



THE WEATHER
High 62° | Low 42°
Sunny. C2

The Villages® DAILY SUN



FRIDAY
JANUARY 29,
2021

THE NEWSPAPER OF FLORIDA'S FRIENDLIEST HOMETOWN

NATIONAL NEWS



The Associated Press

BIDEN REOPENS INSURANCE MARKETS FOR COVID-19 RELIEF

Fulfilling a campaign promise, President Joe Biden signed an executive order Thursday directing the HealthCare.gov insurance marketplace to take new applications for subsidized benefits during a special sign-up window, offering uninsured Americans a safety net as the COVID-19 pandemic continues and vaccines aren't yet widely available. **A6**

NATION & WORLD REPORT

Nation: Irritated by the use of executive orders during the pandemic, some state lawmakers are moving to curb the authority of governors and top health officials to impose emergency restrictions. **A7**

World: A Russian court rejected an appeal by opposition leader Alexei Navalny for his release from jail as authorities detained several of his allies and warned social media companies about promoting more protests. **A2**



World News A2
Florida News A5
Lottery A4
Local News C1



Faces in The News Cicely Tyson

The pioneering Black actor, who touched TV viewers' hearts in "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," died at age 96.

Obituaries, C4



Top of the News

INSIDE THE ISSUES SHAPING OUR COMMUNITY

Hospital Robot Passes A Surgical Milestone



Photos by Cindy Skop | Daily Sun

Thoracic surgeon Dr. Adrian Finol demonstrates how the da Vinci system works in an operating room at UF Health The Villages Hospital. The robot helps make many procedures less invasive.

The system has performed more than 1,000 procedures, allowing UF Health The Villages patients to recover quickly.



By LEAH SCHWARTING
Daily Sun Specialty Editor

For many patients going under the knife at UF Health The Villages Hospital, the days of monthslong recoveries are over. The hospital reached a milestone after performing more than 1,000 surgeries with the da Vinci Xi, a surgical robot created by Intuitive. The robotic system allows surgeons to perform certain procedures, such as hysterectomies or prostate removal, with a minimum amount of disturbance. This gives residents better recovery times and less pain for gastrointestinal, thoracic and gynecology surgeries. The hospital has had the robot since 2015, according to Frank Faust, executive director of marketing for University of Florida Health Central Florida. The UF Health The Villages Hospital Foundation, with support from the local community, helped contribute to its purchase for the hospital. The robot is used by surgeons weekly.

Please See **ROBOT, A8**



Surgeons can perform procedures in tiny places, such as between a patient's ribs, because the equipment is small. The system is capable of moving 360 degrees.

EDUCATION

ELECTIONS SUPERVISORS AWARDING SCHOLARSHIPS

Three students will receive \$1,200 awards from the group this year.

Applicants for the Florida Supervisor of Elections scholarships must be registered voters and state residents for the preceding two years and be enrolled or accepted as full-time students at a Florida senior college or university. Marion County Supervisor of Elections Wesley Wilcox, president-elect of the election supervisors' association, encourages students to apply. For information or a scholarship packet, visit VoteMarion.Gov/Scholarship, email Outreach@VoteMarion.Gov or call 352-620-3290.

— Leah Schwarting, Daily Sun

THAT'S AMAZING!

AMUR TIGER UNDERGOES RARE HIP REPLACEMENT

A 10-year-old Amur tiger with arthritis underwent hip replacement surgery at Brookfield Zoo outside Chicago on Wednesday, and her surgical team is confident the procedure will add years to her life — even after she dislodged the orthopedic implant Thursday.

Veterinarians noted that animals routinely develop joint problems. When the tiger, Malena, arrived at the zoo last year, she already had been diagnosed with arthritis of the hip.

"We're hopeful that by doing the surgery now, we're able to really get on top of this arthritis and keep her comfortable," said Dr. Michael Adkesson of the Chicago Zoological Society.

— The Associated Press

RESOURCES & REOPENING



FLORIDA COVID-19 CALL CENTER

The Florida Department of Health's COVID-19 call center is available 24/7 at **866-779-6121**. You can also email COVID-19@flhealth.gov

Health Departments

Sumter: 352-569-3102
Marion: 352-629-0137
Lake: 352-589-6424

Coronavirus: What's Happening With Vaccination Efforts

Vaccine availability remained grim as no new updates emerged this week for seniors who do not yet have an appointment or who remain on Global Medical Response's wait list for a COVID-19 vaccination. This week, Sumter County Health Department is completing vaccinations for the first 1,000 GMR appointments that were postponed earlier. On Tuesday and Thursday at Wildwood Community Center, the department will vaccinate approximately 1,600 more from the GMR list, notifying them by email. It also will give second-dose vaccines next week to those who got their first dose with the health department. GMR is expected to notify 4,000 people to return to Buffalo Ridge Shopping Plaza for a second dose, sometime after receiving those doses, which are expected to arrive Feb. 5. **For more information on COVID-19, see page A7.**

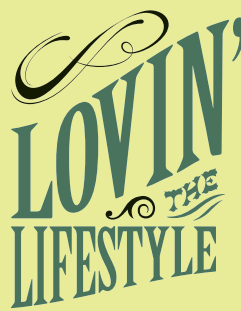
— Daily Sun staff report

VACCINATION DISTRIBUTION IN LAKE COUNTY

The Lake County Health Department launched an appointment system for vaccinations at Lake Square Mall in Leesburg. Appointments depend on vaccine availability and can be made by calling 866-201-6909. The department also opened a site in Groveland at 7453 Republic Drive, offering vaccines to residents over 65 on a first-come, first-served basis Monday to Friday until the lot fills each morning. For appointments with Publix, go to publix.com/covid vaccine after 6 a.m. today to check for availability.

WHAT ARE THE LATEST FLORIDA VIRUS NUMBERS?

The Florida Department of Health reported 11,423 new cases of COVID-19 in Florida as of Wednesday, increasing the total number infected in Florida to 1,687,594. The daily test positivity rate was 7.7%. Sumter County reported 63 new cases, Lake County reported 206 and Marion County reported 181. The state confirms 6,565 hospitalizations as of Thursday and a total of 26,456 deaths, including 186 deaths in Sumter County, 388 in Lake County and 574 in Marion County.



Behind the lens with a Daily Sun photojournalist. **D1**



from the front page

ROBOT

Continued from A1

The 1,000th procedure with the system was completed by Dr. Scott Bovelsky, gynecological surgeon with The Villages Health.

Bovelsky recently reached his own personal milestone, performing the 500th robotic procedure of his career.

Many of those surgeries have been hysterectomies, done with the aid of a laparoscope, a small device with a camera and light used during surgeries.

“When you compare a robotic laparoscopic hysterectomy to traditional surgery, the recovery, pain, hospital stay, everything is astronomically better,” Bovelsky said.

There’s three parts to the Xi system: the brains; which is where the camera and electronics are plugged in, the arms and the console.

During a surgery, the surgeon takes up a position at the console, which is near the patient in the operating room. The camera attached to the robot allows surgeons a detailed, three-dimensional view of what’s happening from the console.

The surgeon creates the small incisions, after which the small robotic instruments are inserted for the procedure. The system operates as a miniaturized version of the surgeon’s hands, allowing movements that closely mirror those of a human’s.

However, unlike a human’s wrists, the instruments can be moved 360 degrees. Additional medical professionals also are on hand to change out the instruments and perform other tasks.

And, because the surgery is done on a smaller scale, surgeons can avoid taking large invasive steps.

For instance, if a surgeon needed to remove part of a lung, Xi’s small instruments allow surgeons to go between the ribs to perform the procedure, said Dr. Adrian Finol, thoracic



Thoracic physician Adrian Finol works at the console board of the da Vinci surgical system in an operating room at UF Health The Villages Hospital.



Finol and other surgeons have been able to use the surgical system for making procedures and recovery easier.

surgeon at the hospital.

Patients also tend to experience less blood loss, said Dr. Li-Ming Su, professor and chair of urology at UF Health. That means that, after the

surgery, they’re less anemic and exhausted compared to more traditional cases.

The smaller incisions also mean there’s less potential for scarring afterward and a better

cosmetic result.

“Simply put, with smaller incisions, patients experience less pain following the operation,” Su said. “That leads to less pain medication requirements, shorter hospital stays and a faster return to normal life.”

Having this technology at the hospital means patients can also remain close to home, said Lorraine Brown, vice president, chief clinical officer and site administrator at the hospital.

“Many of the things we’re doing with it keeps it in the local community, as opposed to having to refer it somewhere else,” Brown said.

Finol isn’t surprised that the hospital reached its 1,000 milestone.

“It just shows the dedication to make it work and to try to help our population the best we can,” Finol said.

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After Parkinson’s Diagnosis, Guitarist Learns to Play Again

By KATHRYN HARRIS
The Associated Press

NORFOLK, Neb.

A little bit of stage fright was no match for Rick Miller on New Year’s Eve.

The Norfolk guitarist marked the end of 2020 by playing a three-hour set at Black Cow Fat Pig, his first performance in front of a crowd in about a year.

“There’s always a little bit of nerves when you get up in front of people,” Miller told the Norfolk Daily News. “This was (about) the confidence — having the confidence to get up there and play and knowing you’re going to hit the chords and notes.”

Miller — who began playing guitar as a child in Puerto Rico more than 50 years ago and has played in venues near and far ever since — had his confidence shattered a little more than a year ago. He lost the ability to play after he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, a neurological disorder that leads to shaking, stiffness and difficulty with walking, balance and coordination.

“My guitar playing wasn’t right,” Miller said of the first indication that something was amiss. “It shakes your hands, and you can’t move your hands in the same formation for the chords that you want to play.”

Upon receiving the diagnosis, Miller said he had only one thought: “I knew I had to fight it.”

He began physical therapy, but he credits his ability to play a guitar again to classes at the Norfolk Family YMCA suggested by his physical therapists.

Miller takes part in three different classes at the YMCA: Silver Sneakers, Rock Steady Boxing and Foundations of Movement.

“The best one that’s helped me is the foundations. It’s more intricate,” he said.

Tina Collison, group exercise director at the Norfolk Y, said Miller approached her after one of the Foundations of Movement classes where they had completed hand dexterity exercises with stress balls.

“He said, ‘I play in a band. I play guitar, but I haven’t been able to play since I was diagnosed with Parkinson’s. Would this help?’ I said, ‘Yes!’” Collison said.

Collison sent Miller home with stress balls and some exercises he could do on his own. Although he still can’t play bar chords, Miller was able to begin fretting the guitar again shortly after beginning the exercises.

Foundations of Movement works participants through a full range of motion, using all muscle groups, and combines cognitive and physical cues in an effort to help them retain or regain some movement lost through the disorder.

“We talk out loud and count everything out loud together,” Collison said. “We’ll count by twos or count by 20s — just something to get the brain and the body thinking at the same time.”

Collison said several physicians in Norfolk refer their patients to the Foundations of Movement classes after they receive a Parkinson’s diagnosis, and Miller’s story is only one of several from those who have regained some strength and range of motion after a Parkinson’s diagnosis.

“One gal hadn’t been able to knit or crochet, but now she’s crocheting stuff and giving them as gifts,” she said.

In many cases, Collison added, the class goes beyond helping participants with strength and range of motion. Some also have formed friendships with one another.

Singles Social

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4:00 PM - 8:00PM
BONIFAY BREEZEWAY

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MUST PURCHASE
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ENTREES

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Mashed Potatoes • Seasoned Rice • Roasted Vegetable Medley

DESSERTS

Chocolate Mousse • Fresh Fruit Tarts • Mini Eclairs

Dancing
Food & Fun

FRIDAY SPECIALS AT BONIFAY & ORANGE BLOSSOM HILLS

Fish Friday



ENJOY ANY OF THE FISH ENTRÉES
BELOW AND RECEIVE A
COMPLIMENTARY SOUP OR SALAD!*

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These Entrées Include Complimentary Soup or Salad!

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guinness beer battered, traditional tartar sauce, coleslaw, fries

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pan seared butter-fish, lemon, fresh basil, seasoned rice, seasonal vegetables

SALMON FLORENTINE

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FRIDAY SPECIALS AT EVANS PRAIRIE & BELLE GLADE

Fish Friday



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spinach cream sauce, seasoned rice, seasonal vegetables 16.95

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shrimp, scallops, sherry cream sauce, saffron rice, seasonal vegetables 17.95

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tapenade, artichokes, red onion, herbs, seasoned rice, seasonal vegetables 17.95

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