

local news

Audience Has the Time of Their Lives at The Sharon

"Dirty Dancing" took to the stage Friday night at The Sharon L. Morse performing arts center.

By KRISTEN FIORE
Daily Sun Staff Writer

The well-known story of Frances "Baby" Houseman and her memorable summer vacation at a resort in the Catskill Mountains unfolded right on stage at The Sharon on Friday night.

Donna Davis, of the Village of Sunset Pointe, and Carol Cotton, of the Village of Santiago, are "Dirty Dancing" fans who were eager to see the show live.

"I love 'Dirty Dancing,'" Cotton said. "I love the movie. I love everything about it."

Cotton and Davis' said their favorite thing about the movie is Patrick Swayze.

"He's like the epitome of 'Dirty Dancing,'" Davis said.

While Patrick Swayze wasn't in this production, there still was plenty of live music, dancing and singing for the audience to enjoy.

What might have been one of the most impressive parts of the show, however, was the changing sets. The stage filled and moved fluidly with rotating mountain, lake, forest and resort scenes.

There were logs, tall grasses, rain, a moonlit sky, bedrooms, stages, gazebos and piers.

The mechanics of the

set design were obviously a well-thought out element of the show.

"It's amazing how they switch the sets by rotating and changing the whole scene," said Sandy Rosenthal, of the Village of Bridgeport at Lake Sumter Landing. "I love it. They're doing a great job."

Baby, played by Alex Caldwell, and Johnny, played by Aaron Patrick Craven, moved effortlessly through the scenes with the others, dancing and delivering their lines in a fast-paced environment without ever faltering or losing their breath.

To top it all off, a majority of the music was sung live by various cast members.

The stage-version of the show had added a few extra songs and even played up another storyline.

While the movie made commentary on the segregation between the working and upper class, the play made additional commentary on the racially charged environment at the time, the early '60s.

Characters listened to a Martin Luther King Jr. speech and talked about becoming freedom riders.

Other than a few additions, the play was very similar to the movie.

"Dirty Dancing" fans got to laugh at punchlines, cheer on the dancers and rewatch the iconic scenes from the original movie live, such as Baby's breakthrough dance lesson with Johnny set to the strains of "Hungry Eyes."

Churches Continue Uniting City Through Faith

By PATRICIA STEELE
Daily Sun Senior Writer

The Wildwood Unity Movement began almost two years ago with a commitment by church leaders across denominations and ethnicities to bring the city of Wildwood together.

"We walked down Main Street two years ago at the height of racial tension around the country, determined to make a difference, to bring unity to all residents," said Michael Beck, pastor of Wildwood United Methodist Church.

A Unity Revival held

Wednesday and Thursday evenings at Wildwood United Methodist Church continued the efforts that began with the walk. Members of several congregations provided music, interpretive dance and prayer.

Bishop Tony Jones, pastor of the City Ministries, shared the message Thursday evening.

"These gatherings of people of God are a great way to gain understanding of each other on a more personal basis," Jones said. "It is good for me to see people from numerous denominations together worshipping God. Everybody brings something different, but we all bring our faith in God."

Regular meetings to continue the work that began two years ago continues, and along the way church leaders added special gatherings to bring members of their more than 10 congregations together. The Unity Revival was the sixth such event

since the movement began.

Maintaining the momentum with so many congregations involved is difficult at times, said Pastor Steve Turner, of Calvary Chapel Villages.

"One of the biggest difficulties is finding a time when all the church leaders can meet on a regular basis," Turner said. "Some of our pastors can't meet during the day, so we're trying evening meetings, even Saturday meetings. It may be difficult, but we have been determined to continue what we've started."

At the end of the Unity Revival, Beck looked back at the event and called it beautiful.

More than 120 people attended the services each night. "Both nights there was standing room only. All the chairs were filled and people were singing and clapping," Beck said. "It was a spirit-filled event that brought people together in worship."

LOCAL BRIEF

Gov. Scott Appoints Gary Lester to FFWCC

Gov. Rick Scott appointed Gary Lester, vice president for community relations for The Villages and an Oxford resident, to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on Friday. Lester will succeed Richard Hanas with a term that runs through Aug. 1, 2022.

The appointment now heads to the Florida Senate for confirmation.

— Curt Hills,
Daily Sun

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