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## LOCAL NEWS

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## OUR TOWN

Where we live and who we are.

## Leaders Look to Have Another Successful Bass Tournament

Second annual bass tournament and General Sumter pursuit expected to boost tourism.

By MICHAEL SALERNO  
Daily Sun Staff Writer

## LAKE PANASOFFKEE

The ongoing pursuit of a bass with a \$10,000 bounty on its head boosted Sumter County's tourism last year.

Now, county leaders aim to repeat that success today with the second annual General Sumter's Last Stand bass fishing tournament, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. today at Lake Panasoffkee.

Last year's event helped contribute to a jump in Sumter's tourist development taxes during the months of March and April, Florida Department of Revenue data showed.

County leaders collected \$87,447 last March and \$84,043 last April, up more than \$10,000 from the same months in 2013, the data showed.

But money is not the only goal in increasing visitation to the county, Sumter Administrator Bradley Arnold said.

"Although increasing the tourism tax is a good goal for the event, raising the awareness of the assets of Sumter County is the largest return on the investment," he said.

## What is General Sumter?

General Sumter is an 11-pound, pre-tagged largemouth bass in Lake Panasoffkee. The general is one of 100 pre-tagged fish stocked in the water as part of a monthslong fishing contest to promote fishing in Sumter County, said Doug Smiley, president of Tangent Media, which manages the promotion.

The lucky angler who catches General Sumter will win a cash prize of \$10,000, Smiley said.

The general eluded capture last year, but its fate could change today.

Please See **TOURNAMENT, C8**



Daily Sun file photo

The second annual General Sumter's Last Stand bass fishing tournament kicks off today at Lake Panasoffkee.

In their mid-30s, Robert and Helene Aisenstat, primary care doctors with The Villages Health, made a decision that would change their lives.

## Nothing Could Squash Drive to Be Physicians

By LARRY D. CROOM  
Daily Sun Ombudsman

## THE VILLAGES

The year was 1983 and Robert and Helene Aisenstat were living the good life while raising a family in South Florida.

Robert was busy saving lives and handling exciting rescues and extrications as a lieutenant/paramedic with the Deerfield Beach Fire Department. And Helene, a nurse who had become a paramedic, was providing advanced life support to patients as a part of Broward County EMS.

But the Aisenstats, who were in their mid-30s, wanted more out of life. And even though the odds were stacked against them, nothing was going to get in the way of having "Dr." in front of their names.

"I had always wanted to be a physician, but just never pursued it," Robert said. "I was a '60s kind of guy, and you get sidetracked. And we were pretty well settled."

At first, Robert planned to attend medical school at a university in South Florida. But that goal was quickly squashed.

"The dean of medical sciences said, 'You're too old. Stay as a firefighter and enjoy your pension. There's no room for you in medicine,'" Robert said.

Luckily, some of the Aisenstats' paramedic friends had visited some medical schools in the Dominican Republic, so that became the next stop on the ambitious journey. And once they visited Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago, they knew it was the right place for them.

"We sold our cars, our boats and all our furniture," Robert said. "I pulled my pension and used that to afford medical school."

The original plan called for Robert to attend medical school while Helene provided an income and took care of the children. But that plan also changed.

"It would take two years to get a work visa to be a nurse," she said. "We weren't going to separate our family and have me stay back in the States. So he talked me into becoming a doctor."

With the new goal in place, the Aisenstats spent the two years at the medical school before completing rotations at multiple hospitals in the United States. Helene said those were difficult times, largely because

Please See **AISENSTATS, C8**



Photos by Bill Mitchell | Daily Sun

Dr. Robert Aisenstat, a former firefighter/paramedic, speaks with one of his patients, Carmen Emilio, at The Villages Health's Pinellas Care Center.



Dr. Helene Aisenstat, a former nurse and paramedic, talks with Martin Lehmann in an exam room at the Pinellas Care Center.

## THIS &amp; THAT

## THE SCENE



JILL SHERMAN  
DAILY SUN COLUMNIST

## Hey, Bunny! How'd You Like To Make Deliveries In This Cart?

If you haven't had your fill yet of chicks and bunnies, take a look at **Roz and Chuck Fox's** golf cart. As soon as Roz removed the St. Patrick's Day decor from the fire engine-themed cart, she embellished it with grass-green garland, colorful plastic Easter eggs and silk springtime flowers. The cart, commonly seen at The Villages squares, popped up last week at Chatham Recreation Center — the Foxes, of the Village of Mallory Square, were there for a social. An accomplished artist, Roz enjoys beautifying her surroundings.



Jill Sherman | Daily Sun

A fire engine-themed golf cart owned by Roz and Chuck Fox, of the Village of Mallory Square, is parked Wednesday outside Chatham Recreation Center.

## PEOPLE

## Bringing Together Beer And Pickleball

**Pat Coakley**, of the Village Santiago, welcomed Wednesday by playing pickleball at La Hacienda Recreation Center. He did a repeat performance later in the day at El Santiago Recreation Center — this time with the Picklebeer Club. The club title says it all: After hitting the courts, the guys hit the facility's cool indoor confines for a couple of cold drinks. Peanuts and pretzels are the snacks of choice for this group. The men even have their own song, sung to the upbeat tune of Olivia Newton-John's "Let Me Be There."

## PEOPLE

## Quilters Make Quilt for A Birthday

**Rosemary McNally**, of the Village Alhambra, doesn't turn 90 until May 14. But she has already received her present, a quilt made by **Villagers Dee Burns and Nancy Wildzunas**, and **Judi Simmons**, of Summerfield. The colossal quilt is machine-embroidered with more than 40 family names and was fashioned entirely by volunteer efforts. McNally's daughter, **Michele**, provided the material. "It was a complete honor," Wildzunas said of the five-month process. "This gave us a chance to do something for someone who loves her mother."