Moment of Zen
Fishing boats are silhouetted by an orange sunset along a calm lake.

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.

LONGTIME RESIDENT APPRECIATES ADULT POOL

Exercising at Hilltop adult pool is part of Marlene Smith's 20-year history in The Villages. Smith walks from her Village of Country Club Hills home to the pool every morning to do water walking and swim laps ... and to nurture friendships. Plus, the pool and its surrounding grounds offer a fulfilling view. "It's always pristine here," Smith said Tuesday before heading back home.

SEVEN SONS ROCKS DURING PRACTICE AT EL SANTIAGO

Rehearsal for the Seven Sons Rock Band recently at El Santiago Recreation Center kicked off with a Toby Keith tune: "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue (The Angry American)." Bass guitarist Alan Rego, of the Village De La Vista, took the lead on vocals. Later, the vocals of keyboardist Marge Phillips, of the Village of Osceola Hills, shone for Bonnie Raitt's "Something to Talk About."

local news

HEALTHIER

Continued from C1

But it's not just about the number on the scale. Studies show obesity is linked closely to the development of a slew of chronic diseases, from coronary heart disease to some forms of cancer.

The effects reach beyond an individual's ailments.

"The cost of treating obesity is significant," said Dr. William Donahoo, associate professor of medicine at the University of Florida. "Unless we find a way to manage this, people project this will cause the failure of the health insurance system."

The Obesity Epidemic

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 27.8 percent of Florida's population is obese.

That is based on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, a telephone survey conducted by the CDC.

Sumter is above the state average at 31.3 percent.

A recent study by the University of Florida concluded the state's actual rate is higher.

Instead of relying on self-reported results, researchers analyzed information from OneFlorida Data Trust, a database of health records.

They found the obesity rate to be 37.1 percent.

"It was telling in that we probably have even more of an obesity epidemic, at least here in Florida, but likely this is typical throughout the nation," said Donahoo, one of the study's authors.

Donahoo, who has practiced medicine for 25 years, said he has always seen obese patients, but has noticed an increase over time.

"What has been more dramatic is seeing the number of people who now have type 2 diabetes and seeing the range of people," he said.

In addition to diabetes, obese people also are at a higher risk

3 WAYS TO HELP YOU GET IN SHAPE

- » Members can work out alone or take group exercise classes at MVP Athletic Club. Call 352-753-6910 for information on the Spanish Springs location or 352-674-7000 to reach the Brownwood gym.
- » Take Off Pounds Sensibly meets from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Thursdays at Lake Miona Recreation Center to offer support for people who are trying to lose weight. Call 352-259-6552 for information.
- » The Villages Health offers classes on exercise, nutrition and diabetes prevention along with healthy weight loss boot camps. Visit thevillageshealth.com/learning-center for information on upcoming courses or call 352-674-1779.

for high blood pressure, gallbladder disease, heart disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, mental illness and death.

Making A Change

Older adults can experience the same complications at a lower weight due to the loss of muscle that accompanies aging.

A senior with the same weight and height as someone 20 years younger can be metabolically obese, while the younger person is not, Donahoo said.

Body mass index is calculated using weight and height. A BMI of 30 or higher is obese.

Donahoo said patients do not need to drop hundreds of pounds to see positive results.

"Even small amounts of weight loss are likely to make a significant difference," he said. "It gives hope and a realistic goal."

He does not recommend a

specific diet, but said seniors should strive for high-protein meals rich in fruits and vegetables.

Donahoo said he thinks one reason many struggle with their weight is that humans were not designed for the environment in which they currently live.

People now have access to high-caloric foods 24-7.

"It wasn't that long ago when everything closed at eight o'clock at night," he said.

Finding Strength Together

Mary Klein is up before sunrise to get in her daily hour of walking.

Last year, she hardly exercised at all.

But since joining a pre-diabetic program offered by The Villages Health, Mary has lost 40 pounds.

Her husband, Don's, doctor suggested that he join the program, and Mary decided to do it with him.

Don has lost about 15 pounds, gaining some back.

Mary said exercise has transformed her life, and The Villages is an ideal place to find an activity for anyone.

"I have a lot more energy," she said. "I'm constantly on the go."

Though he still is working at losing weight, Don said having his wife partner with him makes the journey easier.

"That kept us focused," he said. "We did it together, so that means a lot."

Others have found assistance in support groups.

Nancy Van Rooy, of the Village of Largo, coordinates Take Off Pounds Sensibly at Lake Miona Recreation Center.

She said members enjoy having a space to share concerns

with people who are experiencing similar hardships.

An Ongoing Battle

Vreeland reached her heaviest weight — 327 pounds at 5 feet 4 inches tall — 14 years ago.

"It got to the point where I'd go to doctors' offices and some of them didn't have scales high enough to weigh me," she recalled. "That was really embarrassing."

She applied for gastric bypass surgery, but before going under the knife, her mother suggested they start exercising together.

Insurance denied Vreeland's procedure, but she said by that point, it didn't matter; she was already losing weight, dropping 100 pounds that first year.

Her weight started to fluctuate again, but then someone dared her to do a triathlon.

Vreeland dropped to her lowest weight training for it, 150 pounds.

But then two years ago, she was back up to 215.

She started exercising at MVP Athletic Club and has since dropped 50 pounds. She also began planning her meals and is taking part in a 12-step program.

Vreeland is certain she will drop down to her target weight again.

Choosing not to overeat is a lifelong battle, she said.

Well-meaning people sometimes encourage her to have just one cookie at holiday gatherings. "Would you say that to an alcoholic?" she asked.

Controlling her weight remains a struggle, Vreeland said, but she encouraged others to take the first step.

"I hear people saying, 'I'm waiting for the right time,'" she

said. "It will never come."

But deciding to make an effort has benefits at any age.

"You are never ever too old," Vreeland said. "It's just never too late."

Beyond Weight Loss

Frank Lancione's wakeup call came on his 68th birthday.

Decades of working 10- to 12-hour days six days a week with little time for exercise or proper meals had caught up with him.

His cholesterol had skyrocketed, and he was unable to take medications to lower it.

So he chose to take control of his weight, documenting his meals in a diary and starting an intense exercise program.

Now in the third year of his exercise program, the Village of Antrim Dells resident is down more than 50 pounds.

The transformation does not happen overnight, Lancione said.

"You just need to set small, incremental, achievable goals," he said. "You can't lose 50 pounds in a week, but you can lose three pounds in a month. Three pounds a month for a year, that's 36 pounds."

Lancione lost most of the weight his first year, shifting his focus to getting stronger.

He now works out with a group of seniors who lift weights at MVP Athletic Club in Brownwood.

His peers have inspired him to change his views of aging.

Many believe frailty accompanies aging, but with continued strength training and proper nutrition, that does not need to be the case, Lancione said.

"I don't look at a future of decline," he said. "I look at a future and see how much I can improve."

Everyone has the ability, Lancione said, if they set their minds to it.

"The key is inside you," he said.

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- ★ 3659 Wedgewood Lane, The Villages, FL 32162 (352) 750-1826

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