

THE



Issue 40.03



BULLETIN

March 2014

Free Copy

Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

The POA Website – www.poa4us.org

It's TAX Time Again!

Need FREE HELP Filing Your Tax Return??

Information presented by Jerry Hanson, District Coordinator, and Roy Wittich, Co-Training Coordinator of the local AARP Tax-Aide program at the January POA Meeting:

AARP Tax-Aide is a 40 year old program. It is the nation's largest free, **volunteer-run** tax assistance and preparation service available to taxpayers (you do not have to be an AARP member) with **low and middle income**, with **special attention to those aged 60 and older**. The Tax-Aide Volunteers are trained in cooperation with the Internal Revenue Service and nationwide help over two million taxpayers file their tax returns each year. Volunteers are trained to assist in filing the 1040 tax form and basic schedules. (Taxpayers with complex tax returns are advised to seek paid tax assistance.)

There are nearly 7,000 AARP Tax-Aide sites nationwide which will operate through April 15th, and we are extremely fortunate to have four of those sites located **right here in The Villages**. Another great thing is that starting this year you can make an appointment. (They will still accept walk-ins, but you may have to wait for a very long time.) The four sites, manned by the 180+ volunteers here in The Villages, and their hours of operation are as follows:

- Paradise Rec Center – Make appointments

at Recreation Desk – Monday 8:30AM – 3:00PM

- La Hacienda Rec Center – Make appointments at Rec Desk – Tuesday 8:00AM – 3:00PM
- Mulberry Grove Rec Center – Make appointments at Rec Desk – Monday 8:00AM – 2:00PM
- Colony Cottage Rec Center – Make appointments in AARP Tax Area during scheduled tax prep hours – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8:30AM – 3:00 PM; Wednesday 8:30AM – 6:00PM; and Saturday 8:30AM – 11:00AM.

(Continued on page 2)

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

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

**"LAW ENFORCEMENT
IN THE VILLAGES"**

Presented by Lt. Nehemiah Wolfe
Sumter County Florida Sheriff's Department

Followed by Questions & Answers
Audio and Visual in Overflow Room

Coffee and Donuts After the Meeting!
All Residents Welcome - Come and Join Us!



Exterior Home Painting

From the Districtgov.org website:

VILLAGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS 1 – 8 AND THE LADY LAKE / LAKE COUNTY PORTION OF THE VILLAGES -- EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2014.

BELOW ARE GUIDELINES THAT EACH INDIVIDUAL DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPTED FOR HOME **(EXTERIOR) REPAINTING** WITHIN THEIR SPECIFIC BOUNDARIES. (NOTE: this does not apply to Villas as their covenants have their own restrictions.)

VILLAGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

(Continued on page 2)

Spanish Springs



See you at the Parade!
March 17, 3:30

AARP Tax-Aide

(Continued from page 1)

In addition to making an appointment for assistance in completing your tax form, you can also come in if you do your own return or use TurboTax, if you just want to ask them for help with a particular ‘case’.

The things the Volunteers can do are as follows: All individual tax returns, 1040s and schedules A through E; most common credits, all W-2s, 1099Rs, dividends, broker’s statements including wash sales, self-employed individuals on a limited basis – usually part-time, stock and mutual fund sales, sale of homes, and many other types of income.

Some of the things the Volunteers cannot do, and therefore cannot prepare a return for you, are as follows: rental property; a business that has employees, a business that has expenses in excess of \$10,000 a year, a business that has inventory depreciation and a business that has a loss; K-1s with depreciation, business income or other miscellaneous entries; day trading; trust returns; sale of a home that was used as a business, state returns and a single filer if the adjusted gross income is over \$200,000 or a married - filing jointly tax payer with a combined income over \$250,000. Individuals with any of the above circumstances are referred to paid preparers.

Notes – the program requires that every tax return is reviewed by two people – one counselor who inputs the return into the AARP computer system and a second individual reviews every document that is input into the return and checks everything for accuracy; electronic filing (e-filing) is offered.

Some of the major tax law changes for

2013 returns are as follows:

- New 20% tax rate for higher income taxpayers on capital gains (Over \$200,000 single and \$250,000 joint);

- If under 65 years of age, the medical reduction will require that before you can take the first dollar in itemized deductions for medical, it has to reach 10% of your adjusted

(Continued on page 4)

Exterior Painting

(Continued from page 1)

MENT DISTRICTS NO. 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 AND THE LADY LAKE/LAKE COUNTY PORTION OF THE VILLAGES

When a home is repainted, it is not considered an alteration, modification or change regarding Architectural Review Committee (ARC) approval **IF a)** the chosen color is the color at time of construction, **b)** a color included on the current District approved color palette or **c)** is a color within the hue range of the palette. As a result, ARC approval is **NOT** required.

If the chosen color is not the original color at time of construction, on the current District approved color palette or within the approved hue range, the homeowner must apply for and receive ARC approval to utilize the chosen color. Only solid colors that are harmonious with the surrounding neighborhood and will benefit and enhance the entire subdivision in a manner generally consistent with the plan of development shall be approved by the ARC. Hot, electric, neon or bright colors are not permitted. The approved color palette is subject to change upon review and approval by

(Continued on page 5)

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. □

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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Letter to the Editor:

The POA Annual Memberships Only

My husband and I joined the POA when we purchased our home. Paid for life. During our move, full time here, we misplaced our membership cards. Could you please send us replacements.

Mary Smith

Editor's Note: The organization you joined for life was the VHA - Villages Homeowners Association - which is the one associated with the Developer. They offer a lifetime membership payment option to all newcomers to The Villages.

Many residents think they belong to the POA because they receive the Bulletin on their driveway every month. However, we provide this publication, free of charge, to ALL Villages residents regardless of whether or not they are active members of the POA.

If you wish to join the POA, you can use the adjacent membership form or go to our website - poa4us.org - and click on membership information, where you will find a membership form with instructions. Our membership drive runs from January 1 to December 31 each year. (We do not offer multi-year or lifetime memberships.) We are currently accepting 2014 memberships.

THE POA HAS YOUR BACK, DO YOU HAVE OURS?

We still have concerns in The Villages – the eventual outcome of the ongoing IRS investigation; the desire for the creation of a resident elected Amenity Authority Committee for the Sumter Landing Community Development District residents, roofing defect issues, 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. We believe it is important that all residents have all of the

information about happenings and events in The Villages as they make decisions 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 may not have been 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.)

MAKE AN INVESTMENT IN YOUR FUTURE

POA 2014 Membership – New / Renewal and Contribution Form

Please complete each section and return to: The POA, P.O. Box 386, Oxford, FL 34484

New Renewal Number of People in Household

PLEASE PRINT!

NAME(S)(1) _____
(SAME LAST NAME)

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

ADDRESS _____

VILLAGE _____ VILLAGES ID# _____

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 2014 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: \$ _____

3. TOTAL CHECK AMOUNT: \$ _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

Dues Paid Date _____ (Office Use Only)

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AARP Tax-Aide

(Continued from page 2)

gross income; if you are over 65 it will remain at 7 ½% until 2017;

- There is an additional 9/10% Medicare tax for individuals with incomes over (\$200,000 to \$250,000), a 3.8% tax on net investments for higher income taxpayers;

- Standard deductions have gone up for everyone – for example – if married filing jointly and both are over 65, the standard deduction this year will be \$14,600. This is the amount you will qualify right off the bat so you do not need to itemize unless you can itemize more than that figure;

- If your gross income is more than \$300,000 joint or \$250,000 single, your itemized deductions will start to phase out;

- The exemption has been increased from \$3,800 to \$3,900 for each exemption, but this is also phased out at \$300,000 and \$250,000;

- The mileage deduction for business miles is 56.5 cents and the medical and charitable miles stayed the same at 24 and 14 cents;

- There are some higher limits for deducting long term care premiums and those are tied strictly to the age of each taxpayer;

- There are also a number of ‘extended’ provisions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

1) Did you say there was a deduction for long term care premiums? **A)** Yes. When you itemize deductions on your medical those premiums, just like health insurance, are deductible, but there is a limit based upon your age as to how much of the premium you can deduct.

2) How many years have you guys been doing this? **A)** Jerry responded 22 years and Roy 7 years.

3) Is there a list of what you will or won’t be able to do? **A)** There is a poster at every site that lists all of the things they cannot do and which would disqualify you for their service.

4) Does everyone have to file an income tax form? **A)** No. The requirement to file depends on your age, your income and your filing status. They will look at all of the documents you bring in and advise you as to whether or not you need to file. If you do not need to file they will give you a sheet called a “Homestead Return”. They do not file it, be-

cause IRS does not want it, but you can use that to go to your County and file for an additional exemption with them – a Senior exemption. However, even though you don’t need to file you may want to file because you may have some capital losses that you don’t want to lose – you want to carry those over, or you may have a refund coming.

5) If you sell a home up north during 2013 before moving to The Villages, what documentation would we need to bring to an appointment? **A)** You would definitely need to bring the closing statement and if you received a 1099-S from the closing agent, a copy of that. We would also need to know the price the house was sold for, which should be on the closing statement, and your basis of what you paid for the house and when you bought it. You can bring a list of the improvements and their costs, but in many cases it does not need to be done because there is a \$500,000 exclusion. So, if the house was your personal residence, and it sold for less than \$500,000, it does not even have to be included on the tax return UNLESS you get a 1099-S, then it has to go on your return.

6) If you exceed the 7 ½% threshold for a medical deduction, do you get the total, or just that which is above the 7 ½% ? **A)** Only the amount above 7 ½% . □



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PROMISE PLAN

Exterior Painting

(Continued from page 2)

the individual District Board. Each District's current approved color palette may be viewed at the Community Standards Department, 1894 Laurel Manor Drive. Color palettes may not be commingled.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT NO. 2

When a home is repainted, it is not considered an alteration, modification or change requiring ARC approval **IF** the chosen color is the original color at time of construction. As a result, ARC approval is **NOT** required.

If the chosen color is not the original color at time of construction, the homeowner must seek and receive ARC approval to utilize the chosen color. Only solid colors that are harmonious with the surrounding neighborhood and will benefit and enhance the entire subdivision in a manner generally consistent with the plan of development shall be approved by the ARC. Hot, electric, neon or bright colors are not permitted.

VILLAGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT NO. 4

When a home is repainted, it is not considered an alteration, modification or change requiring ARC approval **IF** the chosen color is the original color at time of construction.

Therefore, ARC approval is **NOT** required. All other home re-painting requests (i.e. colors that are not the original color at time of construction) including those on the

District's approved color palette or color palette hue range, are required to seek ARC approval. If the chosen color is **NOT** the original color at time of construction, on the District's approved color palette or within the approved hue range, the homeowner must seek and receive Board approval to utilize the chosen color. Hot, electric, neon or bright colors are not permitted. The District's current approved color palette may be viewed at the Community Standards Department, 1894 Laurel Manor Drive. Color palettes may not be commingled. □

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EARTH DAY CELEBRATION



The **Villages Environmental Club**... previously the **Village Greens** has reopened their door and is sponsoring an Earth Day Celebration on **Wednesday, March 12, 2014, 3:00 to 7P.M., at Sumter Landing! Join them under their tents for a “FLORIDA” Earth Day Celebration.**

They will set the pace for a fun time with their musicians filling the air with the inspiring music of our late, and great, **Pete Seeger.**

Solar Lights and More’s crew will be available to help you enlist the power of the sun!

Florida Native Plant Society and the **Environmental Club** will be giving away long leaf pine seedlings (These are indigenous to Florida and fast growing...come early to get one free with directions for planting.)

Master Gardeners will be on-hand to answer your gardening questions, **Villages Garden Club** will be selling 2014 Garden Tour Tickets. **For Sale** will be Trees, Shrubs and Flowers from Shady Oaks Gather-all Nursery.

Enjoy Delicious, Gorgeous Organically Grown veggies from Fernando’s farm.

Get Your Free Bumper stickers, “Millions Against Monsanto” and **Pick Up** Literature relating to gardening, recycling, fracking, water conservation and the XL Pipeline; **Check Out** the table from the Sunshine State Clean Energy Coalition.

Eat a Cookie...bet you can’t just eat one!

Sign Petitions for **Recycling** in all the Villages Recreation Centers and to stop the use of non-renewable fossil fuels.

Be a part of the quest to preserve our planet for our future children and grandchildren. Contact information: Sue Michalson suube2@gmail.com (352) 259-1426 □

Recreation Department Peak Activity Participation Guidelines

About three years ago the Recreation Department identified the following procedures for what they called the Peak Participation Season:

- Villages’ residents shall have priority for the activity.
- Due to the attendance at Resident Lifestyle Activities, there are times guest participation will be restricted due to space availability in order to accommodate resident demand on the activity. We regret any inconvenience this may cause you or your guest.
- Eligible guests will be issued a number and asked to wait; if a program is not at full capacity, the guest will be allowed to participate.
- Valid ID cards are required for participation.
- A Volunteer Lifestyle Ambassador/Staff member will help to form a line prior to the activity start time. The location of the line may vary from center to center.
- The participation cards (tickets) will be issued **up to one (1) hour** prior to the start of the activity. (Once you get your ticket you have admission into that program so you can walk around, go get a cup of coffee, etc., and then return prior to the meeting start, and there will be a spot available for you.)
- Each resident participant must be in attendance to be issued a ticket.
- Only one ticket will be issued per resident.
- Doors will open no sooner than **30 minutes prior** to activity start time as printed on the facility permit.
- Once all the tickets for that session have

been issued, the activity is considered full.

- Where available Overflow rooms will be used, based on day & time. Rooms are subject to change due to prior scheduling commitments.
- When programs of similar type activities back up to each other, individuals participating in the first session must exit the room (with their equipment) and join the line for the next session.

NOTE: Prior to the establishment of this procedure, a guest could enter with the resident. You could have two residents waiting for their ticket with one accompanied by a guest and the other alone. Who should have priority - Dilemma time – who gets the ticket? Should the resident be a priority or should it go to the guest of a resident? There are two viable perspectives: it is a challenge to the resident who brought their guest as they want them to get a ticket; but the resident who is waiting for that ticket believes they should have priority over a guest. After meetings amongst staff and volunteers and input from residents, it was decided that the best decision was to err on the side of the Villages resident – to let them get the ticket. □

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Golf Cart Crashes

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 MIGHT KEEP YOU IN YOUR CART!

Monday, January 13th – 2:50PM - An open letter to the POA: While driving with my wife on the trail behind Laurel Manor buildings, I entered the golf cart path traffic circle near Rt. 466. My wife, for some reason, thought I was going to go clockwise (left) around the circle. She hollered, "right," as I entered the circle properly, so I began to turn right (east) out of the traffic circle, thinking that this was what she meant. Since we originally intended to go 3/4 of the way around the circle and head west, she yelled, "left, left". I then twirled the steering wheel to the left and somehow managed to stay on the pavement, but the extremely **QUICK TURN FLUNG MY WIFE FROM THE CART out onto the lawn**, where she landed flat on her back, with her head slamming into the

lawn, so hard it flung her glasses about twelve feet. I quickly pulled the cart off the pavement and ran to her. She was awake, but barely coherent. Others arrived from their carts to help. I called 911 and **she was transported to the Ocala Trauma Center** where an MRI showed a concussion. She stayed overnight for observation and came home the next afternoon. **This short visit has, so far, been billed to us in the amount of \$57,000!!!** Three weeks after the accident, she is feeling no significant after effects. However, had her head hit pavement as hard as it hit the lawn, I am sure she would be permanently disabled or dead. We were very lucky. As referred to in the story about shutting the barn door after the horses escaped, we have just had seat belts installed on our cart. I wish we had taken heed of your messages in the previous POA Bulletins regarding seatbelts being recommended.

Monday, January 13th – 6:15PM – This crash occurred at the intersection of Belvedere Boulevard and Weston Manor Drive. The driver of a green 2005 Club Car was stopped (facing east) in the intersection waiting to make a left turn onto Weston, and as he started his turn, he was hit on the side by a red 2005 Club Car. The 80 year old driver of the red cart stated he noticed the green cart stopped in the roadway waiting to turn left and attempted

to pass it on the left at the same time the green cart turned. The driver in the green cart was not injured. After making contact, the red cart crossed Belvedere and jumped a nearby curb. **THIS ACTION EJECTED THE DRIVER AND HIS PASSENGER INTO THE FRONT YARD OF A NEARBY RESIDENCE. FORTUNATELY, THEY LANDED ON GRASS AND NOT ON THE PAVEMENT.** The driver, who was cited for careless driving, suffered minor injuries and refused transport, but his **80+ year old passenger was transported to The Villages Hospital** for swelling to the left side of her face and to her left side.

Monday, February 3rd – 5:30PM – a golf cart northbound on Belle Meade had merged into the automobile lane to turn left onto Legacy Lane into Chatham Village. The golf cart was stopped at the stop sign waiting on Legacy Lane traffic. An automobile westbound on Legacy attempted to turn left onto Belle Meade and cut **the corner too short and struck the golf cart. THE OCCUPANTS WERE EJECTED FROM THE GOLF CART AND LANDED ON THE PAVEMENT,** The driver was unconscious, on the pavement with head injuries, when the EMS arrived and the passenger had a shoulder injury. **Both were transported to The Villages Hospital.**

*** BE SAFE OUT THERE *** □

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AAC Meeting Summary

February 12, 2014

Old Business Topics Included:

- Lawsuit Settlement Funds - **Capital Projects Update:**

1. Paradise Park Area “A” – the park is open for resident use and has received many compliments from those who have visited.
2. Paradise Park Area “B” – some necessary tree work is currently underway prior to any site improvements planned for the near future.
3. Knudson Softball Field Score Booth/Storage Facility – the bid (\$44,748) was awarded to Mark Cook Builders, Inc., with an estimated completion date of April 9, 2014.
4. Chula Vista Recreation Center renovation – construction is underway with a scheduled completion date of June 2014.
5. La Hacienda Sports Pool Restrooms reconstruction – project is well underway

and is expected to be completed by March 28, 2014.

6. Silver Lake Center refurbishment – construction is underway with a scheduled completion date of May 23, 2014.
 7. Southside Pool and Clubhouse – a well-attended ribbon cutting took place on February 10th and the newly renovated facility is open for resident use and enjoyment.
 8. Tierra Del Sol Recreation Center – project is in the early design phase based on the AAC approval to demolish the existing facility and construct a totally new facility.
 9. Lindsey Lane Golf Maintenance Building – the bid (\$498,348) was awarded to Mark Cook Builders, Inc., with an estimated completion date of July 17, 2014.
 10. Saddlebrook and El Santiago Pavilions – the combined bid (\$74,096) was awarded to Mark Cook Builders, Inc., with an estimated completion date of April, 2014.
- District management, on advice from District Attorney Lewis Stone, reversed their position regarding the District’s ability to lease the **El Santiago Restaurant building** for use as a restaurant. At the July

2013 AAC meeting, prior to the Committee agreeing to purchase the building shell, District Manager Janet Tutt was asked twice if there was any restriction that would not allow the Committee to use the facility for a restaurant. The question was first posed by Vice Chairman Jo Weber and then again by audience member and resident Bob Folcurst. In both cases Ms. Tutt told them no (no restrictions). Specifically, the meeting minutes state, “Mr. Folcurst inquired if anything within the contract could prevent the facility from becoming a restaurant. Ms. Tutt stated there was not.” So, after more than seven months of telling residents it was a possibility, it finally comes out that once the AAC agreed to purchase the building from the Developer, it could not be utilized as a restaurant. Even though it was pointed out that the El Santiago location is not far from two regional recreation centers (Savannah and La Hacienda), the AAC approved a motion, by a vote of 4 to 2 (Jo Weber and Rich Lambrecht voting no), to move forward with a plan to demolish the El Santiago Restaurant building, and construct a new 6087 square foot building on the site, at an estimated cost of \$1,578,054. Including the \$350,000 effectively paid for the land, that’s a total of almost \$2,000,000 for this neighborhood recreational facility.

[Editor’s Note: At \$350,000 for .22 acre, that prices the land at about \$1,590,909 per acre – This is a questionable deal at best.]

- A subsequent discussion ensued regarding the attorney’s ruling regarding the use of the facility as a restaurant. If Chapter 190 would not allow it to be used as a restaurant, because there were no recreational activities associated with it, then how was the AAC able to lease out 100% of a building it owns, for the exclusive use of a privately owned catering kitchen enterprise? Attorney Stone said he would research the issue and respond to the Committee.
- Back in July 2013, the AAC agreed to fund

(Continued on page 9)



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AAC Summary

(Continued from page 8)

50% of the expense of reconstructing the multi-modal path behind the **Glenbrook gate** (Buena Vista at the south end of Tally Ridge Drive). At that time the cost was estimated to be approximately \$47,000. At the February 2014 AAC meeting, CDD3 Chairman Charlie Cook explained that the lowest bid came in at \$54,651. The Committee agreed to the \$3,826 increase in its share of the cost.

- At its December 11, 2013, meeting the AAC agreed by consensus to offer to provide the funds for the **striping**, and its continued maintenance, on the El Camino Real and Buena Vista **multi-modal paths north of CR466**. The total cost of the striping was estimated to be less than \$6,000 and should last four-five years. Since the trails are legally owned by the individual numbered Districts, they would have to enter into Interlocal Agreements with the AAC/VCCDD if they were interested in having the striping done. At their January Board meetings, CDDs 1, 2 and 3 decided they would like to do the striping on a case-by-case basis in areas where

there were infrastructure safety concerns or geometric changes in the path, such as curves that would benefit from the striping. CDD4 determined that it would be interested in entering into an Interlocal Agreement to accomplish the striping on it's Buena Vista path. At the February AAC meeting, a motion was made to direct staff to create the Interlocal Agreement with CDD4. The Committee voted 3 to 3 on the motion, so no action could be taken. The 3 negative votes were Chairman Wilcox (CDD3), Ann Forrester (CDD2) and Gary Moyer (VCCDD). [Subsequent to the meeting, a review of the Class Action Law Suit Settlement Agreement determined that Mr. Moyer was obligated to vote with the majority (in favor {3-2} vote) of proceeding with the Interlocal Agreement with CDD4) on issues involving golf cart paths, recreation trails, multi-modal transportation trails and **tunnels because that "is an issue that directly affects the residents of the VCCDD Service Area and does not directly affect the VCCDD."** Ms. Tutt stated she was familiar with this paragraph in the Settlement Agreement when it was brought to her attention after the meeting, and it is expected, that at the March 2014

AAC meeting, the voting correction will be announced (4 to 2 in favor), and the Committee will proceed with the agreement with CDD4.]

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

NEXT AAC MEETING – Wednesday, March 12th, 9:00 A.M., at the Savannah Center. □

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Criminal Activity In The Villages

Below are the confirmed criminal activities that have occurred involving Villages residents that we have become aware of since the previous month's Bulletin report.

As you are aware, the POA Bulletin is a monthly publication and if something is occurring in your neighborhood a more timely report would be desired. The POA recommends that you sign up for a free daily email from Villages-News.com. (You can do so on their website.) They do a great job of straight forward reporting of happenings in and around The Villages, including all of the good things that are happening, as well as criminal activity, golf automobile crashes, etc.

Additionally, we noted in last month's Bulletin, that the Daily Sun has been doing a much better job of providing this information.

Recently we have been able to find this information on page 3 of the Local Section under the title "Public Safety Report".

January 25th - A burglary in Bridgeport of Miona Shores. The homeowners returned on Saturday after having been gone about a week. They discovered that a combination safe had been removed from the premises. The burglars had forced open a sliding glass door.

January 26th - Residents of a home on Pine Ridge Street in the Villages of Tall Trees reported a burglary. Taken from a drawer were a diamond necklace, gold diamond earrings, and two ankle bracelets. There were no signs of forced entry, but the homeowner believed the car door might have been left unlocked, with the garage door opener inside.

February 6th - The sheriff's office received a report of a burglary in progress at about 5:45AM Thursday on Ducksbury Street. A homeowner reported seeing two young men with flashlights and knit caps, traveling in a light-colored car. Apprehended and charged are Corey Smith, 22, of Lady Lake, and Jordan Goetzen, 18, of Weirsdale.

The POA congratulates both the 911 caller and the detectives who were able to apprehend and arrest the alleged burglars. **REMEMBER --- If you see something that looks like a crime is either about to be or is being committed, call 911.**

Week of February 10th – Burglary on Jem Path in the Village of Amelia.

February 17th – Burglary on Salido Avenue in the Village of Santo Domingo.

Lt. Haworth from the Sumter County Sheriff's Office has asked the POA to please ask our readers to be aware of the people they are hiring, especially cleaning services, pest control and things of that nature, where the individuals are inside your home, because there is definitely a link in some of the reported thefts with cleaning services. He is warning against the 'fly-by-night' companies – not the legitimate ones that have been in operation in The Villages. Make sure you are doing due diligence on those people before you allow them in your home and make sure you are present while they are working. He

(Continued on page 11)



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Criminal Activity

(Continued from page 10)

also suggests that you not leave money, jewelry, jewelry boxes, or any other valuables, visible. The Sumter County Sheriff's office has a large network of detectives and patrolmen working on finding the perpetrators.

Golf Cart Thefts

January 31st - A resident noticed her golf cart was missing from her Village of Orange Blossom Gardens home.

February 11th - A golf cart was stolen from in front of Crispers in the Southern Trace Shopping Center. Law enforcement is waiting on a video.

February 14th - A golf cart was stolen in front of Publix in Mulberry Plaza.

Please help law enforcement eliminate what are called "crimes of opportunity". Lock your doors and windows, lock your car, don't leave valuables visible in a locked vehicle or in an unattended golf cart, and don't leave your garage door open unattended – to name a few. We are hopeful that better awareness of criminal activities around us will result in our residents being more diligent in protecting their properties and watching out for their neighbors. □

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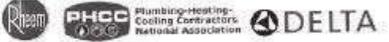
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Over time the POA has received calls asking if we are aware of anywhere that they can have their personal papers shredded, so we thought we would pass this information on to all of our readers.

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Governance Improvement Committee Planning New Direction

Representatives from each of the residential CDDs 1 – 9, plus an AAC representative, met on February 6, 2014, to discuss the current status of their Governance Improvement Committee (GIC) work efforts.

Of the nine items previously identified, five (reduction in reporting requirements, more automation, more selective staff attendance at meetings, less in-person reporting from the Sheriff’s Office and more resident input capabilities) are actively being supported by staff and the individual CD districts via District Manager assembled CDD Chairmen’s meetings.

The other four items (CDD meeting schedules – consider having meetings less often than monthly, expand use of Committees – establish cross-CDD committees to handle certain items and have the authority to act on behalf of the CDD Boards, CDD meeting consolidation – multiple CDDs in the same meet-

ing, Consolidation of CDDs – reducing the number of CDDs) received little interest from the GIC participants and no further activity was indicated.

GIC Chairman Bill Ray offered two options to the committee – (1) place the committee “on hold” and schedule the next meeting in about a year or so, or (2) dissolve the committee at this time. While one member of the committee recommended dissolution, the remainder of the committee supported a recommendation from CDD6 supervisor John Calandro to have a Town Hall type meeting for all of the numbered district supervisors during which District staff would review the processes used to put together the CDD budgets, identify and put together capital improvement plans (CIP) for each of the CDDs and provide them with the details of the purchasing policies used by district staff. Note: Due to the fact that the 50 or so residential Board Supervisors are all on various levels of the learning curve on these government procedures, it should be helpful to be able to bring them all up to speed in one meeting, and a sharing of perspectives from some of the long-time Supervisors could prove beneficial for those newly elected.

(Continued on page 15)

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New Direction

(Continued from page 14)

There was an additional suggestion to hold a public meeting of all CDD boards once or twice a year to address common areas of concerns (i.e. house re-painting, etc.) which would seem to be worthwhile. These would all be open meetings so any residents wanting to know more about how their government works and how various areas of The Villages (North or South of CR 466, and/or 466A) may review various proposals that might be discussed in a Town Hall manner. □

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LETTERS

Letter to the Editor:
CW at Colony Crossing

Regarding the use of amenities funds for traffic control, specifically at the Colony Drive location, I would like to know who owns the road in the area where the guards have been placed? Are local businesses contributing any money toward the costs of traffic control? Why are amenity funds being used for a public safety issue, and who approved the expenditure of residents’ funds? I believe that since the Developer made an error in planning, the Developer should be responsible for correcting the problem. Finally, why does it cost \$30/hr for personnel when the staff in the gatehouses make much less – are the traffic guards receiving that pay rate? Using amenity dollars to maintain staff on a public road is inappropriate and invites legal challenge.

John Costello

Editor’s Note: We checked with District staff and received the following information:

1) **Amenity fees are NOT paying for the Community Watch (CW) services.** The cost is charged to the Project Wide Fund: CDDs 5-10 and the SLCDD contribute to this Fund via annual CDD maintenance assessment.

2) Colony Boulevard is owned by CDD 7 and maintained with Project Wide Funds (at the request of CDD 7).

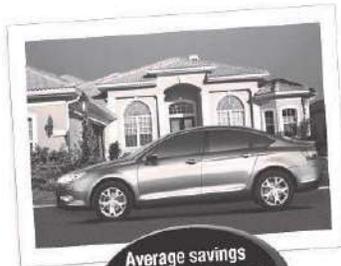
3) A review of the Project Wide Advisory Committee’s minutes found no mention of any interest in asking local businesses to contribute money toward the cost of traffic control.

4) In regard to whether or not the Developer made an error, District staff responded that “...The roads/traffic infrastructure/design was provided by qualified professionals. The intersection is functional: **the improvement is being requested to enhance safety.**”

5) CW services are paid for with amenity funds. However, when the service activity they are engaging in is not related to their responsibilities with the amenity program, they charge the other party for their services, which is what is happening in this instance. They charge an hourly rate for outside services, using the District Rate Rule, which factors in the TOTAL cost of providing staff (including all overhead), so charges to “outsiders” for services are higher than the hourly rates that are paid to individuals working in CW as a part of the amenity service.

In regard to the Colony issue, there is no burden on or costs incurred by the amenity system. The CW budget is being reimbursed for these services by Project Wide Funds. □

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Letter to the Editor:

Trail Signage Enhancement

My husband and I moved to The Villages in March 2013. After renting several winters in this beautiful bubble, we knew this was eventually going to be home. As much as I love this place and thoroughly enjoy getting around in our golf cart, I realize how challenged I am when it comes to directions.

My request is simple, but yet I feel will be extremely helpful to all residents. Is there a way to have our two MAIN streets (Buena Vista AND Morse) listed on the trail signs with reflective paint? The words on the signs are extremely small. For the elderly who can see, but need to get closer to the signs to make out the exact words, I am requesting that The Villages highlight the main streets of Buena Vista and Morse and the arrows pointing which way to turn in reflective paint. This way any person would know prior to being on top of the signs which way they will be turning. It would really be helpful when going through the tunnels. At night, it would eliminate any confusion as to which way to turn for the main streets.

Please let me know your thoughts or who I need to contact to accomplish this task. I know that anyone I have spoken with thinks that this is a great idea. I know many people that are challenged with the trails will find this request to be extremely helpful.

Nancy Grubba

Editor's Note: We have passed this request on to a member of a District board and the AAC and have asked that he present your suggestion to District staff for their review and for a possible discussion at a monthly meeting. □

Letter to the Editor:

Safety & Gate Attendants

Today I was driving East on El Camino Real toward the Paige Place and Morse Blvd. roundabout. As I entered the roundabout into the short right lane into Morse Blvd., the gate person exited the Gate Tenders Building and waved his hand rapidly back and forth at me. Thinking there was an accident or other hazard and he was waving me off, I rapidly slowed and scanned the lanes for a problem.

Instead, the Attendant was waving a greeting, and my pulse rate returned to normal. Occasionally, the Attendant has called out to drivers in the Visitors Lane to "Go ahead." Since this carries across both lanes a vehicle approaching the resident barrier could easily drive through it. A simple wave through would suffice.

Approaching and passing through our many gates takes our full attention and concentration. The gate attendants are there to safely facilitate the thousands of vehicles passing each day. For one who has personally investigated thousands of auto accidents, I would suggest the attendants should not be greeters or wavers, or otherwise distract motorists who are entering a short, busy, and potentially dan-

gerous traffic activity. Paul Endersbee

Editor's Note: We passed this letter on to Scott Wilder who is in charge of the Community Watch services. We hope that he will review and discuss this issue with his staff. □

Letter to the Editor:

Speeding on Rec Trails

Hello. I found the Feb 2014, article regarding golf cart accidents/etc, to be very interesting. I have a question and I know that many residents have asked the same thing. We do know that the police can ticket us for speeding in a golf cart on the road systems, but can they, in fact, ticket us for speeding on the recreation trails? Rick Hassall

Editor's Note: This is a complicated issue and the attorney for the numbered districts actually prepared a report that is on the district website (districtgov.org) that goes into what can and cannot be controlled by the District and/or law enforcement on the recreation trails. As far as any reckless behavior on recreation trails, if they are observed by law enforcement, they can ticket for reckless use of the golf cart. However, they cannot enforce speed limits on the recreation trails, nor can the District. □

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Letter to the Editor:

Golf Cart Seat Belts

My husband and I noticed your recent article on golf cart accidents because he was one of those transported in November by ambulance to Ocala Regional Trauma Center. None of his significant injuries were life threatening, despite the fact that his accident was a serious one. His golf cart was totaled and he is still recovering from some of his injuries.

We are relatively new to The Villages and did not realize that seat belts are a potential option in the carts. Our salesman never mentioned adding seat belts to our renovated gas Yamaha, but we will never own another cart without them.

Thank you for highlighting the need for more vigilant attention to the safety issues that are an inherent part of being in a community where thousands of golf carts are on our residential streets every day.

Name withheld by Editor.

Editor’s Note: Thank you for sharing your experience. □

Happy St. Patrick's Day

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~Author Unknown



What do you get when you cross poison ivy with a four-leaf clover?
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~Author Unknown



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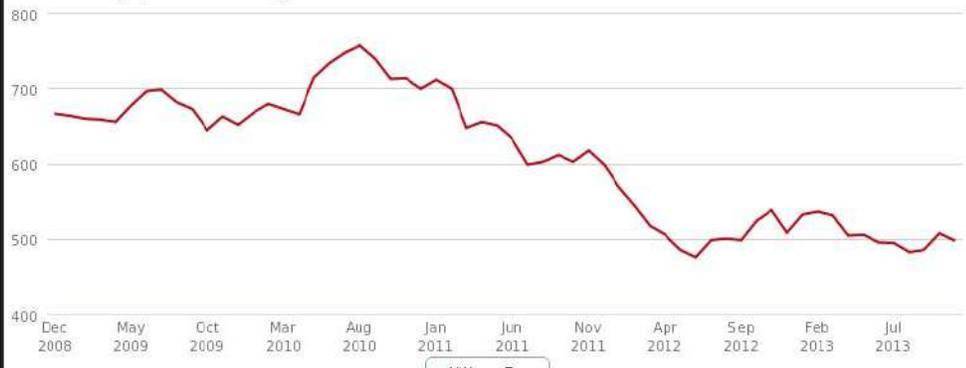


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Our Gardening Column:

The Merry Month of March

by Anne Lambrecht, Master Gardener
annegarden@embarqmail.com

This is the BEST time of year! I love springtime in North Central Florida. I never want to go inside, even when the day is done. The Earth is finally ready to plant, prune and feed.

The last frost date for our area is March 15th – and winter is officially over! The garden centers are overflowing with great flowers and plants such as marigold, salvia, verbena, Torenia (wishbone flower), and zinnia. There are warm season veggies that can be planted now (did you start your seeds in January?) Beans, corn (I've tried broom corn, the kind they used to make brooms with. It's a wonderful accent plant and a great addition to the flower garden), cucumbers (try staking them on a trellis), eggplant, peppers, squash and tomatoes. Veggies need at least six hours of full sun, plenty of water and regular feedings. Slow release fertilizer is the best—you only need apply two or three times a year. This fertilizer looks like a bunch of little round balls. The fertilizer is released from the outside layer of the ball each time you water

or when it rains. Plant warm weather herbs now: basil, dill, fennel, Mexican tarragon. Just remember that bees are crazy for basil and tarragon flowers and swallowtail butterflies lay their eggs on dill and fennel and the caterpillars will eat it right down to the root. So plant extra for them.

It's time to decide what plants need dividing like liriopse, flax lily, and ginger. But don't divide any plant that looks like it's close to flowering such as amaryllis or day lilies. The rule of thumb on any plant is always divide or trim AFTER flowering. Likewise, prune azaleas and camellias immediately after they flower. Pot up any "volunteer" plants and use these freebies to fill in the gaps in the flower bed.

By Valentine's Day you should have pruned back your roses -- but not to worry, there's still time. Trim with clean, bleach-clean, sharp clippers one-third to one-half the cane size. Also trim all dead or crossing branches which will open the center for air circulation. Do not trim climbing roses. Roses are heavy feeders and they love good quality organics.

Gently prune crape myrtles (a favorite activity of mine) and ligustrums before the new spring growth starts, allowing them to grow as

freely and naturally as possible. Ligustrums should look graceful and free form and not like a lollipop. Trim citrus trees of their out-of-bounds growth and any dead branches. Give them their first feeding of the year at a rate of ¼ pound for each inch of trunk circumference measured 6" above the ground. Use a special citrus fertilizer and scatter it under the spread of the tree and a little beyond. Feed again in May, August and early October.

It's a great time to plant new trees and shrubs when they can begin new growth without the stress of heat. Water them daily (or every other day) for the first few weeks, wetting thoroughly the root ball and surrounding soil.

New lawns love this time of year. It's a good time to repair bare spots by removing all weeds (by hand is the most effective way) and debris, till the soil before adding new sod. For only a few bare spots, loosen the soil lightly and install plugs. Growing grass from seed is not easy. Get the information you need from your University of Florida Extension office before you begin. Feed lawns through March. Most good lawn fertilizers contain no phosphorus (the middle number). Our soil already has plenty but a soil test from the Extension office will make sure.

The husband is very happy. I asked him recently to take down a failing citrus tree (I believe it has "greening" disease) and he got out his arsenal of tools: chain saw, hand saw, giant clippers, big shovel and pick axe. Then he really "went to town" on this 5 foot little tree and hoped I had more trees for him to fell. I didn't.

No matter how busy or crazy it gets, always take time to smell the flowers.

Here are a few of our local plant festivals in March:

March 8 & 9 - Marion County Master Gardeners Spring Festival, Extension, 2232 NE Jacksonville Rd, Ocala, 352-671-8400

March 15 - 8:00 – 1:00 Sumter County Master Gardeners Spring Plant Sale, Wildwood Community Center, 6500 Powell Rd, 352-793-2728

March 22 & 23 - Spring Garden Festival Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, \$8 admission;

(Continued on page 20)



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Merry Month of March

(Continued from page 19)

no credit cards, Gainesville, 352-372-4981, www.kanapaha.org

March 29 - 9-3 - Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival, Deland, 386-738-0649, floridawildflowerfestival.com □




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Seniors vs. Crime Avoiding Tax Season Scams It’s Your Money, Spend It Wisely

It’s that time of the year again! Uncle Sam will be sending your annual request for taxes. Some folks think it is not necessary to send in a return. Not true. Unless you earn nothing or nearly nothing, (see //www.irs.gov/Individuals/Do-You-Need-to-File-a-Federal-Income-Tax-Return%3F- for specifics) you **MUST** file a return. It is **NOT** voluntary.

The scammers are also set to send you THEIR request for money. Many schemes are afoot to steal your money. Most of them appear to have come from the IRS via e-mail or phone. Remember, the IRS **NEVER** contacts taxpayers by e-mail or phone. If they want to talk to you, they notify you by US Mail.

Here are some of the scams you might encounter:

A "we owe you money" email seemingly comes from the IRS. The subject line reads something like "Tax Notification" or "2010 Fiscal Activity Refund" and invites you to click on a link that takes you to a convincing-looking IRS website. But the site is a fake IRS

(Continued on page 21)

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Tax Season Scams

(Continued from page 20)

website, which as usual, asks for personal details.

Instead of claiming the IRS owes you money, another tax scam offers a reward to you for filing your return early. Again, a phone caller will ask for bank account details so they can “direct deposit” your ‘reward’. Not only does the IRS not seek such details by phone -- but it also doesn't pay rewards for early returns!

One of the biggest and latest tax scams, according to the IRS, is fake IRS websites. These look, feel and act like the real IRS web site, but they are impersonators. Their only purpose is to steal your personal information for ID theft or similar unpleasant purposes. The address of the official IRS website is www.irs.gov. Don't be misled by sites claiming to be the IRS but ending in .com, .net, .org or any other designations instead of “.gov”.

There are lots more IRS scams -- more than 1,000 at the last count! Some of them have

been around for years, yet still find victims. For more information, visit the official IRS website at www.irs.gov.

How do you spot an IRS scam? IRS scammers try to convince you that their call or email is genuine in a number of ways. Here are some of the tricks they use to try to fool you:

- They invent a refund sum that sounds convincing -- not too big and not too round. Something like \$134.80 sounds legit, doesn't it?
- They use forms with numbers similar to those the IRS already uses; with a jumble of numbers and letters, they just sound right. However, they are not.
- They use the official IRS logo and, very often, copy whole sections of text from the IRS's website.
- They use real names and copied signatures of senior IRS people.

Just because something looks official doesn't mean that it is! Nonetheless, it's easy to sidestep these tax scams if you just remember

these few simple rules -- in addition to the ones mentioned above -- about how the IRS operates:

- The only genuine IRS website is www.irs.gov. If any link takes you to a page that isn't on this site, then you are

(Continued on page 22)

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Tax Season Scams

(Continued from page 21)

- not visiting the IRS website.
- You should type www.irs.gov into your browser yourself and not get there by clicking a link.
- The IRS **NEVER** asks for PIN numbers, passwords or other confidential information for any reason or by any method – not even face-to-face.

It's easy to avoid these IRS scams -- just a

little knowledge and attention to detail can do wonders. When in doubt as to whether something, some offer, is a scam or not, you can always contact your local Seniors vs. Crime office for advice or assistance. They can be reached at 352-753-7775 at the Marion County Sheriffs Office in The Villages, at 352-689-4600, Extension 4606 at the Sumter County Sheriff's Office in The Villages, and at 352-750-1914 at the Wildwood Police Department Villages Annex in Brownwood. Volunteers at all three offices are ready, willing and trained to assist you. □

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