


**BEFORE THEY WERE VILLAGERS | D5**  
Dan Roterman worked as an executive at a company that manufactured armored cars.

6 a.m. 9 a.m. 12 p.m. 3 p.m. 6 p.m. 9 p.m.

48° 55° 65° 71° 64° 56°

**KEITH PEARLMAN ON AMENITIES | D1**  
Registration is now open to participate in The Villages Senior Games in April.



**TOP WORLD AND NATION NEWS**

## E.U. OVERCOMES VETO, SENDS AID TO UKRAINE, A5

**Around the World:** Asteroid to make close approach to Earth. **A2** | **Around the World:** U.S. hints large response to Iran-backed militias. **A3** | **In Business:** What smart choices to make to keep grocery costs down. **D12**

**SPORTS NEWS**

### HARBAUGH'S SUPER BOWL CHASE RESUMES

New Chargers coach Jim Harbaugh says he has one goal remaining, and that's a Lombardi Trophy as Super Bowl champions. **B1**

**LOCAL NEWS**

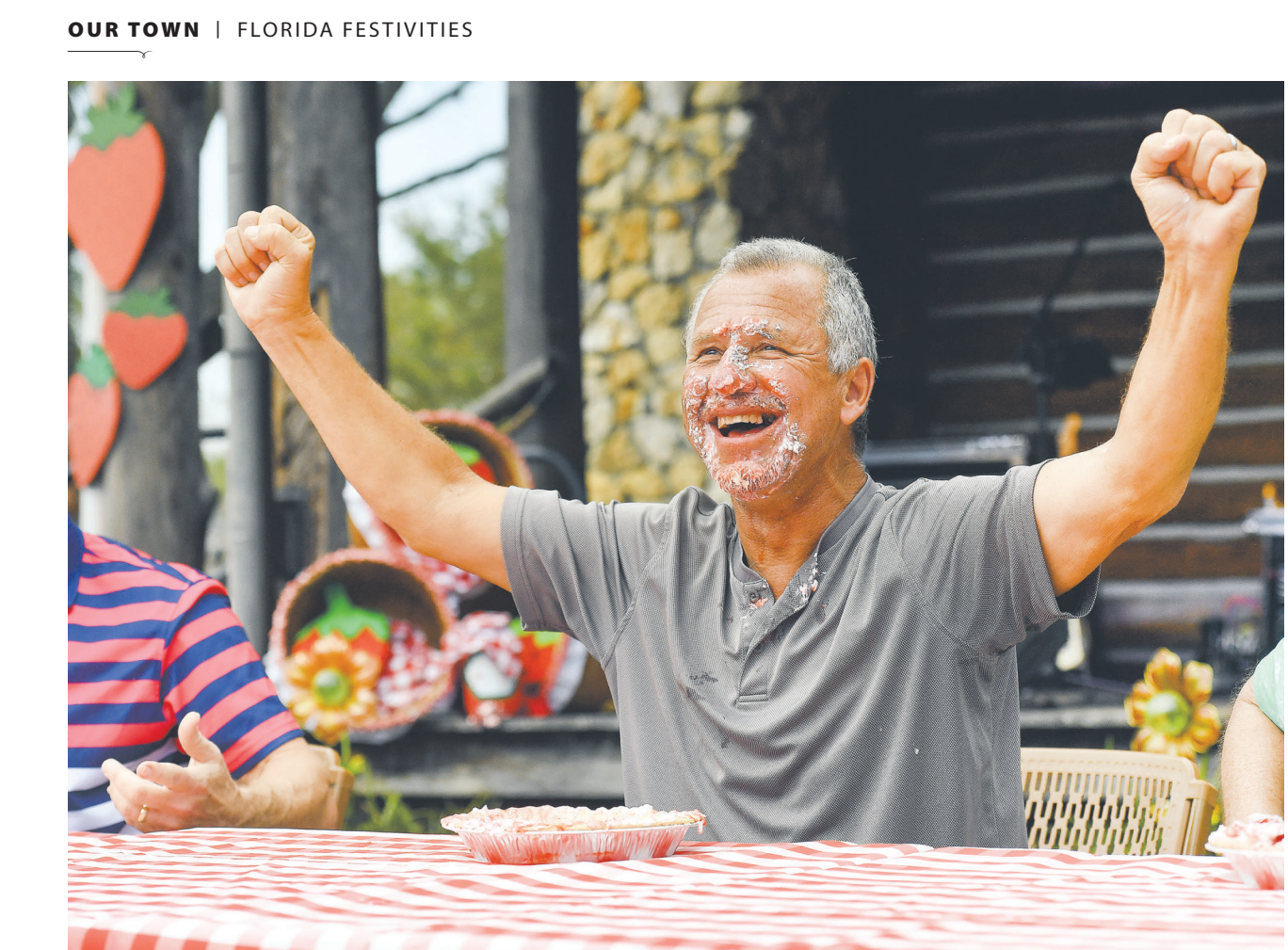
### NEW AMENITIES ON THE RISE IN NORTH VILLAGES

Alongside the grand opening of Cordoba Recreation, more amenities are coming in the north, like a renovated Paradise Recreation. **D1**

**LOCAL NEWS**

### AIRLINE SEEKS VETERANS FOR D-DAY CEREMONY

American Airlines is offering World War II veterans a free nine-day trip to France to take part in the 80th anniversary of D-Day. **D3**



Daily Sun file photo

Tim Pierce, of Wisconsin, raises his arms in victory after he wins the pie eating contest during last year's Strawberry Festival at Brownwood Paddock Square. This year's festival is Feb. 24-25.

# Florida's Strawberry Festivals Are in Season

**By LEAH SCHWARTING | Daily Sun Specialty Editor**

Florida is celebrating its strawberry crop before the last berries are harvested and shipped off. Farms and communities throughout the state are holding strawberry festivals this month. The festivals range from smaller, local events such as those in Oxford and The Villages, to the most famous festival in Plant City. The events are major venues for musicians and other performers, but they also showcase the importance of Florida's strawberries, and their growers, during their short winter production window.

Florida, the country's No. 2 strawberry producer, possesses a singular advantage when it comes to timing. Winter is typically when the strawberry supply is lowest, and prices rise accordingly. For example, strawberries sold, on average, for

Please See **FESTIVALS, A9**

## The Villages Hospital Is Hosting Its Biggest Event of the Year

Tickets are still available for the UF Health The Villages Hospital Auxiliary Foundation's gala Feb. 10.

By MADDIE CUTLER | Daily Sun Senior Writer

Polish your cowboy boots and straighten your bow tie, because the Hearts for Our Hospital Gala's theme this year is "Boots and Bowties." The UF Health The Villages Hospital Auxiliary Foundation's biggest and most important fundraiser of the year will take place from 5:30 to 11 p.m. Feb. 10 at the Brownwood Hotel and Spa.

"We have a lot of announcements prepared for this year's gala," said Erica Lebo, president and executive director of the auxiliary foundation. "At last year's gala it was announced that the mobile stroke treatment unit was coming and the foundation made the first donation installment."

Lebo said those attending the gala will watch a video about the stroke treatment unit in Gainesville and learn more about how it saves people's lives. Teams at both The Villages and Gainesville hospitals are collaborating on the best way to utilize the unit. Lebo said a team is dedicated to setting up a dispatching process and building a service map. Once The Villages' own unit arrives, the dispatch protocol plan already will be in place.

Please See **GALA, A8**

**ONLY IN THE VILLAGES**

By Taylor Strickland

**"American Idol" stars Ruben Studdard and Clay Aiken made the last stop of their reunion tour in The Villages with a concert at the Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center on Wednesday.**

The show opened with the unforgettable "American Idol" theme song. Its familiar refrain was overlaid with the second season's most memorable moments and judges' feedback, including Gladys Knight dubbing Studdard the "velvet teddy bear" and Simon Cowell warning the others that the future winner was the one to look out for during the competition. Studdard appeared on stage first, singing Luther Vandross'.

Please See **IDOLS, A8**

## EXPLORE & EXPERIENCE

**OUT & ABOUT IN THE VILLAGES**

### Try This Today: Cast a Line Out With The Villages Freshwater Fishing Club

The Villages Freshwater Fishing Club is committed to providing members with angling education and promoting sport fishing. A monthly fishing clinic is held on the second Tuesday of every month at ponds throughout The Villages from 9 to 10 a.m. All Village residents are welcome to join — like club president, Jamie Fowler, at right, of the Village of Hawkins. The club holds a monthly meeting on the third Tuesday of every month at Everglades Recreation. For more information visit [freshwaterfishingclub.org](http://freshwaterfishingclub.org).

— Greg Hughes, Daily Sun



George Horsford | Daily Sun

**IN ENTERTAINMENT**

**Paint With Primates at Chase Sanctuary**  
Find out more, **E1**

**Plus:** Find the lineup of entertainment at the town squares, theaters and beyond, **E3**

**AT RECREATION CENTERS**

**Happening near you:** From aqua aerobics to Zumba and everything in between, there's fun for everyone, **E4-5**



Plan your perfect day in The Villages, **E1**

Recipes	E1
Comics	E6
Puzzles	E7-8
Horoscope	E9
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Advice	E12



from the front page

**GALA**

Continued from A1

“There is no date yet for the arrival, but it is coming in 2024,” Lebo said. “We are all excited to finally get to see it, not only because of the hard work it took to get it but because of how many lives it will save.”

Lebo spoke about a woman who had a stroke and was saved thanks to the unit at Gainesville. She said she hopes to hear similar testimony about the unit once it is installed at The Villages hospital.

The auxiliary foundation supports the hospital through donations and volunteer hours. Lebo said she is grateful to be a part of the foundation because of the good work they do.

“It’s so impactful, the philanthropy we provide to the hospital and community,” she said. “Everything that we do, like getting the stroke treatment unit, I just think of how that will truly impact the community as a whole because time is key with a stroke.”

Gloria Counselman, communications committee chair for the auxiliary foundation, said the gala is one of her favorite events put on by the organization.

Not only is it based around supporting and donating to important causes, but everyone loves to get dressed up and have a fun night together.

“We have entertainment from Blonde Ambition, so people can dance all night if they want,” she said. “We also have two auctions to participate in.”

Counselman said the auctions are an important part of the event because they bring in a lot of money.



**Everything that we do, like getting the stroke treatment unit. I just think of how that will truly impact the community as a whole because time is key with a stroke.”**

**ERICA LEBO**

*UF Health The Villages Auxiliary Foundation president and executive director*

The silent auction will feature more than 100 items and the live auction will highlight 10 items, according to Lebo.

Tickets for the event are available at [ufhealth.home.qtego.us](http://ufhealth.home.qtego.us). Items in the auctions can be found on the site as well, so participants can view the items and register their phone number in advance.

The silent auction is open to everyone, even those who cannot attend the event. There is also a secure link on the website that allows anyone to donate to the foundation.

*Senior writer Maddie Cutler can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5386, or [maddie.cutler@thevillagesmedia.com](mailto:maddie.cutler@thevillagesmedia.com).*



Rachel Stuart | Daily Sun

Ruben Studdard, left, and Clay Aiken, who won first and second place, respectively, on the second season of “American Idol,” perform Wednesday at The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center.

**IDOLS**

Continued from A1

“Superstar,” and Aiken followed with his rendition of Journey’s “Open Arms.”

“We’re so happy to finally be here in Florida,” Aiken said to the crowd. “We spent all of January in the coldest places, and all I can say is we saved the best for last.”

It’s been 20 years since Ryan Seacrest announced that Studdard won the second season of “American Idol.” He beat Aiken by 134,000 of the 24 million votes, earning a \$1 million recording contract and a management deal with

industry legend Clive Davis. Although Aiken didn’t win, he also found industry success after idol, signing a record deal first with RCA Records and later with Decca Records.

“We had no idea when we auditioned for ‘American Idol’ that it would change our lives,” Aiken said of the experience.

During the performance, Studdard and Aiken sang a collection of their greatest hits and personal favorites. They also shared insights into their experience on “American Idol,” from auditions to first cut, semi-finals and the finale episode.

Born into a lower income family in Raleigh, North

Carolina, Aiken didn’t know much about music when he started out. Country singers and boy bands made up the extent of his musical knowledge.

“It really screwed me over when I was on the show,” Aiken said.

Studdard, on the other hand, was a consummate music lover before the show. Growing up in Birmingham, Alabama, he learned to sing gospel and soul music with his mother and studied the greats by listening to his father’s record collection.

“If it weren’t for my daddy, I wouldn’t have known all

those songs I did on Idol,” Studdard said. “My daddy had a huge record collection and my favorite record was Rick James, so tonight I’m paying tribute to Rick James.”

Studdard donned a backwards curly wig and sang James’ “Give It to Me Baby” while Aiken attempted to provide back up dancing. The two friends lamented Aiken’s poor dancing skill before setting out on a theatrical attempt to get Aiken in the groove by trying some boy band moves as they covered top hits like “As Long as You Love Me,” “I Swear,”

Please See **NEXT PAGE**

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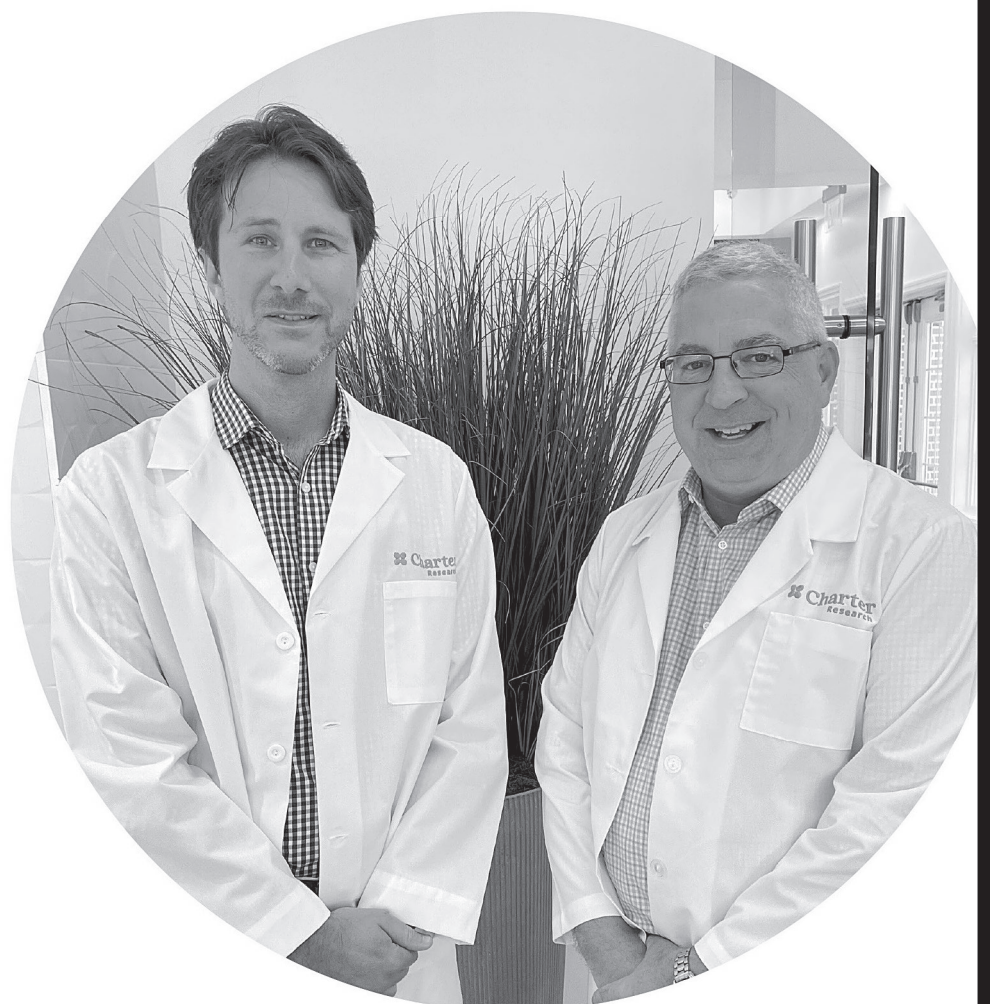
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