



from the front page



Gov. Rick Scott presents a medal to World War II veteran Bill McBride, of the Village of Glenbrook, on Monday during the Governor's Veterans Service Award ceremony.

MEDAL

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Award medals during a ceremony at Eisenhower Recreation Center.

"We can never thank you enough for your service to our country, and this will serve as a testament of our thanks from Floridians everywhere," Scott, a U.S. Navy veteran, said before personally handing out the medals to each veteran in attendance.

In addition to passing out the medals, during the presentation Scott also ceremoniously signed the Don Hahnfeldt Veteran and Military Family Opportunity Act into law.

The bill, which will go into effect July 1, eases professional fees and requirements for active duty military members and veterans and their family members. The bill was posthumously named after the late Rep. Don Hahnfeldt, who represented The Villages in the Florida House of Representatives until he passed away last December.

"(Hahnfeldt) was a great public servant," Scott said. "He had great military service, and it's a bill that basically honors him and does a variety of things to help our active military and our veterans and their families."

Navy veteran Solon Paul, of the Village of Gilchrist, stood on stage in uniform as Scott signed the bill into law.

"To see the governor and help the veterans, it was a real pleasure," Paul said.

Veteran Curt Swanson, of the Village of Fernandina, watched from the crowd, which overflowed into a second room at Eisenhower.

"It's a real honor that the governor is doing this and recognizing veterans from past wars," Swanson said. "I think it's a wonderful thing for veterans to get recognized late

in life for their sacrifice."

Marine veteran Sam Jacob, of the Village of Collier, attended the ceremony with his wife, Carol Ann.

"It's beautiful for me to watch him get a medal because I know he certainly deserves it," Carol Ann said.

Tris Ruffalo, of the Village of Briar Meadow, also attended the event with his wife. The day marked 66 years and one day since he'd signed up for the Navy.

"This is something my kids will enjoy, too," he said looking down at the new medal around his neck. "I'm proud to have it."

Joan Sullivan, of the Village of Springdale, said the ceremony was about more than a medal. The Army veteran said it was about recognizing veterans' service to their country, and the bond they all share.

"As much as this celebrates the individuals who have served, it celebrates the bond between and among us for what we have gone through together," she said.

Scott, who has handed out nearly 14,000 Governor's Veterans Service Awards across the state during his time in office, said it's important to recognize the sacrifices veterans have made for their country, not only on holidays or during special ceremonies, but every day.

"We're working every day to give back to our selfless veterans that have given so

much to our state and our country," Scott said. "Florida is the most military-friendly state in the nation, and we have to take every opportunity we can to show how incredibly thankful we are to our veterans and military members."

Sarah Wilson is a senior writer with The Villages Daily Sun. She can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5401, or sarah.wilson@thevillagesmedia.com.

THEATER

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statement about Season 3. "But I hope that what we'll find is that those differences are the very thing that bind us all together as human beings."

Morse said telling the stories of those who are labeled as "different" is something The Studio has wanted to conquer.

"We've been telling somewhat conventional stories about men and women together, and this year we wanted to take a closer look at what it feels like to not fit in and to be told that who you are isn't what society expects of you," Morse said. "I think that's a universal theme. It's something that we all feel at one time or another, whether we're part of a marginalized group or not."

Morse said she is very pleased and amazed by the success of The Studio.

"I just feel so lucky to be a theater-maker in a town that really loves theater so much," Morse said. "I wish the rest of the world was more like The Villages."

"The Story of My Life" by Brian Hill, with music by Neil Bartram, will be the opening show of Season 3.

The story unfolds as Thomas, a writer, works on a eulogy for his lifelong friend Alvin, sifting through memories and reflecting on their relationship.

The production is about friendship and the sacrifices that must be made to maintain a friendship.

The intimate two-person musical will open Sept. 28 and

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close Nov. 4.

"Stop Kiss" by Diana Son will be the second production of Season 3.

The story, told artistically and nonlinearly, is about two women who form an unlikely friendship in New York City.

"We get to watch them fall in love, but we also watch them suffer the consequences of that relationship, which are quite violent," Morse said.

"Stop Kiss" opens Nov. 30 and closes Dec. 30.

The third show, "It Shoulda Been You," is a full-blown musical comedy by Brian Hargrove with music by Barbara Anselmi.

The audience will go behind the scenes on the wedding day of a Jewish groom and his Catholic bride.

What could go wrong? "It Shoulda Been You" has a classic theme with a

modern twist.

"The other three shows that we selected will feel very much like Studio shows — intimate and kind of artsy," Morse said. "It Shoulda Been You" is our first venture into the golden age-style musical. 'Company' was close, but this is different. I'm excited to see how our audiences like it."

The show opens Jan. 18 and closes Feb. 24, 2019.

Season 3 will close with "A Doll's House."

The play was written by Henrik Ibsen in 1879, but The Studio will be performing Christopher Hampton's adaptation from the early 1970s.

"A Doll's House" was a big moment in feminism," Morse said. "It did quite a lot for how people saw women in the 1800s. I think what's so poignant about this play is that it's been 140 years since the play was written, and we've come a long way in women's rights, but we still have a ways to go, and this play still rings true."

The play is about a woman named Nora and her fragile marriage, as well as the consequences of her darkest secret and the lies she told to save her husband's life.

"A Doll's House" opens March 22, 2019, and closes April 28, 2019.

Kristen Fiore is a staff writer with The Villages Daily Sun. She can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5270, or kristen.fiore@thevillagesmedia.com.

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