

# The POA Bulletin

Free Copy



The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

Issue 34.12

Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

December, 2008

## TVRH News: Good And Not So Good

The Villages Regional Hospital (TVRH) may be cleaning up its act.

It has a new director of the Emergency Room (ER) promising to improve service. Furthermore, the ER scored better in a recent private performance evaluation survey of its operations.

The new director of operations was mentioned in last month's issue of the POA Bulletin. Mr. Burleigh Richardson, R.N. was hired to oversee patient satisfaction, quality of care, turnover, and patient safety. This is a positive development.

**We are hoping that this effort and new personnel will bring about the changes that the POA has campaigned for during this past year. We view this as a hopeful sign that TVRH and its parent, the Central Florida Health Alliance (CFHA), are finally addressing the problems identified by the POA and looking for solutions.**

Also, a recent VHA newspaper article reported on a private study by the Press Ganey group that was just completed. In summary, TVRH ER scored in the 90th percentile for ER operations in a recent quarter after scoring in the 50th percentile a year earlier.

(We should point out that the Press Ganey

study was of patient opinions and did not address the deficiencies reported by the Joint Commission as summarized in last month's Bulletin and mentioned later in this article.)

The POA thinks that the 50th percentile ranking from a year earlier may have coincided with the peak of problems noted in the many letters we have received about unsatisfactory operations in the TVRH ER.

**It is likely that the POA publicity about these ER problems had something to do with the hospital's efforts to improve operations as noted in this year's evaluation.**

Recent newspaper reports have noted that patient waiting times have been reduced with the hiring of 60 new employees, a new triage group has been added, and new fast-track beds have been provided. Also, TVRH is focusing on improving lab test results, diagnostic studies, and patient communications.

**Isn't this what the whole POA initiative on identifying problems in TVRH ER has been about – improving service? Perhaps the POA was instrumental in getting some of these improvements. We hope so – for the benefit of all Villagers.**

Remember that we identified several months ago that the TVRH problems go back to at least February, 2004, when the POA Bulletin (see that issue in the Bulletin Archives Section of the POA Website) wrote a front-page article about "Serious Problems in

The Villages Hospital." We said then:

"There is something drastically wrong with the Villages Hospital.

"There are just too many stories of inattentive staff, long waits, ignored patients,

overcrowding, bureaucratic bungling, questionable triage, and generally unsatisfactory service. Stories about malpractice lawsuits in the near future would not be surprising.

"Yes, there are also stories of good service, etc. However, the bad stories seem to overwhelm the good stories.

"So, what's wrong? And, why can't the hospital management company brought into run the operation fix the problems?"

*(Continued on page 2)*

## TVRH is Too Small

The Villages Regional Hospital is too small – not large enough to serve our community of 70,000 residents. This is the conclusion of the POA Health Care Committee in its work on the ER situation.

Although beds in TVRH have been increased over the years, the additions are insufficient to meet the needs of its patients.

Lack of space has severe consequences for residents who need the TVRH emergency room. Especially during the winter months, the hospital is often filled to capacity. All of the hospital beds are full. Emergency room beds are frequently occupied by residents who are waiting for an empty bed in the medical-surgical areas. If you need the services of the ER at this time, you will have to wait in the ER waiting area until an Emergency Room bed is opened up.

*(Continued on page 2)*

**December 16, 2008**

**THE NEXT POA  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**Third Tuesday of the Month – 7:00 p.m.  
This Month Only at Lake Miona Rec Center**

**Investiture of Officers and Directors  
Induction of Hall of Fame Candidates  
Annual Christmas Party, Annual Meeting**

**Coffee and Donuts**

**FOR ALL AFTER THE MEETING  
ALL RESIDENTS WELCOME – COME AND JOIN US**

**← Notice: December Meeting at  
the Lake Miona Rec Center**

**It's Time to Renew your POA  
Membership for 2009.**

**Use the Form at the Top  
Right-Hand Corner  
of Page 15.**

**If You are Not Yet a Member  
of the POA, this is  
a Good Time to Join.**

## TVRH News

*(Continued from page 1)*

That was published in February, 2004. In February, 2008, we could have written the same story. So, these problems have festered for over four years.

**Just recently, the Joint Commission on Hospital Accreditation gave TVRH negative marks for:**

- Heart Failure Care
- Heart Attack Care
- Use of Antibiotics in Pneumonia
- Treating Venous Thromboembolism

We, as a community, need to stop denying that these serious problems exist and to identify the dangerous consequences of not solving them. These problems can have a disproportionately negative effect on Villages residents who tend to have more of these types of problems.

**We need TVRH to address these problems and solve them. We can’t spend another four years singing the praises of the hospital while some of our residents could easily die because these problems are not solved.**

To the credit of TVRH, the Joint Commission noted that TVRH has a task force in place for each of these problems that, hopefully, will solve these problems soon. That is good news. Let’s hope that the task forces do their jobs and solve the problems.

While these problems were festering, TVRH, LRMC, and CFHA were paying big money to publish full-page ads in the Daily

### The Next POA Meeting Is on Tues, Dec 16

The next POA General Membership Meeting will be on Tuesday, December 16, in the Lake Miona Recreation Center at 7:00 p.m. This move to Lake Miona Rec Center is only for December. In January we return to the Laurel Manor Rec Center.

In this meeting we will have the investiture of newly-elected POA Officers and Directors, induction of several members into the POA Hall of Fame, the Annual Christmas Party, and the Annual Meeting.

Please join us for this important meeting and coffee and donuts afterward. The discussion and opportunity to meet fellow Villagers add up to a thought-provoking and interesting evening regarding your community. Non-members of the POA are always welcome. □

Sun and send out glossy brochures to pat themselves on the back claiming that TVRH was a great medical institution.

**Villagers should call this for what it is: the worst of false propaganda trying to cover up problems. This was not only morally wrong, it was a gross injustice to all Villagers. This is a classic Red-Herring misrepresentation by the hospital management.**

Hopefully, Villagers see that the managements of TVRH, LRMC, and CFHA have shown no integrity on this issue.

They should have acknowledged the problems, met with community representatives to ask for support while the problems were worked on, and then reported back to our community on the progress made.

**To just deny that these problems exist is basically dishonest on the part of TVRH, LRMC, and CFHA management.**

For the Villagers who think the POA is on a witch hunt, please, please, read this article again with an open mind. Consider the facts we have presented. Focus on the improvements we advocate. And, hope the improvements come before you need the services of TVRH.

Villagers deserve better service from their community hospital. We deserve better. □

## TVRH Is Too Small

*(Continued from page 1)*

Waiting for an Emergency Room bed to open up can have severe consequences to your health. One Villages resident thought she was having a heart attack and had her brother drive her to the Emergency Room. Upon arrival she told the staff she was having severe chest pain – but that didn’t seem to matter to the staff. She sat (with severe chest pain) in the Emergency Room waiting room for 3½ hours until the nurse called her back to the Emergency Room treatment area. Once care was started, she was informed she had a heart attack while waiting to see the doctor.

The hospital also has insufficient capacity to treat patients once they enter TVRH. State-of-the-art centers for cardiac, orthopedic, neurosurgery, and wound healing have been built at the Leesburg Hospital – not at TVRH. This is wrong.

This can pose severe problems for Villages residents. One Villages resident thought she was having a stroke in her home. Her husband quickly brought her to TVRH - but

*(Continued on page 3)*

## POA Mission Statement

The Property Owners’ Association of The Villages is an independent organization devoted to our home ownership experience.

The Vision/Objective of the POA is to make The Villages an even better place in which to live, where Residents’ Rights are respected, and local government is responsive to the needs and interests of residents.

Specific POA attention is focused on housing, community, neighborhood, and government issues. Special emphasis is directed at the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC), our Community Development Districts (CDDs), and the Florida Chapter 190 law that regulates CDD operations here.

The POA serves Villagers through programs of education, research, analysis, representation, advocacy, and legislative action.

The POA also functions as a “watchdog” organization overseeing the actions of the developer and our local governments.

The POA has no ties or obligations to the developer of The Villages that might compromise the POA position or its advocacy of Residents’ Rights.

The POA, founded in 1975, is the original homeowners’ organization in The Villages. Membership is open to all residents. □

## The Villages Residents’ Bill of Rights

**RESIDENTS’ RIGHTS** are to:

1. Be treated in a respectful, fair, and responsive manner by the developer and our local government officials.
2. Elect the supervisors and the top administrative officer in our central districts.
3. Approve major purchases of common property.
4. Approve any debt obligations assumed by residents.
5. Have a local government that is free from conflicts-of-interest.
6. Be charged honest monthly fees that are used only for the stated purposes.
7. Receive full disclosure when purchasing a home here in The Villages.
8. Receive an objective market appraisal for major purchases of common property.
9. Receive objective, unbiased, and unslanted news reporting from the local news sources in The Villages.
10. Be consulted beforehand by the developer and local governments on major changes in, or additions to, our community. □

## TVRH is Too Small

(Continued from page 2)

the hospital and Emergency Room were full. While she waited 1½ hours to be admitted to the treatment area, she could feel her right arm become numb and paralyzed. Her husband pleaded with the staff to help her but nothing was done. Three hours after she first noticed symptoms – she got to see a doctor who diagnosed bleeding in her brain. But TVRH does not have facilities to do neurosurgery – the woman had to be taken to the Leesburg hospital. Due to the delay in surgery, this woman can hardly move her right arm and is just re-learning to write her name.

We are a senior citizen community of 70,000 residents who are growing older. Problems with our health occur – and they generally happen at an inconvenient time. We need our local hospital to be large enough and to have facilities to treat the health conditions we will develop.

We note the recent announcement that another hospital will be built close to the new square planned for Brownwood on Hwy 44 close to Wildwood. Although we applaud most additions to the medical service capability in our community, we can see problems here with a fragmentation of hospital services. We suspect that this Brownwood Hospital will be too small for a critical mass of comprehensive services and too close to LRMC and TVRH. This could further dilute the argument for a larger critical mass in TVRH with more comprehensive facilities and services. Two small hospitals are not better than one big hospital. We would rather see the resources identified for the Brownwood facility dedicated to better TVRH facilities. □

From the POA Website Forum:

### Let's Finally Solve the TVRH Dispute

**Nov 9:** Let's resolve the TVRH issue. It's time for action.

When I left last spring, the POA was in exactly the same position on this issue as the last issue I read. It seems [that] ill-considered and unfounded comments are mixed with good information. Some slander [and] some fact is not a way to get the hospital to work with us or even to learn what (if any) steps have been taken to remedy the ER situation.

It is a fact that the hospital cannot discuss any of the case issues with the POA. [That would be] a violation of federal law: the HIPAA Act specifically prohibits it.

If our goal is to improve the hospital, then the following proposals should be made.

1) Recruit 6 or 8 retired people with a medical industry background living in The Villages (not people inside or affiliated with the POA) to meet as a small group with the hospital to discuss ER policy and problems and how they are being addressed on a hospital wide scale for 1 year.

2) Guarantee the hospital that no report of this meeting will be published in your monthly paper other than the one listed below.

3) Have that whole committee present a quarterly summary report to the POA of progress or lack thereof.

4) Publish the findings verbatim. No slander, no changes (you can do that in the article next to the report).

It seems to me that's the only way to bring credibility back to this issue and the POA.

Further it bothers me that our POA has stepped beyond it's own promise to us. The POA's Residents' Rights and their own Mission Statement pertain to the developer not private industry. Who's next, Home Depot?

Let's move beyond the accusations to solutions, the cases you found deserve that.

**Editor's Note:** The POA met with Mr. Tim Menton, SVP in charge of TVRH operations, a few months ago and discussed the POA's proposal for exactly the very same four points listed in this letter as a solution for this whole dispute. See the "Status of the Hospital Project" article in the August, 2008, issue of the POA Bulletin in the Archives.

Mr. Menton agreed to this very same solution and offered the members of a TVRH committee already established as the core group of this community review committee. The POA was to name several independent community people to this committee.

This group was to review the 32 significant complaints, abstracted to eliminate personal identity information, and issue recommendations to the hospital and community.

These recommendations would identify how to react to the complaints and how to improve TVRH ER operations so as to eliminate the problems that prompted the complaints in the first place.

The POA was happy to go along with this committee idea and was willing to hold up comments in the Bulletin about TVRH until

the recommendations were published.

The day after we reached agreement, Mr. Menton reneged on the agreement and completely changed his position and memory of what we clearly discussed in that meeting.

We regret that Mr. Menton went back on his word and his handshake and reneged on a solution that could have gone a long way to resolve these issues. We also regret the missed opportunity to solve this problem through an initiative that explained the situation to the entire community.

We are still left with the fact that some residents, admittedly a small percentage of the total, have received medical care below accepted industry standards in the TVRH ER. Also, we have received reports of several deaths that might have been avoided and may have resulted from medical malpractice.

The reader should take note of the several stories in the Daily Sun about new directors, new staff, and new nurses and a focus on improving patient care and satisfaction in the TVRH ER. Many of these actions would most likely not have occurred if the reports of the POA Bulletin were way off base.

Furthermore, the reader should realize that if the POA stories were without a factual foundation, the attorneys for TVRH would have closed down our reporting long ago as unfair and inaccurate. They didn't close us down because we can document all of our reporting with factual information from real people in our community.

And, as we said early in our reporting, the members of our Hospital Committee, all of them trained medical professionals, felt that we had a moral obligation to pursue these issues for the benefit of all patients of the hospital.

So, let's focus on solutions. This is too important an issue to ignore. □

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## VHA Elections Past and Future

Election Day 2008 has come and gone. The turnout was heavy and that's a good thing. Representative government is what our democracy is based on and the right to vote via secret ballot is crucial. Whether or not your candidate won, the electorate has spoken and the majority of those willing to cast votes have determined who our leaders will be. This is not the way it is done in many parts of the world — and it is not the way it is done in the VHA.

The VHA was created by the developer of The Villages in an attempt to supersede the POA. The developer, wary of the POA quest for Residents' Rights, started the VHA and placed residents who were employees or had other ties to him on the VHA board of directors. The bylaws for the VHA were written to assure that the VHA president would always be "elected" by the board of directors. While board members are "swapped out" from time to time, little notice is given of board openings and a person selected for appointment is always "nominated" (chosen) by the existing board, so that the developer never loses control.

Per the VHA by-laws, new board members are "elected" by a show of hands at the large VHA annual meeting. While nominations are allowed from the floor, no one dares to speak up at the meeting to ask to be considered for board membership without the current board's support.

It is a foregone conclusion what type of individual will be allowed on the board and that they will support whatever the developer wants. With such a process in place, it is no wonder that the VHA consistently backs the developer (VHA President at the time, Doug Tharp, spoke out against Residents' Rights, such as the Straw Ballot tried to establish; current VHA President, Roger Kass, claims there are no vinyl siding problems; etc.).

So here we are, having known for months now that Don Hahnfeldt will be "elected" in March 2009 to be the new president of the VHA. Just like his predecessor Roger Kass, Mr. Hahnfeldt was named to the board some months previously for the sole purpose of taking over the presidency. The key qualification necessary is that he be willing to speak out on behalf of the developer on any issue where residents' interests and developer interests are at odds.

We are amazed that the VHA organization does not trust the membership to elect its officers as does the POA with its open election of officers and directors. We think the VHA would be much more responsive to the concepts of Residents' Rights if the VHA general membership was freely allowed to elect officers and directors.

Interestingly enough, in the recent AAC elections, the candidates with VHA leadership affiliations were rejected in the districts they ran in. Clearly the residents understand that their interests will not be represented by these developer "puppets."

While the VHA is a very important organization and its membership is responsible for much good that happens in our community, it is a shame that those who speak for the organization can not put Residents' Rights first. When will the VHA membership insist on leadership that reflects their views?

If that wasn't enough, this just in – Governor Crist appointed former VHA president Doug Tharp to the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) board. This is the board that has responsibility for water use policy, especially as it pertains to residential and commercial development projects. Can you guess which central Florida Republican power might have made that happen? Now guess whose interests Mr. Tharp will continue to look out for? □

Letter to the Editor:

### VHA Is Cheerleader For The Developer

[This is regarding the POA's comments on] Roger Kass, President of VHA: "Conflict of Interest." It is apparent the folks in the POA camp don't understand the function of the VHA. The VHA functions as a public relations mechanism for The Villages developer. For that organization, or Mr. Kass in particular, to function in any other manner would be counter productive to their public

relations mission. So why is there that expectation that Mr. Kass has a conflict of interest?

The purpose of the VHA is to make the developer look good and to be a cheerleading squad for The Villages. On the other hand, the POA acts as a checks and balances watch dog on issues when The Village developer drops the ball and does things that are not in the best interest of the residents.

Constantly asking for Mr. Kass to resign shows a lack of understanding on the part of POA as to the function of the VHA. Both organizations are needed, but their functions are completely different from one another. I would recommend to the leadership of the POA that they back off the "conflict of interest" campaign and let the VHA do their public relations thing for the developer. Just accept the fact that this is their function just like the function of POA is to protect the interest of residents against goof-ups by the developer. I think the anti-Kass campaign does more harm than good for the POA because it takes on the appearance of a "belly-acher" syndrome.

Sym Terhune

**Editor's Note:** Yes, you are right. The VHA is a cheerleader for the developer. Let's just call it for what it is. □

### POA Bulletin Is Now Available in PDF Format

I applaud the decision to make the November POA Bulletin available in PDF form [on the POA Website]. Will the archived Bulletins be available in PDF form?

John Macko

**Editor's Note:** The PDF versions of the Bulletin will only be available starting with the November, 2008, issue on the POA Website. The free Adobe Reader is needed to open the PDF version. Before November, 2008, in the Archived Bulletin section, the Bulletin stories each month are available only in word processor format.

### Larry Blake Home Improvements

Interior and Exterior Painting  
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### Tee Time Golf Cart Rentals

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Representative

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## POA Increases Annual Dues to \$10

The POA Board of Directors has reluctantly decided to increase the annual POA dues to \$10.00 per year for the 2009 membership year. A membership year runs from January 1 thru December 31. We will start issuing 2009 cards at the new dues rate as of the November 18 membership meeting.

POA dues have not increased in over ten years, during which time our annual expenses have gone up almost ten-fold to about \$65,000 and the circulation of the Bulletin has increased about eight-fold to about 34,000 copies per month. Bulletin expenses alone, are budgeted at \$55,000 for 2009.

In addition, we have seen a sharp downturn in Bulletin advertising over the past half year. We have lost and have not yet been able to replace our Select Sponsors which accounted for over \$20,000 in advertising revenues annually.

Consequently, we are looking at a negative cash flow figure of approximately \$10,000 for 2008.

In addition to focusing on a number of cost saving measures, we reluctantly decided to increase membership dues. We hope the membership understands our reasoning and will continue to support their POA.

In comparison, we note that the VHA reported in its November newspaper printing expenses of \$1,740.62 per month (about \$21,000 per year) and no distribution expenses. VHA appears to have a sweetheart deal with the developer to print its newspaper at a lowball rate and then distribute at no charge through the Daily Sun. In comparison, the POA has printing and distribution expenses budgeted at \$55,000 in 2009.

So, you can see that it is expensive to continue the operations of your POA. We hope and trust that you understand why we had to increase dues.

With the start of the new year, a POA new membership year will start. It would be a big help if members would send in their membership renewals as soon as possible, starting now. We have over 5,000 members and the postage cost alone to send out renewal notices would be huge. So, we would really appreciate it if you could send your renewal in before we need to send out that renewal notice. You can use the membership renewal form in the upper right hand corner of page 15. Thanks in advance for your help. □

## Anonymous Letters

Recently, the POA Bulletin has received several unsigned Letters to the Editor. These letters expressed good ideas that deserved to be printed. However, we have a policy of not printing unsigned letters, no matter how worthwhile. If there were significant extenuating circumstances, and the letter writer's name and address were included for verification purposes, and the writer requested that the name be withheld and stated the reasons, then we would consider withholding the name. These conditions, however, would probably not occur often. □

## POA Elections

The deadline for Bulletin stories last month came before the POA Election scheduled for the November 18 membership meeting. So, we will report on those elections in the January issue of the POA Bulletin.

As of the press deadline for this issue, officer candidates for election include: Joe Gorman for President, Elaine Dreidame for Vice President, and Bill Garner for Treasurer.

Richard London is a candidate for reelection as a Director. Other candidates for election as a Director include: Myron Henry, Dennis Petrucelli, and Bunny Swift. □

## ATTENTION SNOWBIRDS

**Question for Snowbirds:** What is worse than going through probate?

**Answer:** Going through **TWO** probates!

Did you know that if you own real estate in Florida, your estate may have to go through probate, even if you have a Will? Furthermore, if you own real estate up north as well, your estate may have to go through a *second* probate.

## Andrew Curtis Revocable Living Trusts



Villages Resident

### Andrew Curtis' Qualifications

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- An MBA at the University of Michigan 1978
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The hiring of a lawyer is an important decision that should not be based solely on advertisements. Before you decide, ask me to send you free written information about my qualifications and experience.

## POA East Side Auxiliary

A meeting for the proposed POA East Side Auxiliary is planned for Thursday, January 15, 2009. The meeting's purpose will be to discuss the group's mission statement, organizational issues, and initial objectives.

The meeting will be held in the Henry Fonda room in the Paradise Center, starting at 3:00 p.m. Please watch the January Bulletin for any more details of the meeting.

If you support the objectives of the POA, but have been unable or unwilling to attend the evening meetings at the Laurel Manor Recreation Center, this should be a good opportunity for you to participate in your POA close to home. This is an important meeting. Hope to see you there. □

Letter to the Editor:

## Comments on Hospital Negative Marks

I am responding to the headline in the November POA Bulletin: **NEGATIVE MARKS FOR HOSPITAL IN SURVEY.**

I am a newcomer to The Villages, having moved here in June of this year. I am a member of the POA and joined because, like FOX news says, I like a "fair and balanced" picture of what's going on in my community.

I'm also a physician, having practiced for 31 years and still practice in the area. I spent 17 years of my career practicing in one of the largest rural tertiary care medical centers in the nation and have been through many Joint Commission surveys.

I am writing to enlighten the readers to the realities of a Joint Commission survey. First, EVERY hospital surveyed by The Joint Commission gets "negative marks." That is NOT a headline. One of the purposes of the survey (which the hospital pays a huge sum of money to have done) is to identify areas where there is an opportunity to improve the

care being delivered. What WOULD be a headline if the hospital being surveyed did NOT receive accreditation or certification from the Joint Commission after the survey.

Actually, it is not at all uncommon for hospitals to receive a "conditional" certification. This means certain deficiencies were so serious that certification could not be granted until these deficiencies are rectified.

Your article suggested that TVRH received a full accreditation/certification from The Joint Commission after the survey which deserves a congratulations to the staff and administration.

Secondly, after the survey, SERIOUS attention is given to areas that are identified that require improvement. EVERY surveyed hospital expects and receives such recommendations and responds accordingly. You cannot imagine the attention given to this. After all, the hospital pays a huge sum of money to have experts come in and answer the question, "tell us where the care we deliver needs to be improved."

In summary, the headline really is, TVRH receives full accreditation from The Joint Commission for Accreditation of Hospitals.

The sub headline is, "areas identified which need improvement." In reality, for most hospitals and most communities served by those hospitals, that is not really an above the fold headline.

R. Scott Hoffer, MD

**Editor's Note:** TVRH did receive negative marks, and this represents a serious problem for the Hospital. We should not lose sight of this. We don't think it is acceptable to have these problems because many hospitals have these problems.

Furthermore, we think TVRH should acknowledge the problems, however slight they think they are, and focus on solutions to the issues uncovered by the Joint Commission survey. And, we would like to think that the Bulletin stories have contributed to significant corrective actions and positive change.

Wherever the stories are displayed in the Bulletin, Villagers have a right to know the unvarnished facts about their hospital. We don't want to cover up the facts, as hospital management actions seem to indicate. Sweeping problems under the rug, or claiming that they do not exist, is not acceptable.

Finally, we are hopeful that these problems will be solved well before the time comes for us to go to the hospital. We would like to feel confident about top quality care from TVRH. Don't you agree? □

## POA Still Accepting Hospital ER Stories

The POA is still accepting your stories about your experiences in the Emergency Room of The Villages Regional Hospital. Whether these are good, bad, or indifferent, we urge you to tell us your experiences.

Thus far we have received over 150 stories from residents detailing their experiences. About 20 of these have been positive to the ER; over 130 have been negative about the services of the ER.

We are summarizing these experiences for review by the appropriate regulatory and licensing agencies for hospitals and medical professionals. We are hoping that the abuses and shortcomings of the ER which we have been able to document will ultimately result in improvements in the services of the hospital.

We have talked to several people who say that they don't want to get further involved. We can understand this sentiment. However, if you don't come forward to tell us your story and follow up on the complaint process, then whatever happened to you might potentially happen to one of your neighbors. We as a community have to pursue this process to force improvements in the hospital so that others will not experience whatever bad experiences you had.

So, we need your help. All Villagers need your help. Please contact us for the details about how you can make a difference in your community hospital for the better. Contact us at one of the numbers or addresses shown on page 15. □

The Recreation Centers and the Customer Service Center have the **Roundabout Brochure** available. This shows how to drive through those often confusing Roundabouts in The Villages. This brochure was designed and produced by Sumter County and printed by The Villages. You can pick up your copy now.

## PRISM STAINED GLASS

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Letter to the Editor:

## Guest Passes

I believe the 30 day limit on guest passes only applies to guests under 19. My son and his family decided on buying in Bison Valley because of the reputation of how The Villages maintain all the properties within The Villages. They also based their decision on the fact that they would be eligible for the In-Area Family Passes due to my living in The Villages. All the people living in the so-called Family Villages are not entitled to these passes unless one of their parents live within The Villages. Therefore, as pointed out in your article, there are relatively few of these passes issued. I believe John Rohan mentioned that there are 20,000 regular passes issued each month and there is a total of 1279 active in-area passes. Also there are no passes issued to employees without having a parent in The Villages. As is in my son's case he, his wife and older son work within The Villages and the younger son attends The Villages High School. This leaves them very little time to enjoy the amenities here. Besides, I must be with them in order for them to use the facilities. They have lived here since June 2008 and have used the family pool a total of three times. They have not used any of the other facilities available here. In fact the three times we went to the family pool, we were the only ones in it. The biggest complaint I hear from residents here is that they are clogging up the golf courses and not paying their share in the amenities. Let me tell these people in many cases (as in mine) I am paying the same amenities as them and I do not golf at all and neither does anyone in my son's family. Is this fair? If they want to stop the few family passes is-

sued then let's change the whole system for the amenities fee and charge everyone by usage. In that case let everyone who lives in The Villages including the Family Villages (I believe there are only three) and in-area family members use the facilities at a cost based on each individual usage. That would be the really fair way. Therefore, I say to all the people complaining: "be careful what you wish for" you just might get the really fair way of paying. I think the avid golfers here might find that they are really getting a bargain even though my son and his family might get to use the pools here once in awhile. I also would like to change the requirement of my being with them at all times. I am retired and I like to go to the pool early in the morning, all my in-area relatives work in the mornings and would like to take a swim in the early evening after work. It serves no real purpose that I have to be with them. I also find it aggravating that so many of the permanent residents here complain that the snowbirds are due back and will tie up the golf courses, restaurants, and roads. These people also pay their amenities every month and are entitled to be here whenever they have time off to come here or just feel like being here. Without the snowbirds we would not have as many restaurants and stores building here at all.

Ed DiStefano □

## December AAC Meeting

The Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) of the VCCDD will meet on Wednesday, December 10 at the La Hacienda Center at 1:30 p.m. The meeting is usually in the Savannah Center, but scheduling problems required this switch for only this month. The Guest Pass policy will be reviewed, and the newly elected supervisors will be seated. □

## The Vinyl Siding Committee Needs Your Help

The POA Vinyl Siding Committee needs to have a full-scale inspection, evaluation, and report done of the vinyl siding problems in The Villages by a qualified building inspector. This person could serve as an objective expert witness.

The cost for all of this could be in the range of several thousand dollars. For this expense, we are asking any homeowners who have benefited through the efforts of our Vinyl Siding Committee to consider donating to a special fund which would pay this expense.

We are asking that homeowners who can afford to do so to please contribute \$10, \$50, or \$100, or more if you can, to this fund. The POA will match donations up to \$1,250 on a dollar for dollar basis. Just send your donations to The POA Legal Action Fund, Vinyl Siding, at P.O. Box 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158.

Please rest assured that we need your help to pay for this inspection, and anything you can contribute to this cause will be greatly appreciated. Remember that our Vinyl Siding Committee members gave generously of their time and effort to help residents identify their vinyl siding problems. Now, we need you to help us pay for this expert witness and the inspection report. Thank you.

The POA Vinyl Siding Committee □

## Vinyl Siding Repair Firms

We have found that the following companies have done acceptable if not good work for residents in the repair of their vinyl siding problems, etc. We cannot guarantee their work, but we have heard from residents that they are pleased with the results.

**New Look Exteriors**, Steve Justice  
9860 SE 145th Place, Summerfield, FL  
352-288-3040

**Brix & Stix**, Terry Poortenga, VP  
P.O. Box 384, Oxford, FL 34484  
352-330-1817, 352-516-0505 cell  
[www.BrixandStixFraming.com](http://www.BrixandStixFraming.com)

**Scott Smith Roofing**  
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## The POA Joins with iGive.com Just in Time for the Holiday Season

The POA has established a relationship with the iGive.com group that makes donations to organizations like the POA whenever you shop on line. All you have to do is register for your account, purchase items on line from merchants who in turn will donate a percentage of the price of the items you buy, and name the POA as the recipient of your donated funds. The iGive.com organization does all the work. The POA will then receive a check for the donated proceeds periodically.

This will cost you nothing – the participating sellers make the donation in your name to the POA. This is a great way to donate to the POA. All you have to do is register and then buy items from the special retailers and stores.

Help support the POA this holiday season and throughout the entire new year by doing some or all of your on-line shopping through iGive.com. At the iGive.com Mall, there are over 700 named brand stores from which to shop including Eddie Bauer, Lands' End, Golfsmith, Home Depot, Barnes & Noble, PETsMART, J C Penny, Drugstore.Com to name just a few.

The iGive.com organization has been around since 1997 and has given away over

\$3.6 million in donations to organizations like the POA.

This is a WIN – WIN situation for the POA and its supporters as well as for the hundreds of on-line stores. With the holiday season just around the corner this is a wonderful opportunity to take advantage of tremendous savings and make a donation to a worthy organization like the POA. Moreover, this can be done right from your home.

It's easy to become a philanthropic shopper. Just go online to the website at: [www.iGive.com/POATV](http://www.iGive.com/POATV) and fill out your account information. It is easy.

Begin shopping at over 700 stores. You must place your first order through iGive.com within 45 days of your initial registration so that you can earn an extra \$5.00 BONUS for the POA.

Order your item and an e-mail notice will arrive stating that the POA has been credited for a donation check in your name.

See the ad immediately below this story for more information on how this all works. Thanks in advance for your consideration in setting this up for the benefit of your POA. The funds donated to the POA by the iGive.com organization will be a big help to the POA in paying our operating expenses.

For any organization located in The Villages which would like to receive more information about the iGive.com benefits for the POA, or would like a brief presentation at one of their meetings, please contact: Christine Courtwright, 352-753-6139. □

From the POA Website Forum:

## Non-Resident Guest Passes

**Nov 15:** I understand that all recreation centers will allow non-residents to participate in activities. If this is true why are we residents paying our amenity fees so outsiders who don't pay enjoy our facilities? There has been a letter sent to the rec centers from the management to allow anyone to enter and participate in the activities. I think this is wrong and the policy should be changed back to residents only.

**Editor's Note:** Non-residents are not allowed to use any of our recreation facilities unless a resident has secured a Guest Pass for them. Guest Passes are tightly controlled and are not issued in sufficient numbers to overwhelm the system. In the case of Executive Golf, non-residents can get reservations on our courses, but only as a Guest of a residents and with a proper Guest Pass issued to them – and then only after all residents have been granted reservations for that day. This issue of Guest Passes will be taken up at the AAC meeting on December 10 at the La Hacienda Center. □

Letter to the Editor:

## Neighborhood Watch

Do we need all of the Neighborhood Watch that we currently have? All day long I see them riding around my neighborhood. They have no law enforcement powers so they can't catch a criminal. Have they ever relayed information of a crime in progress to law enforcement authorities? I have been reading The Daily Sun for four years and never saw an article in this paper about any such event. They are great for telling you that you can't have something or other in your yard. I think this is the main part of their job.

It's costing us plenty to pay these people, buy or lease the vehicles, and pay for the gas and up-keep of these vehicles. How about this. Cut out the neighborhood patrols and eliminate most of the people and vehicles. If someone in a neighborhood does not think a lawn item is appropriate they can call in and have it investigated. Have a part time staff for special events and a few vans to transport the event staff to the event. We are paying a bundle for things we do not need.

E. R. Stocker □

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Who hasn't uttered the word, "wish there was something I could do to help." Now you can.

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[www.iGive.com/POATV](http://www.iGive.com/POATV) For a limited time: get a \$5 bonus donation with your 1st purchase at any iGive.com store!\*



## Bulletin Delivery

We need your help on delivery of the Bulletin.

During some times of the year the Bulletin is sometimes delivered to unoccupied houses. The homeowner may be away for vacation, or may be a snowbird. And, the Bulletin may lie on the driveway for some time. We ask if neighbors could pick up the Bulletin when these situations occur, or at other times during inclement weather, and either discard the Bulletin or hold it for return of the homeowner. This will be a big help to us. We greatly appreciate your help. Thank you in advance.

Those who know they will be away for any length of time can contact us at the email address: [delivery@poa4us.org](mailto:delivery@poa4us.org) and advise us to put you on our "No-Throw" list. Just include your name and address and village or villa and the time period for which you do not want the Bulletin delivered. We'll do our best to not throw the Bulletin on your driveway as you request.

Thanks to all for your help. □



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From the POA Website Forum:

## Guest Pass Focus Group

**Oct 4:** We have lived in The Villages for four years. Our son lives in Ocala. I can count on one hand the number of times he has played golf or used any facilities here. He pays his guest fee the same as anyone else. Why should a "stranger" be allowed to golf with us and not our son? If you want to be angry about the overcrowding, be angry with the Village's policy for renters. They are given full resident status when they rent here. My husband and I witnessed the special treatment The Villages give. We went to play golf on one of the executive courses. We watched this couple pull up and talked to the ambassador. We were held up twenty minutes on our tee time. When we questioned the ambassador he told us that the couple was on the "Lifestyle Preview" and showed up twenty minutes late for their tee time. I reminded the ambassador if I was twenty minutes late I would be out of luck. He told me that The Villages would not allow that to happen to prospective buyers and that they are led to believe that they can have and do whatever they want while they are here. So, people, speak up to The Villages about renters! NOT children and grandchildren. They are our family members and should be able to use our facilities with us. There is no danger of overcrowding our facilities [with family

members]. [The few] people who take advantage ... will be the minority and not the majority.

**Oct 6:** There is a committee of RESIDENTS working on the guest pass issues. We have come up with some guidelines to be presented to the AAC [at the December 10 meeting] for approval. To highlight: In-area passes will still be issued on a 365-day basis with each pass valid for only 30 days of usage and the guest MUST be accompanied by the RESIDENT living in The Villages. [They] cannot obtain multiple passes. Their name will be associated with the sponsoring household. For instance, Grandma cannot get them a pass and then Grandpa get them another one. It is one per guest per RESIDENT household. Once the card has been used 30 days, that pass will come up as expired and another will not be issued until the year time-frame has expired. Only sons, daughters, and grandchildren are eligible ... not brothers, sisters, etc. There are penalties being put in place to defray abuse. Not only will the guest pass be pulled, but ALL passes obtained by the RESIDENT for a specified time. In-area passes currently account for a [small] number of guest passes. This committee is made up of RESIDENTS, not the developer. □

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#### Want To Give Something Back To Your Community

There is a section that lists places that are looking for Volunteers. Find something that you like to do and get involved with helping others. Villagers are known for their generosity, and helping others always makes you feel better.

[www.The-Villages-Online.com](http://www.The-Villages-Online.com)

Owned, Operated and Designed by Two Villagers  
The-Villages-Online is a noncommercial community website

Letter to the Editor:

## The Villages Lifestyle

The proposal by the Villages Central Community District (VCCDD) to issue permanent guest ID cards [is] perhaps well intended [but] fraught with opportunities for abuses.

The Daily Sun recently published an article stating that The Villages is increasingly becoming more of a tourist/vacation mecca. Is this good news, and if so, for whom?

The "Village Lifestyle" primarily encompasses our recreation centers, executive golf courses and [entrance and exit facilities].

The Villages "Lifestyle" was what sales people told us we were buying for those "above market prices" on our homes, as well as the costly bond and monthly amenity fees. So it should come to no ones surprise when residents take seriously the need to ensure these facilities are being used only by residents or their guests, who retain 30 day-per-year privileges. Methods should be available to ensure that residents and their guest have priority access to play the executive courses.

What becomes more problematic is the issue of renters or other non-residents use of our executive golf courses. This issue is especially critical during peak golf seasons and, as The Villages expands, will increase proportionately.

It is disheartening that by building these units [in front of the] Waterfront Inn we lost the great aesthetic value placed at the entrance to Lake Sumter Landing and the surrounding property. It is also likely that the residents who purchased homes in and around this area for "the view" like it less.

Which brings me to our need for due diligence. It seems that those two hundred units may be rental units and planned for expanding the tourist/vacation agenda. Sell or rent, the net aesthetic effect is the same; and the increased crowds, while benefiting the Developer's pocketbook, do little to enhance the quality of our Lifestyle.

### Remember Our Troops At Christmas Time

Jack Mertz  
Fidelity Reverse Mortgage  
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The Developer has breached his covenant with Village residents before as he did with Freedom Pointe. We stand guarded concerning the integration of the Parkwood Homes Project with that of The Villages. The Developer also has been reluctant to right the concerns regarding the Vinyl Siding Issue. He claims that the homes he built in The Villages meet hurricane codes. Perhaps. But the question being asked is not whether these homes can withstand catastrophic winds but if the homes are properly weatherproofed to withstand water intrusion from an ordinary rainstorm. If not, the vinyl issue is of significant importance to homeowners.

There is something fundamentally wrong when a Developer can act with impunity under the protection of Chapter 190.

This is a retirement community and will not blend well with tourism and the ills that stem from promoting it. Hopefully, tourism is not the Developer's intent. This is our home. We paid for it and continue to maintain it and should have significant say in its operation. So, issues that affect our "Lifestyle" become personal because this is our home and we have a heavy financial investment in it.

Dennis Petrucelli □

## Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus

Dear Editor: I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, If you see it in The New York Sun, it's so. Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.

Your little friends are wrong. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion

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exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy.

Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We would have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to have men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can imagine all the wonders there are unseen and un-seeable in the world.

There is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, and romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernatural beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God! he lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Excerpted from  
the New York Sun, 1897 □



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Our Monthly Column:

## Gardening in The Villages

### Holiday Plants – Now and Later by Anne Lambrecht Master Gardener

It is a great time to garden. My garden is glorious and I can't get enough. I admit I'm hooked: my crud-encrusted fingernails give me away. I love to get my hour back when Daylight Savings ends but I sure don't like ending my day in the garden at 5:00 pm.

Soon the stores will be filled with holiday plants. Here I will attempt to give you some interesting facts on popular holiday plants and their care and what to do afterwards concerning each plant.

**Poinsettias – Euphorbia pulcherrima** – An American diplomat with an interest in botany, Joel R. Poinsett, saw these plants on a visit to Mexico in 1821 and fell in love with them, brought them back to his greenhouse in South Carolina and gave them his name. (I'm sure the Mexicans had them already named). Noah Webster's first pronunciation of this Central American plant is poin-SET-ah. The second is poin-SET-ee-a. However you pronounce it, both are correct.

The poinsettia is a member of the Euphorbia family which basically means it has milky sap (which is irritating to some people). The red (or white or pink) part is not actually a flower; it is a colorful bract-or false flower-very much like the bougainvillea. The colorful part looks just like the other leaves. The flower is actually the little yellow dots in the middle (white dots in the bougainvillea). The plant is poisonous to some degree which just means don't let your animals or kids eat it.

Poinsettias are popular, nice holiday plants and if you're lucky enough to have a spot on the north side of your house, you can enjoy them for years outside. When the holidays are over, put the poinsettia outside on the porch or in the lanai (protected from cool air-they don't like under 55 degrees) and water once a week. Do not over water! Do not fertilize while it's in bloom. Starting in January apply a household fertilizer once a month. In February or March cut back each of the old flowering stems to 4 to 6 inches in height right above the leaf node. This will promote new growth.

My neighbor, Jim, has amazing Poinsettias and I enjoy his since his north side faces my place and I have failed miserably for 5

years to get one to survive.

Poinsettia flowering is "photosensitive" which means that flowers begin to form when the nights are long enough. Without long nights, this plant will continue to produce leaves and will grow but will never flower (turn red). I heard a story from a lady named Bea about a successful South Carolina poinsettia grower whose nursery was fairly isolated in the woods. He always had spectacular poinsettias to sell at the holidays since the plants received their required autumnal equinox nighttime light and no artificial light.....until one year. The poinsettias did not set flower. The man discovered that at night the road to his nursery became a popular place for kids to neck. Their headlights fell directly upon the Poinsettias and was just enough light to prevent them from turning color.

The University of Florida has "Poinsettia trials" each year in Gainesville. I was lucky enough to attend one year. They grow and "try" different kinds for color, longevity and replantability, etc. They give you a clipboard with instructions and let you loose in their greenhouse. It's a wonderland of color, scent and warmth and it helps get you in the holiday spirit. You choose which in a certain group is your favorite. The UFL uses this data to make a better poinsettia. After the trials, you get to shop! This year the Poinsettia Trials is December 11<sup>th</sup>. The greenhouses are located near Fifield Hall (horticultural center), up the street from the Natural History Museum, Performing Arts Center and

the Butterfly House. Anyone up for a field trip? Here is a link for hours and directions: [www.poinsettia-trial.org/2008trials.htm](http://www.poinsettia-trial.org/2008trials.htm).

**The Christmas Cactus** – is a nice plant for the holidays with their red, white, or pink blooms – some double, some single. They are bred to bloom at this time of year and some are bred to bloom in the spring. They grow large slowly and many have been in families for generations. They are succulents and members of the Zygocactus family, most of which are native to Central and South America. Although they are called cactus, they are actually epiphytes (air plants) and are found where you would find orchids in the wild. You should water your cactus sparingly, especially when blooming. At other times, water the cactus thoroughly and let it dry out. Try to keep your cactus where it receives indoor indirect bright light during the day and total darkness at night. They like the temperatures to be cool, also. And they like humidity to be about 50-60%. You could place a glass, vase or tray of water near the plant and as the water evaporates, it will provide the humidity the cactus needs. Start to fertilize in February and then regularly during the growing season with all purpose liquid houseplant fertilizer. It is very frustrating to get your cactus with lots of buds and have them fall off before they bloom. This is usually caused by over-watering, lack of humidity or insufficient light.

After the holiday season, the Christmas cactus should be given about a 30 day rest.

(Continued on page 12)

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## Gardening

(Continued from page 11)

Again place it in a cool room and provide limited water. Don't worry if it loses a few leaves or joints and appears weak during this rest period. This is not the time to pinch, prune or shape a Christmas cactus. The best time is when the new growth begins in March or early April.

Likewise, the best time for repotting a cactus is in February, March or April. However, keep in mind the plant will flower best if it's kept in a container where it's pot-bound. If your Christmas cactus is given proper care and is placed in the right location, it's not unusual for it to flower several times throughout the year.

I have a pretty pink one I named Aunt Julie (after the husband's aunt) since she gave it to me. Every time she blooms I think of Aunt Julie who is now deceased.

**Holly Ilex species** – If you have a holly in your yard, you are lucky – you have a great source of free greenery to decorate with. Holly sprigs last a very long time without water (about 2 weeks) and they will keep even longer in water. For a table decoration, I lay some out down the center of the table and mix it in with some ivy and go around the house singing the carol, The Holly and the Ivy, driving the husband crazy. Mix it with some juniper, pine cones, fresh Nandina berries and you have a beautiful and original spray. If you receive a balled holly tree for the holidays, it should not be kept for too long in a warm house or it may become bald. It can be planted outside any time.

**Mini Norfolk Pine** – Soft and tropical and extremely inexpensive, the potted Norfolk Pine usually comes decorated, an instant Christmas tree. After the holidays keep it wa-

tered regularly. Do not let it sit in water. After the holidays transplant to a bigger pot and keep it in a cool but humid place. It can be planted outside after frost is gone (late February) but put it in a protected location (it is extremely frost tender when it's young) and stake it up. Mine got moved at least three times and it has blown over in our fierce winds dozens of times before I found the right home for it.

**Rosemary, the Herb** – During the holidays, rosemary is usually found in conical shapes. They need to be kept moist but not overly wet or the roots will rot. Rosemary does not like heat from houses. Misting them now and then will prevent the needles from falling off. After the holidays keep them on your porch or lanai or in a protected cooler area. Plant outside in late February after the frost has left. Depending on the cultivar, rosemary will grow into a large shrub, is an attractor of many pollinators, and should be able to survive our winters.

**American Mistletoe** – Ever see those round green clumps up in the trees in winter? They are mostly in the live oaks and many times in the dead live oaks. That's mistletoe. Mistletoe is a "hemi" parasite (partial parasite) which means it does not take all its nourishment from the host (they love oaks) because it makes photosynthesis. It grows from New Jersey to Florida. Mistletoe is the state flower of Oklahoma.

Mistletoe has pointy, green, leathery leaves with waxy berries that are either red or white. The berries are eaten by birds and when the birds leave their droppings on a tree branch, within six weeks the mistletoe plant begins growing. It takes root right in the branch of the oak. When you look at the branch of the mistletoe, it looks just like a branch of the oak. In order to get it out of the

tree's system, you need to cut 18" down from where the mistletoe branch attaches.

Mistletoe was sacred to the Druids and kissing beneath it echoes its ancient fertility symbolism. The Druids believed that because the plant was growing from dead branches, and stayed alive throughout the winter, it must have mystical and life giving (sexual) powers. They had no idea about the parasite thing going on. Science is good and we need to have it to explain many things in our world but it's still fun to consider the mystical world. So when someone holds a branch of mistletoe over your head (and the fake stuff doesn't count), go ahead and smooch away. I, for one, am going to put it all around the house. Hopefully the husband will get the hint. □

Letter to the Editor:

### The Daily Sun's Mix

I also agree with the letter to the editor, and editor's note about the potentially divisive and ill conceived idea of the North and South MIX insert in the Newspaper. They could print an all-in-one insert called something such as, "The Villages Mix." Could someone there post or print in your next edition the email addresses of The Mix for those who want to express their feelings directly. Most people I've talked to also agree with the editorial. The Mix insert is: [themix@thevillagesmedia.com](mailto:themix@thevillagesmedia.com)

The Mix editor is listed as:

[hillary.crawford@thevillagesmedia.com](mailto:hillary.crawford@thevillagesmedia.com)

The Mix reporter is listed as:

[pat.jocelyn@thevillagesmedia.com](mailto:pat.jocelyn@thevillagesmedia.com)

Marty Newton □

Letter to the Editor:

### Hwy 466 Work

Why did [the town of Lady Lake] wait for the busy season to start work on Hwy 466 and delay traffic at the time of year when traffic volume doubles in the area? Tommy McDonough, project manager of The Villages, suggested [in the Daily Sun] that people seek alternate routes. And what would that route be? I don't see another public street route [parallel to and as an alternate to hwy 466] without going into The Villages. And that just doesn't seem to work either.

George Marshall □



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## Where to File Hospital Complaints

Please continue to send to the POA your stories about your experiences with the Emergency Room at The Villages hospital. We have thus far received over 150 stories or complaints describing the experiences and/or issues of Villagers with the ER. Thanks to all those who have chosen to tell us about their experiences.

We are still accepting stories, so please send us yours. These stories, all 150 of them, are a worthwhile assessment of the services of TVRH's ER. Please, tell us your story and help us address this issue.

The more stories we gather, the more comprehensive will be the review that we will be able to make. And, we may just make a difference in the quality of services provided by the hospital. We will protect your identity. We will ask you specifically for permission, if later needed, to share your detailed story with any of these investigating and review committees.

Based on many of the comments received, we can see that most people are unclear on the best way to file a complaint. So, here is the listing of who, what, and where to complain about medical service and personnel from any service provider:

• **For comments about The Villages Regional Hospital, contact:**

Mr. Tim Menton  
Administrator of TVRH  
1451 El Camino Real  
The Villages, FL 34748  
Phone: 352-751-8000  
[tmenton@cfhalliance.org](mailto:tmenton@cfhalliance.org)

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• **For comments on LRMC or to Mr. Menton's boss, contact:**

Mr. Lee Huntley, CEO  
Central Fla. Hospital Alliance  
600 E. Dixie Highway  
Leesburg, FL 34748  
Phone: 352-323-5762  
[lhuntley@leesburgregional.com](mailto:lhuntley@leesburgregional.com)

• **For comments about procedures, policies, staff, and medical care in general, contact the state agency:**

Holly Hunter, Secretary  
Florida Agency For Healthcare Adm.  
1717 Mahan Drive  
Tallahassee, FL 32308  
Phone: 1-888-419-3456  
<http://ahca.myflorida.com>

• **For comments about procedures, policies, staff, and medical care in general, contact the federal agency:**

Mark Chassin, MD, President  
The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Blvd.  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
Phone: 630-792-5000  
[www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org)

• **For comments about the actions of specific doctors and/or nurses, go to:**

Dr. Ana M. Viamonte Ros, Secretary  
The Florida Department of Health  
2585 Merchants Row Blvd.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
Phone: 850-245-4444  
<http://www.doh.state.fl.us>

Please copy the POA on correspondence to coordinate our activities on these matters. □

## Complaints About Medical Personnel

The Florida Department of Health is the agency to which complaints about medical professionals (doctors, nurses, dentists, etc.) should be filed. Each person with a grievance needs to fill out the three-page form available at this internet website address: [http://www.doh.state.fl.us/mqa/enforcement/frm\\_general-meducf.pdf](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/mqa/enforcement/frm_general-meducf.pdf)

This form covers the following areas:

- Quality of care
- Inappropriate prescribing
- Excessive tests or treatment
- Misdiagnosis of condition
- Failure to release patient records
- Insurance fraud
- Impairment/medical condition
- Advertising violation
- Mis-filled prescription
- Patient abandonment/neglect

The POA urges residents with any complaint about service at TVRH to file a formal complaint. By doing so, the hospital's staff will be put on notice that substandard care is unacceptable. Please file a complaint if you have had any bad experiences with TVRH. Otherwise, problems may continue.

If you want copies of the complaint form, please go online or call or email the POA. We can bring those forms to you, and we can help in the process of completing the forms. Just let us know ... we can help. □



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## Your CDD Meetings

The Villages CDDs meet at the Laurel Manor district offices:

Second Friday of the month:

SLCDD at 8:00 a.m.  
CDD # 2 at 9:30 a.m.  
CDD # 4 at 11:00 a.m.  
CDD # 1 at 1:30 p.m.  
CDD # 3 at 3:00 p.m.

Third Friday of the month:

VCCDD at 8:00 a.m.  
CDD # 5 at 9:30 a.m.  
CDD # 6 at 11:00 a.m.  
CDD # 7 at 1:00 p.m.  
CDD # 8 at 2:00 p.m. as needed  
CDD # 9 at 2:30 p.m. as needed  
CDD # 10 at 3:00 p.m. as needed

The AAC meets on the Wednesday before the second Friday of the month at 1:30 p.m., (new time) usually in the Savannah Center.

These meetings have been moving around to various locations, so watch the Daily Sun, the district governments' websites, or the Our Place column on Thursdays, for notices of schedule changes. Holidays can alter the schedule, and special meetings may be held at other days and times.

All Villagers are welcome at any of these worthwhile meetings which show our local governments in action. Residents wanting to know what's going on with their governments should attend, watch the proceedings, listen, and ask questions.

Also, the District Administrator's office conducts a two-hour CDD Orientation program once a week at 10:00 a.m. on Thursdays. Call 753-4508 for details.

CDD Orientation is informative and provides a good basic overview of how CDDs work and are organized. The POA recommends the program for all residents.

However, the POA also recommends that, after attending the orientation, you come to a POA general membership meeting for the rest of the story. You will not get the whole story at CDD Orientation. □

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## The Hospital Goofed Up! Now What?

**ASK WHAT HAPPENED.** In an ideal world, you'd get a prompt explanation. The reality, though, is that open discussion of a medical mistake, along with an apology, remains uncommon. Still, some hospitals -- like Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore -- are working toward more openness.

**GET A COPY OF YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS.** It's your right to see your file -- but you may not get your complete records, says Bruce G. Fagel, MD, an ER physician turned medical-malpractice lawyer in Beverly Hills, California. In a birth-injury case, for instance, one of the most crucial documents is the fetal-monitoring strip, but it won't be in your file unless you ask for it.

**START KEEPING YOUR OWN NOTES.** Write down everything, including dates, procedures, medications, and the names of health-care staffers who cared for you. If you opt to sue, your own record may be an effective tool against the usually vague notations in most patient's charts. "Doctors are constantly told what kinds of things not to put in medical records," Fagel says.

**SPEAK TO A HIGHER-UP.** If you don't get a satisfactory answer from the physician, talk to someone at a higher level. Also, ask to speak with an ombudsman and a patient advocate.

**FILE A COMPLAINT.** If you're still not satisfied, complain to your state or local health department, as well as to the Federal Hospital Joint Commission at the internet address: ([www.jointcommission.org/GeneralPublic/Complaint](http://www.jointcommission.org/GeneralPublic/Complaint)). Patients who've experienced an error usually want to make sure the same mistake never happens to anyone else; lodging a complaint is one of the best ways to do that.

**CONSULT A LAWYER.** If you don't get an acceptable answer from the hospital, you may want to consult a lawyer. If you decide to sue, a good medical-malpractice attorney can help you navigate the Byzantine world of state and local laws.

**Editor's Note:** This was reprinted from Health Magazine, July/Aug '08, written by Lorie Parch. □

Cats Have Nine Lives  
But Frogs Croak Every Night

## Bulletin Pick-Up

If the Bulletin is not delivered to your driveway within the first ten days of the month, you can get copies at the locations listed below. Please take the time to thank the manager or customer service staff for stocking the Bulletin for pick-up. This would be a big help to us.

### Plaza Grande Shopping Center

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Winn-Dixie Supermarket

### Spanish Plaines Shopping Center

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### Mulberry Grove Shopping Center

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### Southern Trace Shopping Center

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### Colony Plaza Shopping Plaza

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## Seniors Vs. Crime

If you have a problem related to financial losses due to scams by dishonest vendors, salespeople, or contractors you should consider contacting the Senior Sleuths for help at these Villages locations:

### Sumter and North Lake Counties

Sheriff's Annex -- Sumter County  
8035 E. County Road 466  
The Villages, FL 32162  
352-753-2799, ext. 4253

### Marion County

Sheriff's Annex  
8230 SE 165th Street -- CR 42  
The Villages, FL 32162  
352-753-7775

The hours and open days vary by location. So call for details. Wednesdays are best, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Assistance is only available on a limited basis. □

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**Lady Lake, FL 32158-1657**

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**POA e-mail** [poa4us@gmail.com](mailto:poa4us@gmail.com)

**Web Site** [www.poa4us.org](http://www.poa4us.org)

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## The POA Discount Partner Program

The POA Discount Partner Program is a continuing benefit for POA members. We hope to be adding additional Discount Partners in future months. Our website also carries this information so also check there.

Just show your current year POA Membership card when ordering the product or service listed here. And, please say "thanks" to our Discount Partners for participating in this program.

**All Things Fine** - 1171 Main St., Spanish Springs, 352-257-7384. 10% off all regularly priced merchandise. Excludes sale items. Not valid with any other offer.

**Away From Home Pet Sitting Service** in The Villages, 352-454-2623. 25% off first day service of pet sitting while you are away.

**Bonne Chimie Custom Skin Care** - 990 Alvarez Ave., Spanish Springs. 352-391-9600. 20% discount. Not valid with other promotions.

**Bravo Pizza** - 1080 Lake Sumter Landing, 352-430-2394. 10% off dine in & take out (whole meal). Not valid with any other discount offer.

**Caribongo** - 1041 Canal St., Lake Sumter Landing, 352-750-6147. Free color changing Tote Bag (retail value \$9.99) with the purchase of \$30.00 or more at the time of purchase. Offer not valid with any other offer or promotion. Sale items excluded. Limit one Tote per family.

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**The Club Golf Cart Security System for Villagers**, email at [yunk38@comcast.net](mailto:yunk38@comcast.net), 352-391-5077. \$3.00 discount (apx. 10%) for the Club Golf Cart Security device for POA members showing their membership card.

**Comfort Suites** - 1202 Avenida Central, 352-259-6578. 25% discount, November 2, 2008 through April 30, 2009. Not valid Leesburg Race Weekend. All reservations are based on availability. Must call hotel directly in advance for individual reservations.

### The POA Forum

The Forum is on the POA Website for your use. You can comment on anything going on in The Villages, respond to comments of others, and make your thoughts known. This is your Hometown now -- speak up!

Website at  
[www.poa4us.org](http://www.poa4us.org)

**Coral's Casual Patio and Fireplace Shoppe**, U.S.Hwy 441/27, across from Wal-Mart, 352-307-8522. Free bottle of "Dew Not" with the purchase of \$300.00 or more. One per customer.

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**Edible Arrangements** - 11962 CR 101 - Palm Ridge Plaza, 352-391-1334. \$4.00 off purchases over \$25.00.

**Enterprise Rent-A-Car** - In The Villages at 1076 Lake Sumter Landing. 352-751-2417. Special rates for POA members. A pick-up service is available. One-way rentals to Orlando and Sanford airports are also available.

**Flags & Flag Poles** - 845 CR 25 across from Lady Lake Post Office. 352-751-1876. \$4.00 off flag pole order of \$119 or more for POA members showing their current year membership card. Discount on "check and cash orders" only.

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