

The POA Bulletin

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

Issue 39.09

Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

The POA Website – www.poa4us.org

Free Copy



September, 2013

The Great Wall Of Paradise



Sometime between Friday evening August 9, and 6 a.m. Saturday morning August 10, 2013, the golf cart trail between Paradise Drive and The Villages Health System East Campus was closed off with two sections of concrete wall that matched the wall behind the properties on either side of the trail.

This trail had been used for the last fifteen years by eastside residents as a way to access the Health System medical facilities. Over time, other businesses have sprung up just north of the medical facilities (Lowes, Beall's, Aldi's, Wal-Mart, Cracker Barrel, etc.) and many eastside residents have found it to be a godsend that they can satisfy many of their shopping needs via golf cart and not venture out onto the always busy State Road 27/441 or have to use the narrow golf cart bridge.

While most residents have the alternative of using their car, clearly there are those who do not have a car, can no longer drive, or are afraid to drive on busy roads. These residents were beside themselves wondering how they could get to doctor appointments on the other side of the wall.

In some cases we were advised of couples where one uses the golf cart to get to a job at

an eastside business while the spouse uses the car for other necessary trips.

The recurring question we heard from affected residents was WHY? The closure was done under cover of darkness, no prior notice of the closing had been given to residents and no one was taking responsibility for erecting the wall which is on Developer owned property. Some eastside residents were even "walled out" Saturday morning, having gone to their night shift jobs at eastside businesses before the wall was put up. Out of necessity, they had to drive their golf carts along the 27/441 grass right-of-way to get home, as did others attempting to get to their Saturday morning doctors appointments. They were soon advised that they would receive a traffic citation if they continued to use the right-of-way.

(Continued on page 2)

Tuesday, September 17, 2013

POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Third Tuesday of the Month – 7:00 PM
Laurel Manor Recreation Center

Lightning Rods

Do They Work? Do You Need Them?
What Research Studies Show!

By Len Hathaway
Villages Study Group on Lightning

Audio and Visual in Overflow Room

DONUTS AND COFFEE AFTER THE MEETING
All Residents Welcome - Come and Join Us!

2013-2014 PARADE DATES



Mark Your Calendar Now

The Village Center Community Development District PARADES will coincide with the Entertainment Department FESTIVALS for 2013-2014.

Specifics:

All parades will be held at Spanish Springs Town Square in conjunction with the corresponding festival. All parades will begin at 3:30 p.m. utilizing the same route & staging area as the March 2013 Irish-American parade.

The festivals will begin at 5:00 p.m. Recreation, Special Events and Entertainment staff will provide logistical support for all parades.

Schedule:

Italian Festival and the Italian-American Parade will be held on **Tuesday, October 8, 2013**. See page 3 for more information!

Oktoberfest Festival and the German-American Parade will be held on **Tuesday, October 22, 2013**.

St. Patrick's Day Festival and the Irish-American Parade will be held on **Monday, March 17, 2014**.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WHO "SAVED THE PARADES"! □

Paradise Wall

(Continued from page 1)

With no other recourse, eastside residents then began utilizing a section of amenity maintained property a short distance south of the closed trail, just north of the Boone gate, to access the south end of the medical campus via the parking lot of the Life Family Practice Center. Dr. Kraucak, who owns the facility, was kind enough to allow golf cart traffic during this crisis, but this too was temporarily terminated by Villages authorities until Dr. Kraucak showed them that the property was owned by him and thus they could not deny his allowing access to his property.

On Monday, August 12th, the "Take Down The Wall" rally (organized by concerned residents) was held in Spanish Springs Town Square. POA President Elaine Dreidame was present and advised the participants that the POA had engaged an attorney who had already begun working through legal channels to urge the Developer to find a solution to the problem the wall had created for residents. (No one from the VHA spoke up – if there was anyone present.) She also used this opportunity to speak with some of the Lady Lake officials and later that day with some of the AAC members, regarding alternative solutions if discussions with the Developer were not successful.

At the rally the suggestion that no permit had been requested to build the wall circulated and later that day Town Manager Kris Kollgaard sent an email to Mayor Jim Richards and Town Commissioners advising them that staff had determined that back "in 1998 a resolution was approved to vacate lot 3422 (the lot on which the cart path is now located and which is owned by The Villages of Lake Sumter) so that it may be used as a thoroughfare for golf carts pursuant to a site plan approved by the Town Commission."

She further advised that she had just received "an application for a Demolition per-

mit to prepare the site for a new single family residence which was brought in from Murray Construction for the lot in question." (Murray Construction - you can find it under the Florida Corporations - Fictitious Names Category - is owned by the Villages Developer.) Would the Developer really have gone so far as to build a home on the lot in order to deny the residents access to the medical facilities, et al?????

Town Manager Kollgaard advised the Mayor and Town Commissioners that, "I gave the permit back to them and advised that there will be discussion at Monday's (August 19th) meeting regarding this lot and that they were welcome to attend."

It was not until Wednesday, August 14th, that any entity took responsibility for the erection of the wall. It was announced in an article in the Daily Sun that the Developer indeed had put up the wall because of a concern for security and that the Developer had agreed to "donate to the district government the home site on Paradise Drive, which had previously been utilized as a golf cart path. As a condition of that donation, the district would build and maintain a gate that would allow access to Village residents only."

If security was the only reason for concern, it seems like the solution was pretty obvious and would have saved all the time and expense it took for the Developer to cast the wall sections and have them installed, and more importantly, avoided the tremendous amount of angst it created in hundreds of residents. And if security was the only concern, why was the wall put up in the middle of the night, on a weekend, with no notice to residents, and why the silence until Wednesday's Daily Sun article?

On Thursday, August 15th, Janet Tutt advised the VCCDD Board of Supervisors that the controversy around the wall was the fault of social media spreading misinforma-

(Continued on page 4)

The POA Bulletin is published monthly by the Property Owners' Association of The Villages, Inc. Articles represent the opinion of the POA or the writer, and Letters to the Editor postings represent the opinions of the writers. Care is taken to ensure that facts reported herein are true and accurate to the best knowledge of the POA and are taken from reliable sources.

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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 governments are responsive to the needs and interests of residents.

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 our Developer and our local governments.

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

The POA has no ties or obligations to the Developer of The Villages which 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 Villages residents. □

The Villages Residents' Bill of Rights

RESIDENTS have RIGHTS to:

1. Be treated in a respectful, fair, and responsive manner by the Developer and our local government officials.
2. Have decision making authority for important issues in our community.
3. Elect our top government officials and approve appointments of the top administrative officials in our community.
4. Approve major purchases of common property and the related debt obligations assumed by residents.
5. Have local governments that are free of any conflict of interest issues.
6. Be charged honest monthly amenity 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, unslanted news reporting from local news sources.
10. Be informed beforehand by the Developer on any major change in our community. □



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The Villages Resident Italian Parade Spanish Springs 3:30 PM - October 8, 2013

Calling all Italians and Italian Americans and those who just want to join us for the day!!

The Villages Italian Parade Committee would like you all to join them this year in the first Residents' Italian Parade to show how proud we are of our heritage. Come with your decorated carts or bring a group of walkers and let's make this the best parade ever! The theme is Benvenuti Amici or Welcome Friends!

NOTE: All participants need a pass to enter the staging area and will be notified (by email) of the day and time to pick it up. All carts must be decorated in the Italian Theme and Walkers must be dressed in colors of the Italian flag.

Contact Frank Truglio, via email at thetrugs@gmail.com and please include your full name, phone number and email address. Cut off date is September 27th, 2013. □

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Make An Investment In Your Future - JOIN NOW!

We still have concerns in The Villages – the eventual outcome of the ongoing IRS investigation; warranties on leaking underground a/c refrigerant lines and defective roof shingles; District governance as we approach build out; and the desire for the creation of a resident elected Amenity Authority Committee for the Sumter Landing Community Development District residents, to name a few. The more members the POA has, the better able it will be to help manage good results for residents if there are problems. We are supporting you. We urge you to support us.

We put a Bulletin on almost every driveway in The Villages every month, regardless of whether or not you are an active POA member. We believe it is important that all residents have all of the information about happenings and events in The Villages as they make deci-

sions on various issues. The POA has no ties or obligations to the Developer which might compromise the POA position or its advocacy of Residents' Rights.

We are making every effort to research the issues and advise you of any pertinent information which was not included in the various Villages media outlets.

If you believe we are providing a service and you read the Bulletin, we urge you to become a POA member. (Membership form and information below – annual membership year is from January 1 through December 31.)

Paying a membership fee of \$10 per year is an investment in your future as you will be helping to keep the POA financially sound and your membership numbers will increase our "clout" if action needs to be taken. □

THE POA HAS YOUR BACK – DO YOU HAVE OURS?

POA 2013 Membership – New / Renewal and Contribution Form

Please complete each section and return to: The POA, P.O. Box 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158

New Renewal Number of People in Household

PLEASE PRINT!

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NAME(S)(2) _____
(DIFFERENT LAST NAME)

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CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____
(We respect your privacy. Your email address is for POA Official use ONLY)

1. MEMBERSHIP NEW/RENEWAL: Please enroll my POA membership for 2013 at the Annual Rate of \$10 per household. A check payable to POA is enclosed. Memberships are for Households and run annually from Jan 1st to Dec 31st. (check the box that applies)

I will include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with this form and my check.
Please mail my Membership Card to me
At the address above.

Please hold my POA Membership Card for me to pick up at one of the monthly POA meetings.

2. ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION: Please accept my additional contribution to the POA in the following amount:

\$ _____ (Please indicate amount) **3. TOTAL DUE:** _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

Dues Paid Date _____ (Office Use Only)

Paradise Wall

(Continued from page 2)

tion about why the wall was erected and that VHA President Bill Gottschalk had proposed to her the compromise solution of the Developer donating the property to the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) which could then install and maintain a gate permitting ingress and egress to Village residents only and that she and the VHA President then approached the Developer with this proposal. She asked the VCCDD to give pre-approval for the acceptance of the deed and the acceptance of the cost of the gate and its maintenance, pending approval of the AAC at their August 22nd meeting in order to expedite the action. Ms. Tutt advised the Board that the wall was erected due to liability and security concerns. (That still begs the questions – why no notice or discussion with residents about possible alternatives, why in the cover of darkness, and why, after fifteen years, did security and liability become such an issue that it required urgent action on the part of the Developer???)

On Friday, August 16th, at approximately 5 p.m., the Developer relented and had a crane come in and remove the wall.

We attended the Monday, August 19th, Town of Lady Lake Commission meeting, along with an overflow crowd. After discussion amongst the Commissioners it was apparent that they believed the wall was down for good. However, during audience com-

ments, many of them from Stonecrest residents, expressed their displeasure about the “required gate” and wanted to know if it truly was a requirement. After much discussion the Commissioners agreed that the original site plan which had designated the cart path included a gate and therefore they believed that they were compelled to follow the original intent of the plan as it was laid out in the 1998 Town of Lady Lake Resolution.

An audience member asked if a CDD could deny access to the public. Janet Tutt, VCCDD District Manager responded that the VCCDD attorney had already reviewed that question and had concluded that since the proposed transfer of the property from the Developer included the condition that it be a “resident only” gate it would be legal for the VCCDD to use security gates.

However, as the discussion ended, the Commissioners decided to further investigate the issue of security gates and agreed to direct their attorney to contact the Developer and LRMC and direct them to adhere to the conditions of the site plan which included the gate (to be according to the specifications of Orange Blossom Gardens). The issue is that during the meeting in August of 1998, further statements regarding the gates indicate the Leesburg Regional Hospital representative confirmed that the golf cart path “will be gated like the existing gated vehicle entrances) which at that time were gate card activated only, but now are push button and open to the public like all other gates in The

Villages. The Commission attorney was asked to report back to the Commission within 30 days.

Following the Town Commission meeting, Ms. Tutt advised the Amenity Authority Committee that John Wilcox, its Chair, had cancelled the Special Meeting on the issue of acceptance of the property in question which was previously scheduled for 1:45 p.m., on August 22nd, due to the fact that the Lady Lake Commissioners directive did not include the VCCDD/AAC as part of the discussion or resolution at this time.

So, THE WALL IS DOWN AND THERE CURRENTLY ARE NO SECURITY GATES. It would appear that the wall will stay down and that Villages residents will have access to the medical facilities, etc. but the question of whether or not there will be security gates which will deny access to the public is still to be determined.

In concluding, we hope that if there ever is a “next time”, the Developer will provide advance notice for changes that affect residents in such a major way, so that together they can come up with a solution before any heavy-handed action is taken. We will continue to send email alerts to POA members when important information is available.

P.S. *The POA apologizes for not being able to respond to the tremendous number of emails and telephone messages as we were busy researching the issue and working with residents and others to impress upon the Developer the need to find a solution to the problem he had created for a large number of residents.* □

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In The Villages

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POA Leadership Changes

First of all, we would like to thank **BILL GARNER**, who recently resigned his position as Vice President, for his years of service to the POA and, as such, to all of the residents of The Villages. Bill served as a member of the POA Board of Directors from 2003 - 2006, during which time he was the major force behind the push to completely renovate the Paradise Recreation Center which had fallen into total disrepair.

In 2006, he, along with several other POA Board members resigned from the Board to become a member of the POA Outsource Legal Action Team which successfully carried out the class action lawsuit against the Developer. The successful conclusion of the lawsuit resulted in the creation of the Amenity Authority Committee and \$40M+ for the VCCDD amenity fund which provides services and facilities north of CR466. Following the completion of the lawsuit, Bill rejoined the POA Board of Directors and served as Vice President from 2011, until mid-2013.

Secondly, at the August Board of Directors meeting, Jerry Ferlisi resigned his position as Treasurer and was elected by the Board to finish out the term of Vice President and Ed Highland resigned his position as Assistant Treasurer and was elected by the Board to finish out the term of Treasurer. (All POA Officer and Director terms are for one year: January 1 - December 31.)

At this same meeting the Board welcomed back Frank Carr, who had served as Treasurer from 2005, until the summer of 2010. Frank agreed to rejoin the Board as Assistant Treasurer in 2011, and retired (he thought) at the end of his term in 2012. While no longer a Director, he has agreed to serve as the POA Financial Systems Coordinator. □

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Two POA Director Positions Open

IF YOU APPRECIATE THE EFFORTS THE POA MAKES ON YOUR BEHALF, IT'S TIME TO SHOW IT BY GETTING INVOLVED - ONE GREAT WAY TO DO THAT IS TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE POA BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

As stated in the POA's mission statement, we exist and function as a "watch dog" for the residents of The Villages. Established in 1975, we are the original home owner's association that has no ties and/or affiliations to the Developer, local government or business interests. Through our efforts the POA strives to make The Villages an even better place in which to live, where Residents' Rights are respected and local government and the Developer are responsive to the needs and interests of all those who live in Florida's friendliest hometown.

If you think you might be interested in becoming a POA Director, please contact Elaine Dreidame at 753-5069, or you can email her at poa4us@hotmail.com. □

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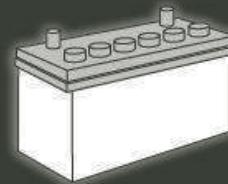
What's Happening At Orange Blossom Hills

There have been no announcements from the Developer regarding any possible restaurant operator or any indication when it might open.

However, there does appear to be some activity taking place inside the building at this time. The interior has been cleaned and according to our sources they are now waiting for the previous proprietor to remove his equipment and after that there will be some interior gutting and refurbishment. We do not know who will operate it but were advised there are several interested parties.

In the meantime, the pool is open. The Tiki bar is not open, but on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m., Sunset Café caters at the pool area and sells burgers and dogs as well as beverages, including beer and wine. □

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Golf Cart Crashes With Injuries

Recent reports (**ONLY THOSE THAT INVOLVED EJECTION, FALLING OUT OF THE GOLF CART, AND/OR INJURIES are provided**) that we have received from Village residents, Public Safety, and area law enforcement. (Note: we cannot guarantee that the information we receive is completely accurate about all the details.)

USE OF SEAT BELTS WILL KEEP YOU IN YOUR CART!

Saturday, August 3rd - 2:45 p.m. - Location: Morse Blvd & Stillwater Trail Gate

Myself & wife had just finished golf and we were on our way home in our golf cart. Approaching the crossing of Stillwater Trail, I looked to my left (East) for traffic - there was none. Then looking straight ahead to "Residents Car Lane", "it" was also clear. Due to the guard house and a very large and wide tree you are unable to see the "Visitors Car Lane", as the guard house is approximately 50 ft. before the gate, with the tall tree interfering with your sight of the lane (additionally, the driver in the car can't see me until we meet). Applying brakes and turning (left) at the same time, we collided. My wife **was ejected** from the cart. It's a miracle she wasn't seriously hurt. As the Police and

the EMS appeared simultaneously, I was in the midst of calling The Village Kart Aide to pick-up my cart and haul it to my home. Next dilemma, how was I going to get home, get my car and go to the hospital? Thankfully, the driver involved kindly said "I'll drive you home".

Bob Cheney

Monday, August 5th - 7:54 a.m. - The driver of a 2012 red Yamaha golf cart was westbound on Canal Street and had just crossed the intersection of Odell Circle when he realized there was a golf cart in front of him making a left turn. He tried to come to a sudden stop resulting in over correcting the steering wheel. The **golf cart was overturned** damaging the right side. The cart had scrapes on the right side of the body and the right side of the roof. The driver was **treated by EMS for a head injury**. He was transported to the Villages Regional Hospital. The driver stated that he did not strike any other vehicle and that a person had helped him when his vehicle rolled on its side. The vehicle was disabled and was towed from the site.

Monday, August 5th - 12:08 p.m. - The driver of a 2012 Chevy Volt stated she was southbound on North Morse Boulevard and approaching San Marino Drive. She advised that she was turning right on San Marino Drive and did not see the 2009 Club Car. The driver of the Volt acknowledged that she collided with the golf cart, causing minor damage to the front passenger side bumper of

her car. The driver of the golf cart was southbound on North Morse Boulevard in the golf cart lane. The Volt struck the driver's side of her golf cart, **causing the golf cart to tip over on its side**. The golf cart sustained damage to the passenger side door and front quarter panel. No injuries were reported and the driver of the Volt was cited for careless driving.

Friday, August 9th - 3:45 p.m. - A 1999 Mustang was traveling east on Odell Circle approaching the intersection of Canal Street. A 2009 Star LSV was traveling north on Canal Street through the intersection with a green traffic signal. As the LSV entered the intersection the driver of the Mustang ran a red light (A witness confirmed this action). The driver of the LSV took evasive action (steering east) and the left rear side of the LSV struck the right rear side of the Mustang which caused the **LSV to tip over and it landed on the driver's leg**. The driver received minor scrapes and abrasions and was tended to by EMS, but refused transport to a hospital. The driver of the Mustang was cited for disobeying a traffic signal. □



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AAC Meeting Summary

August 7, 2013

Old Business Topics Included:

- The Committee approved Bid #13B-032 with Down to Earth for the Paradise Park Area A Improvement Project, to include the flexi-pave alternative with curbing (Total price approximately \$637,500). Paradise Park Area B will be discussed in detail at the August 22, 2013, workshop.
- Kimley-Horn reported to the AAC that the Woodshop parking area project should be completed within the next month.
- Dugout construction at Knudson Field has been completed and the new restrooms should be completed today. The parking lot will be repaved at the end of the current season.
- Staff has scheduled a meeting for 1:00 p.m. on August 14, 2013, at La Hacienda Recreation Center to review the Tierra Del Sol expansion plans with residents.
- A meeting will be held on August 30, 2013, at 9:00 a.m., at the Savannah Center to receive resident input regarding the use of the former El Santiago restaurant.
- The joint workshop to discuss re-painting of homes will be held Sept 27, 2013, at 1:30 p.m., at Laurel Manor Rec Center.
- Concern was expressed with the extended installation time that occurred with the gate cameras currently being installed.

Staff was directed to provide for a more timely process for future installations.

- The AAC received and approved the updated site plan for the Silver Lake Recreation Center refurbishment project.

Consent Agenda:

- Approved the meeting time change and meeting schedule for the AAC for fiscal year 2013-2014. Meetings will be in the Savannah Center, at 9:00 a.m., on the Wednesday before the second Friday of each month.
- Recommendations to award bids for the following were approved:
 - Landscape and irrigation maintenance for VCCDD areas of Districts 1 and 2 to The Shepherds Landscaping.
 - Landscape and irrigation maintenance for the Lady Lake/Lake County portion of The Villages to ValleyCrest Landscape Maintenance.
 - Landscape and irrigation maintenance for VCCDD areas of District 3 to Down To Earth Landscape and Irrigation Contractors.
 - Pool deck renovations at Chatham, Springdale and Summerhill pools to Hardscapes of Central Florida, LLC.

Committee Member Comments:

- One Committee member along with a resident requested further consideration and support for the undertaking of a feasibility study for an indoor athletic facility that could accommodate indoor activities such as basketball, volleyball, badminton, handball, etc. The suggestion was

that the cost of the study be shared by the VCCDD, SLCDD and the Developer (who still collects close to half of the amenity fees). After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Moyer, an AAC member and VLS Vice President, made it clear that the Developer would be unwilling to sell land to the districts for this type of facility which would compete with MVP Sports Clubs.

- A member of the Committee raised some questions regarding recent advertising for an assisted and independent living facility which stated amenity contracts were available for its rental residents. District Manager Tutt explained that this privilege had been extended by the Developer and was limited in this case to 25 specific units which would not change over time.

Please go to the www.districtgov.org website for the Official Minutes, Agendas and Meeting Schedule.

NEXT AAC MEETING – WEDNESDAY, September 11th, 1:30 P.M., AT THE SAVANNAH CENTER

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AAC Capital Improvement Plan Workshop

On July 24, 2013, members of the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) met with the district staff to review the five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP is basically a listing of all Amenity System capital assets and the schedule of any spending for their renewal and refurbishment over the next five years. This spending is above and beyond normal annual maintenance and repair. The CIP reflects expected spending of almost \$7M over the five year period October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2018, with almost all of the money coming from the General R&R fund.

Renewal and refurbishment of recreation centers accounts for a little more than half of the \$7M (\$3,561,676), and the golf maintenance and facilities portion accounts for \$1,892,500. The rest is split over non-facilities such as fences, landscape/irrigation, gates and a storage yard for \$1,012,776 (the majority is for the gate camera project), parks and fields for \$216,609 and postal facilities for \$102,382.

The CIP for typical recreation center improvements would include a schedule for roof replacement, flooring replacement, restroom renovations, theater lighting, curtain

and sound system upgrades/replacements and HVAC replacement. In addition the various outdoor facilities at the recreation centers have scheduled refurbishment and reconstruction timetables as well. These schedules are then modified for actual experience (i.e., an AC unit may not last as long as expected or a roof may be in good shape beyond the expected useful life).

The golf maintenance plan covers replacement/rebuilding of greens, tees and bunkers as well as irrigation system upgrades and course landscaping renewal and replacement. Golf facilities planning would cover such things as the starter shacks, restrooms, parking lots, cart paths, pump stations and maintenance buildings.

Beyond the CIP, the AAC discussed the list of new projects that would be in addition to the existing capital projects such as Paradise Park, Saddlebrook picnic pavilion, Chula Vista reconstruction, La Hacienda and Southside pool renovations, Tierra Del Sol recreation center expansion and the Silver Lake recreation center improvements. The expense of these projects is expected to be paid from the law suit settlement funds the AAC has accumulated. (See related information, on page 12, in the response to a letter to the editor.)

One additional agenda item raised by an AAC member was for committee consideration of a suggestion to provide high speed connectivity between all entry gates and possibly between all district facilities. Staff will

explore options and associated expense to provide such connectivity as well as a review of benefits derived. □

IRS Update

At the August 15th VCCDD meeting, Janet Tutt reported that on August 13, 2013, the District received an updated 5701 Notice of Proposed Issue. This 5701 is another procedural step involved in the IRS's examination of the District's tax status.

The cover letter from Internal Revenue Agent Debbie Arceneaux requested that the District review the enclosures and tell them whether they agree or disagree with their analysis. She advised that, "If you do not agree please provide us with a written explanation within 30 days from the date of this letter (8/7/13). If you agree, you may be able to enter in to a closing agreement to resolve the issue(s) described and avoid a proposed adverse determination."

The IRS position continues to be that, "the Center District was not delegated a sufficient amount of any sovereign power to allow it to qualify as a political subdivision during the period of November 29, 1993, through June 1, 2004."

The District attorneys are reviewing the 37 page document and are determining how a response will be structured. (This document can be found on districtgov.org - left hand column - click on IRS Updates.) □

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Fire Safety in The Villages

Chief Mike Tucker, head of The Villages Public Safety Department, was the guest speaker at the July POA meeting. Highlights of his presentation which addressed some of the fire related topics of concern to Village residents are as follows:

The incidence of fire in The Villages is relatively low. He advised that the number one cause of fires in The Villages and everywhere else is only one factor - and that's PEOPLE. Somewhere along the line when you are checking into the cause of a fire you will find that at some point a person caused that situation. This year in the Sumter and Marion County portions of The Villages, there will likely be at least 14,000 calls. Seventy-eight percent of them are medical in nature and only two percent of those 14,000 calls are related to fire. This two percent indicates an incident where there are flames which can be homes, car fires, dumpster fires, brush fires, etc. This means that the remaining twenty percent is everything else, such as ducks or cats in the drains, smoke detector battery changes, etc.

The reality is that fires are a significantly small part of the emergency responses and that number is relatively consistent across most fire departments in the country.

One of the biggest problems that fire ser-

vice officials have is that people watch CSI and they are able to solve every 'mystery' in 60 minutes. Unfortunately, it is not that way when they are in a real emergency. It takes a lot of time and resources to be able to solve the causes and origins of fires. Chief Tucker acknowledged that residents usually assume that the fire fighters can figure out exactly what burned and what caused it right away. Upon responding to a fire situation one of the things that they do initially is try to determine an area of origin and that step is relatively simple. Understanding where the fire started is not too hard and when you start looking at the burn patterns you can begin to figure out about where the fire started. Then you have to look for things like whether or not criminal activity was involved, whether it was some type of equipment malfunction or something that somebody did wrong.

If it is not criminal in nature, they turn the investigation over to the property owner and their insurance company to conduct any further investigation on the cause. He noted that insurance companies pay investigators a lot of money to do the best they can to identify another responsible party because they do not want to pay out. If there is suspected criminal activity, the State Fire Marshall's office is contacted to come in and do the investigation. In The Villages, they have an average of approximately two home fires per year so the rate of fires that we have here is not sufficient enough for our fire departments to become proficient in fire investigations.

Discussions have arisen regarding the safety of the Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST) vs the traditional black pipe as a means of carrying gas inside the home. Chief Tucker did not take a position on that issue and advised that both products are found in The Villages and both are authorized by the State of Florida and the National Building Codes and as public safety officials the only thing they have the authority to do is to enforce what is in the building code.

Chief Tucker indicated that his position was the same on lightning rods in that he espoused that if you want lightning rods and they make you feel safer, get them. However, if lightning rods do not make you feel safer, don't get them. But, if you get them, make sure that they are installed by a company that is properly licensed, bonded and has the ability to certify that system because there is a certification process and it is very tedious to put in a lightning protection (rods) system as it is more than just putting up rods. Some of the here today - gone tomorrow companies that are selling in The Villages will tell you that they can put up a lightning rod system for you for \$800 - \$900 and do it in about two hours. They cannot do it correctly and they will put something on your home that is absolutely dangerous.

There is no one hundred percent guarantee that your home will be struck by lightning or not struck by lightning. Nobody can guarantee that your home will not be struck by

(Continued on page 11)

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Fire Safety

(Continued from page 10)

lightning if you put lightning rods on your home. However if you put up lightning rods and they are **properly installed** and your home is struck by lightning **it should go straight to ground**. If they are not properly installed and that home is struck by lightning it will go into your house, so do not purchase a system from an unlicensed operator.

Lastly, Chief Tucker was asked to address the recent sales presentations for the "fancy" smoke detectors which are being conducted at the Golden Corral. He advised against purchasing anything from anybody that is trying to scare you into buying a product, but did acknowledge that these particular "fancy" smoke detectors are unbelievable in their capabilities, but are they worth the additional dollars? The smoke detectors installed in your home meet the building codes, they just don't do the fancy things that the more expensive detectors provide. A point to remember is that the **life of a smoke detector is usually around 8 – 10 years** so be sure to replace them on a timely schedule. □

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Church on The Square Closed Permanently?

My wife and I attended church service at the Church on the Square before the building was closed for renovations. It was a very sad day because everyone was saying goodbye -- the singers, the pastor, everybody. On the way out I asked the pastor if the church was being closed permanently, and he said 'yes'. In your June POA newsletter you applauded the Developer for his decision to expand the 'church' on his dime. Inside the article the Developer was quoted as saying "We can assure you that you will have some of the same things you have now..." It appears, now, that the Church on the Square **will not** be used as a church. No place can I find anything said, by anyone, that the church will continue as a church.

I think the Developer has been very sneaky. There are many people who attend the church services, and my guess is that most of them think services will be contin-

ued. I suspect that the Developer knows a lot more than he is telling so that he doesn't get flack from the hundreds (thousands?) of people who think church services will be continued. In your POA article the Developer is quoted as saying, "There is sort of an artist's rendering of what the outside will look like...:" He goes on to say 'we don't know the details', 'we don't know completely how it's going to be programmed', etc. Frankly, it is hard to believe that only 2 months before renovation there is only an artist's rendering, and that they don't know any other details?

I would like to know how we can get the details. I would like to see the Developer much more transparent on plans that affect people in The Villages. The Church on the Square is an icon of The Villages, and if it is to be used only as an entertainment center, and not a church, people should know this immediately. How can you help? P. Beinetti

Editor's Note: Unfortunately, we have no influence in this matter. It is strictly the decision of the Developer and his staff. □

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Expenditures of Lawsuit Settlement Funds

The more we read and consider the current situation, it seems that the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) is not meeting the requirements of the Judgment. The section to "provide appropriate levels of Amenities" is not being addressed in our area - De La Vista Village. I believe we are now in the 4th year of being paid the settlement funds and I calculate the money is depreciating at least a rate of 3% per year, the difference between the interest rate they get and the cost of building costs increasing every year.

Pauline Houghton

Editor's Note: The settlement created the AAC and it seems clear to us that they are working hard to refurbish and upgrade ALL amenity facilities north of CR466. There are many capital projects that have been recently completed or are moving along toward com-

pletion, including Paradise Pickleball courts, Paradise Park trails, walking path and restrooms, Knudson Softball Field dugouts and restrooms, Saddlebrook picnic pavilion, Chula Vista Rec Center (enclose lanai, construct new billiards room and enlarge multi-purpose room), La Hacienda pool (reconstruct restroom and shower facility), Southside Rec Center (total renovation of facility), Tierra Del Sol Rec Center (expand facility to include kitchen, indoor restrooms and new décor), Silver Lake Rec Center (expand card room, kitchen area and office space; improve ingress and egress to center; replacement of pool tables) and the Woodshop parking improvements. Preliminary data show these items alone total over \$3.5M. At the same time, major upgrades have been taking place

at most of our executive golf courses and we now have a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that tracks all capital items and schedules all expected refurbishment. We believe these actions have indeed made it possible for the amenity system to provide appropriate levels of service to all residents.

Specifically in your area, the AAC is making substantial upgrades to Chula Vista and Tierra Del Sol. While the Developer may have decided to increase the number of rec centers and pools per home in new areas south of CR466, there is no way that this can be accomplished to the north. The AAC does not own land to place additional facilities nor would they ever get agreement from adjoining property owners (residents) to place a pool or recreation center next door. □

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Underground Waterline Insurance

I keep on getting an offer from "Homeserve USA Repair Management Corp" regarding underground water line insurance. Do you happen to have any report or complaint as to the legitimacy of this company?

Angel DeFiesta

Editor's Note: The District covers the water lines to your meter and your home owners insurance will likely cover them inside the house. Your exposure is a short distance of pipe between the meter and your house. Many home insurance policies cover this - call and ask your insurer if you are covered. If not, there is a slim possibility that this could occur to your home and it would be relatively inexpensive to repair - depending of course on the distance between your house and the meter.

You might call Seniors Vs. Crime and see how many complaints have been filed against this company if you decide you want to purchase this type of insurance. 689-4600, Ext. 4606. □

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ARC Permit Application Modifications

Have you noticed that the ARC permit application has changed twice in the last three months? The changes are aimed at shifting the risk to the homeowner. Essentially, the District and the ARC deny any responsibility for any errors the ARC may make in the permitting process, now requiring the homeowner to sign a hold harmless clause as part of the application. This appears to be at odds with Sections 1.1 and 1.3 of the ARC Manual.

BOTTOM LINE, HOMEOWNER BEWARE! John McKinney

Editor's Note: We contacted Diane Tucker at the VCDD office and she provided the following explanation: Since the inception of the District's adopted Rule and architectural review process it has been stated to the Boards that the related documents would be working documents as staff began the implementation process. The architectural review application has changed numerous times since we began the process. As we add additional Districts and some of the deed restrictions are different, we revise or update not just the architectural review application, but the matrix, standards and other documents pertaining to Deed Compliance and Architectural Review process.

The Architectural Review Committee (Committee) is not a regulatory or permitting committee that reviews and provides approval or denial based on building, zoning, water management, or other regulations that fall under the responsibility of the respective County Building Departments or the Water Management Districts. As you know, and as stated in Section 1.1 and 1.3 of the ARC manual, the Committee determination is based on the District's adopted Rule, guidelines, procedures, policies, standards and aesthetics. The acknowledgement, indemnification, and hold harmless were included because the Committee does not have the knowledge of the laws of the other governmental agencies. It is the responsibility of the property owner to make sure that they comply with those laws as required by the respective county building department and applying for and receiving a permit if required. The Committee does not issue permits. □



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Roof Shingles Update

At my last writing to the POA, my claim was approved and I was offered new shingles and all the required labor. A few days later I received an email stating that there was a "miss-print" in my settlement letter; and I would not be getting paid for the labor. I objected vehemently; provided data of others who registered their claim after me and got full labor; and threatened legal action. Lo and behold, two days later the customer service supervisor called me. He stated that my claim had been "re-evaluated". The result of the re-evaluation was I would receive full labor after all. I assume the check is in the mail, but I do not have it yet.

Owens-Corning appears to be very inconsistent in its settlements based on my Hadley neighbors. Sacks Roofing and Scott Smith Roofing have been very helpful in collecting

information on the original installation and settlements to homeowners. Bob Rutkowski

Editor's Note: Thank you for the follow-up information. It appears that the Warranty Department is not taking up the fight for the residents, but it does appear that if the residents push hard to get their fair settlement that Owens-Corning (OC) is giving in. Several years ago OC lost a class action lawsuit and likely does not want another one filed against them.

We would suggest working with one of the roofing companies identified above and if you are not able to receive fair compensation from OC that you write up the details and forward it to poa4us@hotmail.com and if there are enough of you, the POA will look into helping the impacted residents file a class action lawsuit. □

problem or maybe the pad is breaking down. Thank you. Steve and Jenny Robinson

Editor's Note: We have had only two such reports -

1) The concrete slab was not sealed properly so stains on the concrete would seep up thru the carpet and

2) The carpet had been stained to the extent that it got into the carpet pad so it will never really go away - it will show up again shortly after cleaning.

We would suggest that if you call in someone from the carpet industry that you get at least three opinions/estimates and then check with Seniors Vs. Crime before you make your final decision to see if your top choice has given others problems. □

Electronic Delivery of The Bulletin

Why can't we receive the POA newspaper electronically and save the cost of printing and delivering a paper copy? P. Shunk

Editor's Note: The major reason we put the Bulletin on the driveways - of every resident - POA member or not, is that it is our only means of attracting new members. Without their membership we would have no way of having their email address to deliver the Bulletin electronically.

(Continued on page 15)

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Electronic Bulletin

(Continued from page 14)

Also, we have learned our readers prefer the paper copy which is a good thing, because it would be “labor intensive” to identify and skip those households which are already members. (The Bulletin, as far back as the year 2002, can be found on poa4us.org.)

Response from resident: All good reasons. Thanks for the response. And thanks for the good job in publishing the paper. □

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Even though we typically have mild winters in this area, fall is about the time when we go for that annual cleaning and tune-up to our home heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Lucky for you there is usually a “special” coupon in the local newspaper. You can get your annual cleaning and service for only \$39.95 - what a deal! Clip, snip, and save a bundle - **or will you?** Many times these coupons are just a “loss leader” to gain entry to your home and gain access to your HVAC system. Once there, **other work not covered by the coupon “needs” to be done** - often to the tune of \$1000’s. **Or does it???** If it was working OK when you called them for “routine” service, why does the entire system need replacing today? **It could be a major upsell scheme.**

How do you protect yourself against these scams, upsells, or outright bait ‘n switch schemes by unscrupulous HVAC contractors? One of your best defenses against rip-offs is prior planning. Because you often call them in emergency situations, there’s the temptation to go with the company that can be there five minutes ago. Do some research before you need them and find a quality HVAC contractor with a great reputation. In the long run, you’ll be cooler in summer, warmer in winter, and happier all year around.

What else can you do? If you call for a repair on your furnace or air conditioner and the service technician finds that you need to replace multiple components you should be skeptical. Typically one component can fail, maybe two, but not several components all at once. If this happens you should get a second opinion before spending the big bucks. If you find that you must add refrigerant every service call for your air conditioner, this is a scam to make money off of you every year. Any reputable contractor will

(Continued on page 16)



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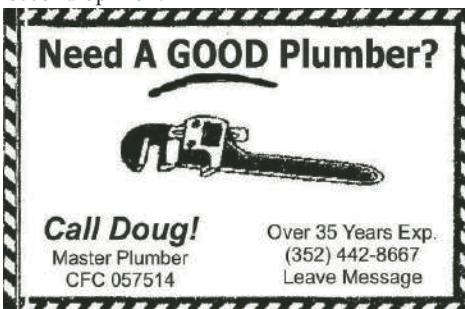
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Seniors Vs. Crime

(Continued from page 15)

find the leak with a pressure test and repair it. No air conditioning system should leak refrigerant regularly.

If a contractor tells you that your furnace is leaking carbon monoxide and needs to be replaced, ask to see the proof. If they can't show you a crack in your heat exchanger and can't show you a carbon monoxide reading on a carbon monoxide meter or detector, then ask them to leave and call someone else for a second opinion.



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Often, at the completion of the work, you are asked to sign "something" - usually the work order. **READ IT!** Some are really a "release". The 'fine print' will state that you acknowledge that all work has been completed, has been tested, and that you are totally satisfied, have no questions, concerns, qualms or recourse. If this isn't completely true, **don't sign it!** It affects your rights to contest shoddy or unnecessary work.

Other good advice includes:

Always use a licensed HVAC contractor that you trust. There are plenty of good ones around.

Ask for proof of needed repairs when it makes sense and ask for more information when something sounds fishy.

Get a second, third or more opinions before you spend the big bucks. Get multiple estimates to make sure you are getting a fair

deal. Never get rushed or pushed into an agreement for major HVAC repairs.

Read what you sign - before you sign it!

Never pay in advance for "special order" parts or equipment.

Use your common sense and the TGTBT Rule - if it sounds Too Good To Be True, it probably is. Walk away!

Stay alert, be smart, be aware and be wary. Remember, no one will watch out for your interests better than you. When in doubt as to what else you can do to protect yourself, contact your local Seniors Vs Crime office in The Villages for assistance. They can be reached at 352-753-7775 in the Marion County Sheriff's Office, or at 352-689-4600, Extension 4606, in Sumter County Sheriff's Office. Volunteers at both Villages offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. □



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Our Gardening Column:**Our Lawns
In Summer**

by Anne Lambrecht, Master Gardener
annegarden@embarqmail.com

Many of you know that I hate lawns but the poor things do need a little mentioning here. Our turfgrass has been through a very tough, wet summer. We've had miserably high heat and daily rains. Many of us are away and have our irrigation set to run. Some of us have our irrigation systems on twice a week because it's "ok to do so". This time of year when I walk through my grass, a flutter of little light brown moths are disbursed in all directions. There are brown patches and tons of weeds and ruts where the lawn guys have torn up the lawn.

The folks north of CR466 typically have St. Augustine (Floritam) grass and the majority of folks south of CR466 have Zoysia (Empire) grass. Also popular here is Bahia. Bermuda grass is mainly on the golf courses. Each one has their pluses and negatives. Most of us have lawn care and fertilizer experts to help maintain our lawns.

Here are some basic guidelines to follow or to ask your experts to be aware of:

General Turf Culture:

1. Soil characteristics greatly determine performance. Our soil is sand or clay and the turf laid down on top is embedded in a layer of topsoil, so you need to get the roots going strong so that they can grow deep and be able to live in that sand or clay. To accomplish this, water, fertilizer and mowing will all have a say in the results.

2. Water is critical. Water is most needed in the month of May! You should water your lawn twice a week in May. Watering is also needed during our dryer months: November through March. Lawns should receive 1" of water a week which is anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour. This does not mean in a couple of doses. By watering all at once, you are encouraging a deep root system because the roots will grow down deep to reach the water. Deep roots mean healthy grass. In winter, when lawns are sleeping, water less—maybe once every 14 days. And please,

(Continued on page 18)

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Summer Lawns

(Continued from page 17)

please, don't water at night, especially in summer. The reason? The water stays on the leaves and invites fungus due to humidity.

3. Mow properly to ensure health. Cut to the proper height for your kind of grass. Keep blades sharp (sharpen every 25-30 hours!). We have a lawn service: very nice young men who mow several neighbors' lawns in one fell swoop. When I see that the tips of the blades are ragged as if they are being chewed off, I call and fuss at these fel-

lows to sharpen their mowers. Jagged edges mean that you contribute to the harm of the grass and thus invite disease and insects because of it. They need to disinfect their blades as well, because this is how disease is spread.

4. Fertilizer: Nitrogen is soluble and if applied properly to healthy turf, all nutrients will be taken up by the plant. Apply nitrogen when the plant (roots/shoots) is actively growing. Look for a fertilizer where at least 50% of the nitrogen is in slow-release form; add potassium in the fall, as this contributes to root health and cold tolerance. UF recommends 15-0-15. NO fertilizer should be applied between October 1 and March 15. The University of Florida says "no" to Weed & Feed products because there is too much nitrogen and it ends up in the aquifer. I see the lawn care people out spreading something around the yard and out I go to fuss at them. "What are you doing?" They get a sick look on their face and explain that we are on a plan and they've GOT to do something in

November and December so they're spreading fertilizer. So I just send them home. (Please don't tell the Husband).

Another question you can ask your lawn maintenance service: are they *licensed to distribute fertilizer* under the new "Best Management Practices" laws of Florida? They should be able to show you their certificate or card.

Types of Turf in Villages

1. Bahia – excellent drought tolerance, few insect problems (mole crickets, fall army worm); weeds will be a problem (they get those V-shaped seed heads); low fertility.

2. St. Augustine – poor drought tolerance (needs 1.5" water per week); chinch bugs are a problem; can suffer cold damage in extreme years; brown patch and take-all root rot are disease problems; dwarf varieties for shade (expensive); mow 3"-4"

3. Zoysia – very pretty, soft "petite" grass; poor drought tolerance (needs 1.5" water per

(Continued on page 19)



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12-1A-1417

Summer Lawns

(Continued from page 18)
 week); slow recovery from cold; mow at 2.5" to 1.5"

Weed problems in turf

You will always have some weeds--it just can't be helped. What you can do is use a strategy to crowd out weeds by maintaining solid, healthy turf cover. Mow and hand weed to avoid spread. Pre-emergence materials are more readily available than post. This should be applied in January and February. It is difficult to control grass weeds (and sedges) vs. broadleaves, in a grass crop.

Insect problems in Turf

Scout for insects to minimize damage. After seeing all the moths in my lawn, I inspected the grass which was weak, spindly and had lots of little green worms eating the bases of the grass. I called our maintenance service and they came out with a specific insect killer. Take heart, they will go away when the weather changes.



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Disease problems in Turf

Not every turf grass problem is automatically a disease problem. Many of the non-descript disease symptoms of diseases can be mimicked by improper cultural practices, misused pesticides, nematodes or insect injury. Diseases are continuous conditions that will not stay static but will increase and spread. It is often faster to rule out involvement of other factors than to verify the presence of a disease. Some diseases have one or more pathogens (like a fungus and a nematode) or a pathogen and a cultural stress.

Diseases can be expected on poorly maintained turf. Imbalances in nitrogen and potassium levels as well as periods of high humidity, over-irrigation, rain, heavy dews or fog will favor the incidence of many of the fungal diseases of turf. You can treat with fungicides specific to your grass type. But really study your lawn issues first and consult your lawn care professionals before swinging into action.

The other day I was telling the Husband of a recent bout with heatstroke while working in the yard. I thought I could take the

(Continued on page 20)

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Summer Lawns

(Continued from page 19)

heat but then I felt dizzy and nauseous and had to get a cold shower right away. I was hoping for some sympathy but instead he offered to rip out all the garden beds and replace them with St. Augustine grass. Isn't he thoughtful?

For more information:

Florida Lawn Handbook by Kathleen C. Ruppert and Robert J. Black University Press of Florida == St. Augustine grass for Florida Lawns: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh010> == Bahia grass for Florida Lawns: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh006> == Zoysia grass for Florida Lawns: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh011>

The above co-authored by Dr. Laurie Tremholm, UF's Goddess of Lawns. □

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(Continued on page 21)

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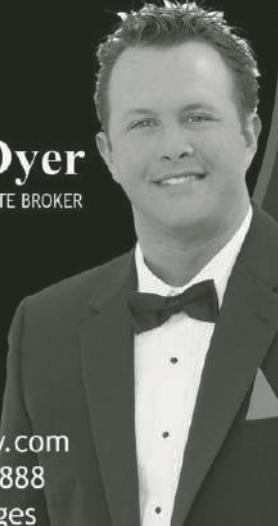
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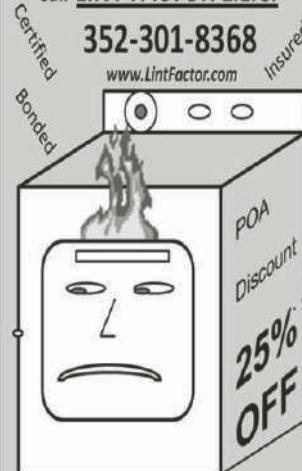

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Plaza Jewelers - 16770 S. Hwy. 441, Baylee Plaza, 307-3846. 20 to 40% POA saving off retail price; all watch batteries \$3.

(Continued on page 23)

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Discount Partners

(Continued from page 22)

Sparr Building & Farm Supply - At Hwy 44 & Signature Dr, Wildwood. 330-1718. 10% POA disc on fertilizer, water softener salt & pool supplies. Sale items excluded.

Stewart Lawn & Landscape Maintenance - 347-3792. 20% POA discount.

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Tip Top Tree Experts - All tree work, landscaping, paving, pressure wash, auto body & paint. 10% POA discount. 516-8820.

Tri-County Landscaping - 25% POA member discount off first 2 months of lawn care, 10% all other services, 352-693-3202.

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POA discount. John Sainiak, 516-2976.

Vic's Embers - 7940 US Hwy. 441, Leesburg, 728-8989. Complimentary after-dinner cocktail or dessert for each in the party for POA members. Not valid w/other special offers or if in complementary bus.

Villages Apparel - Southern Trace Shopping Center, 750-1600. 10% POA disc off custom screen printing, min order 25 shirts.

Villages Car Wash and Lube - Bichara Blvd, La Plaza Grande Center, 753-1306. \$1 POA disc off regular silver or gold wash.

Villagers Home Watch - Call us at 750-2522. 10% POA disc off regular monthly rate of \$48 for first three months of service.

Weed Getter Landscaping & Lawn Maintenance - Trim Hedges, Mulch, Planting, Etc. 10% POA discount, 361-2854.

Wholesale Computer Components - Terrace Shoppes Spruce Creek, Summerfield, across from Wal-Mart, 245-1500. \$15 POA disc on any computer repair. □

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