

THE



Issue 41.06



BULLETIN

June 2015

Free Copy

Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

The POA Website – www.poa4us.org

ILLEGAL TREE REMOVAL

AT THE VILLAGE OF BRIDGEPORT AT LAKE MIONA

Come on folks, someone in the **Village of Bridgeport at Lake Miona** has to know who was responsible for cutting down the live oak trees. Your failure to speak up, and you can do it anonymously, will forever leave a 'black mark' on your beautiful Village.

The Sumter County Sheriff's Office has exhausted its leads, but is looking for any new information concerning the trees and foliage that were cleared in the area of the northeast side of Lake Miona, in the **Village of Bridgeport at Lake Miona**. The trees and foliage were cleared from an area of the lake behind the 1700 block of Lake Miona Drive, thereby enhancing the view of the properties, as can be seen in the picture below.



The clearing would have taken place sometime between Nov. 1 and Dec. 15, and encompasses a land mass of approximately 300 feet

by 100 feet. The amount of land cleared indicates a fairly large-scale job requiring multiple workers over at least one day, but the job could have taken longer. The individuals who conducted the clearing may not have been aware of the required authorizations.

Someone needs to step up (**preferably the perpetrators**), because it is not fair that all of the residents living south of CR466 are going to have to pay for the restoration, which is now estimated to cost in the neighborhood of \$50,000. (The good news is that the perpetrators will soon lose their recently created view enhancements, as the restoration funds will pay for the planting of **12 new trees** and a minimum of three years of ongoing monitoring at a cost of \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year.)

If anyone has information pertaining to the clearing, and you wish to **remain anonymous**, please contact **CRIMELINE** at 1-800-423-TIPS (8477), or you can also contact Detective Wasson of the Sumter County Sheriff's Office at 352-689-4607. **You may be eligible for a reward of up to \$1,000.** □

Bus Ban Disenfranchises Residents

Staff Report: On April 17, 2015, District Manager Janet Tutt issued the memo below to Resident Lifestyle Volunteer Group Leaders to explain a recent decision by the District to begin enforcing a District rule to prevent outside (emphasis added) transportation companies from picking up or dropping off passengers at the squares or Recreation Centers. Pertinent parts of the memo read as follows:

"RE: Transportation ...As you are aware, our three "Downtowns," Spanish Springs, Lake Sumter Landing and Brownwood, and Recreation Centers are usually bustling and a hub of activity from early morning to late in the evening. They are an important part of the lifestyle in The Villages.

"With all that activity comes the need to park golf carts and cars to access all the opportunities the downtowns and Recreation Centers provide. It is important and critical (and a District Rule) that the parking areas be used

(Continued on page 2)

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Third Tuesday of the Month – 7 PM

Laurel Manor Recreation Center

"How to Save Energy in Your Home"

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**Followed by Questions & Answers
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All Residents Welcome - Come and Join Us!

Bus Ban

(Continued from page 1)

for those using the business and entertainment in the downtown and recreation areas.

"To that end, I have been working with the bus companies and explaining it is breaking a District rule to use the downtown areas to pick up groups for day trips, transportation to cruise destinations and any other reason which provides an impact on the parking availability.

"Please note that the district does have the ability to trespass those bus companies from the downtown areas for violating the District Rule. We have not taken that drastic action to date as education of the bus companies and tour coordinators needed to take place. While this issue began small, it has grown to the point where sometimes four to six busloads of residents are picked up which has resulted in a substantial amount of parking areas being used up long-term which impacts those who wish to enjoy the downtowns.

"The purpose of my communication to you is that if you have a group planning a trip (whether for a day or longer), the bus companies need to explore pick up location options other than the downtowns or recreation facilities. This will help all residents better enjoy the great opportunities available.

"Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at janet.tutt@districtgov.org or 352-751-3939."

DISTRICT RULE (Per reference in Janet Tutt's memo):

Rule in question enacted **February 27, 1998** Rules of the Village Center Community Development District – Chapter IV, Section 7.

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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PARKING ON DISTRICT PROPERTY:

"Parking of vehicles on or in District Parking Lots shall be restricted to those persons utilizing adjacent or nearby District facilities. Persons shall be restricted to parking for not more than four hours duration without the express approval of the District Manager... The District retains the right to remove vehicles improperly parked in violation of this Rule in accordance with State Law at the vehicle owner's expense, pursuant to the order of the District Manager, or their Designee."

Concerns about Ms. Tutt's interpretation of the 1998 Rule are as follows:

1) Nowhere in this District Rule does it say buses are banned from picking up and dropping off residents – it ONLY addresses parking. Additionally, the rationale that was presented for enacting the District Rule in 1998 stated, "Adoption will enhance areas economy and benefit by insuring adequate parking for their use. The monetary amount of benefits is difficult to measure, but they are real and believed to be positive." The rationale presented indicates that the Rule was for commercial parking lots, not recreation center parking lots as inferred by Ms. Tutt.

2) Ms. Tutt indicates that, "it is breaking a District Rule to use the **downtown** areas to pick up groups for day trips... and any other reason which provides an impact on the parking availability..." and advises that the "... District does have the ability to trespass those bus companies from the **downtown** areas for violating the District Rule." Was the fact that she did not include Recreation Centers in the notice of the ability to trespass the bus compa-

(Continued on page 4)

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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CDD4 Expansion

As indicated in earlier articles, it will be several months before the Developer is far enough along in its planning to provide any more definitive details about its proposed expansion, including such things as golf cart access to each of the parcels, overflow parking in the villa parcels, financial issues queried by the CDD4 Board and the Amenity Authority Committee, to name a few.

Meanwhile, District Staff has been busy compiling data regarding usage of both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities throughout District 4 and investigating what the plans are for the old Baptist Church which is adjacent to the west parcel. □

HELP WANTED

Delivery person for the monthly POA Bulletin for various individual routes throughout The Villages. Must have a reliable golf cart and also have plenty of room in a vehicle in order to be able to pick up your papers in Leesburg. Pick up and delivery of The Bulletin takes about 15 hours a month over several days. Attractive compensation. Email your name, address, and phone number to delivery@poa4us.org. No phone calls please. □



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REASONS TO JOIN THE POA

The Board of Directors of The Property Owners' Association of The Villages (POA) would like to thank you for your support. We will continue to speak out for Residents' Rights as we have in the past. The POA has no special interest or hidden agendas, except to protect, preserve and improve the rights of all residents. We believe the POA is a needed check and balance to ensure that the Developer and governments decisions are in the best interest of the residents.

The POA will continue informing and educating all residents (POA member or not) on issues that have an impact on their quality of life and their public safety in our free POA Bulletin.

Every third Tuesday, 7PM, we have a gen-

eral meeting at Laurel Manor, where residents can participate in a question and answer session and voice any concerns, as well as hear a speaker on a selected topic.

POA membership entitles you to participate in our Discount Partners Program. (See page 23 for information.) As an active member, you will also qualify to receive our monthly email alert which keeps you instantly updated on Villages issues.

Your membership and contributions are vital to our existence. The larger our membership, the more credibility and strength the POA has. If you want to know more about us, please visit our website at poa4us.org.

Get involved, support your POA in 2015. □

POA 2015 MEMBERSHIP – NEW/RENEWAL & DONATION 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! or Use the **ONLINE FORM** found on our website **POA4US.ORG**

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

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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 **2015** 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 me my **2015** Membership Card.

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

2. **ADDITIONAL DONATION:**

Please accept my additional **2015** contribution to the POA in the following amount: \$ _____

3. **TOTAL CHECK AMOUNT:** \$ _____

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Bus Ban

gies an oversight, or is she acknowledging that there is a difference between amenity facilities and commercial facilities?

3) We currently have a District rule governing long-term parking at the Recreation Centers which was revised 12/19/07 which is on the District website. It reads as follows: "Residents wishing to park their or a guest's vehicle overnight at a recreation center may do so by requesting an overnight parking permit. Overnight parking permits are issued at the regional and village Recreation Centers. Permits can be issued for up to five (5) days. Overnight parking is not permitted at the neighborhood center (swimming pool only), and unfortunately we cannot accommodate RVs. For further information and/or assistance, please call La Hacienda Regional Recreation Center at 753-1716". This rule does not ban buses from these parking lots either.

The POA has received numerous letters to the editor, as well as telephone calls, about this decision to enforce an "old" District Rule without having had any discussion with representatives of the Resident Lifestyle Clubs (RLCs), which would be impacted by this decision, or the Amenity Authority Committee

(AAC). (The AAC has oversight on the amenity facilities north of CR466, including their parking lots.)

We also asked attendees at the POA April meeting how many had taken RLC bus trips and about 80% of the hands went up. Everyone also acknowledged that they wanted the POA to pursue a solution for use of the recreation center parking lots.

Sample letter: "Janet Tutt is out of line by outright banning charter bus pick-ups at Squares, Recreation Centers, and Shopping Centers without providing a viable alternate solution for charter buses and the Villagers who use them. First off, this leaves The Villages Transportation Company as being the only charter bus operator that can effectively pick up and discharge passengers within The Villages. The Villages Transportation Company has a contractual right to use the Depot at Sumter Landing.

"Second, and most importantly, the homeowners own the recreation facilities through the Districts. We paid a high price to the Developer for these facilities and we should not be denied their use for a viable activity. I consider group travel to be such an activity.

"I understand Ms. Tutt's concern with having folks clog parking lots near the squares by

leaving their cars. However, there are several parking lots near Recreation Centers and other facilities throughout The Villages that rarely get near full.

"Another solution would be to develop a charter bus depot with a shelter, rest room facilities, and parking for autos and golf carts. Before any ban on charter bus pick-ups and related parking is imposed (especially at Recreation Centers), a viable alternate solution should be found so that Villagers have a place where they can meet buses and safely park their cars or golf carts.

"For this reason, I request the POA to ask the Amenities Board and the Districts to identify parking areas under their control that can serve as meeting points for Villagers boarding charter buses.

"Ms. Tutt should also be instructed by these bodies to hold off on any ban (at least at Recreation Centers) until an alternate solution is worked out and implemented. With all the land and ample parking currently located within The Villages, surely something can be worked out.

Steve Bressi"

While it may be appropriate for the Commercial District to mandate regulations regarding usage of the parking lots for their commercial areas, it should be noted that residents do have a vested interest in the usage of the recreation center parking lots, as they pay their monthly amenity fees in response to the Districts responsibility to provide all of the amenity facilities and services, at least at the

(Continued on page 5)

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Bus Ban

(Continued from page 4)

same level or better than they were when the amenity contracts were sold from the Developer to the Districts.

When other issues that have an impact on residents have risen in the past, study groups or workshops are usually created to look at the problems and discuss possible solutions and decisions.

If nothing else, the problem could have been brought by District Staff to the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) to allow them, as a resident elected Committee, to provide input on the proposed bus ban. Rules could be developed which would protect the parking capability of the users of the center(s) without simply banning their total usage by RLCs which use bus trips. After all, residents on trips sponsored by RLCs should have as much right to usage of their recreation center parking spaces as they would have if they had a daylong meeting inside the recreation center.

The POA hopes that a Study Group will be formed **immediately**, either by District Staff or by the AAC, to evaluate the application of the District Rule to Recreation Centers and work to develop a set of rules that does not

arbitrarily disenfranchise one group of RLCs in the use of the parking lots their amenity fees purchased. The Study Group should contain leaders from several of the RLCs that have bus trips as a major part of their Club's activities.

A Study Group could present a process that could be tried on a TRIAL BASIS to see if any problems arise, and if so, determine if they have viable solutions. Some possible guidelines, for a **Trial Process** that could be looked into, are as follows:

Bus pick-up at a Recreation Center:

- 1) **Day Trips ONLY** – no overnight trips.
- 2) January 1 through March 31 - No parking of participants vehicles in the Recreation parking lots, just drop off and pick up.
- 3) Permits available to **Resident Lifestyle Clubs only** – the **Leader** secures a permit from the District for the bus company. **Permit will identify the entrance and exit of the parking lot to be used by the bus and the spot for loading.**
- 4) All riders must present Villages or Villages guest IDs to ride the bus – may be checked on departure or return – if the group leader has not made sure this rule was enforced by the club, they would be denied usage of any parking lot for a bus trip for one year.

- 5) April 1 to November 30th – parking permitted **if space is available**. It would be relatively easy to set up a permit system where a request could be made and a recreation center parking lot assigned for that Lifestyle group. The parking lots are designed for peak use so there are times when space is available during these months.
- 6) No free rides for any club members or organizers of the trip.
- 7) No parking or pick up for businesses that organize tours for profit – casinos, AAA, etc. If the Trial Process was successful, other possibilities could be looked at, such as pick-up and drop-off for overnight trips during certain months.

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES NEED TO ACCOMMODATE RESIDENTS!! □

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Recreation Trail Pavement Marking Update

HOORAY, remedies for visibility issues for those of us who operate our golf carts at night and/or in inclement weather on the recreation trails – multi-modal paths – multi-use paths – whatever you want to call them, may be just around the corner.

The Multi-Modal Path Discussion Group Workshop was held on May 5th. This group is composed of one supervisor each from CDDs 1 – 10 and one member of the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC). Richard Busche, the now "famous" engineer from Kimley-Horn (KHA) gave another presentation, which was not received, by the proponents of striping, any better than his last one. In fact, he let his frustration, on the lack of many attendees to agree with his position, show. Mr. Busche again made it very clear that he would not recommend or support striping. In his "opinion", striping would fundamentally change the paths into golf cart "highways" and make the golf cart operators think they owned the path.

It was obvious, as the workshop continued, that there was still no consensus among elected officials. What the public appears to want, and what the engineer continues to recommend to the District, are not the same.

One thing, that the majority did seem to agree on, was that there needed to be better markings on the islands (medians) in the paths. While District staff has added more reflectors on the bullheads, there seemed to be impetus for using the solid yellow line going up to and out of the island, as well as around the island so that it was clearly identified as you approached it as well as while you were passing it.

The vast majority believe that the visibility issue for night and inclement weather needs to be addressed, and since Mr. Busche had made it clear from the start that he did not want to even discuss centerline striping, the issue of edge markings on the concrete curbing became the focus of discussion. Which would be better, reflectors on the curbing every 30 to 50 feet or reflective white paint on the concrete curbing? You guessed it – there was no unanimity on this issue either.

It was agreed that all of the representatives would report back to their constituents.

Several hours after the conclusion of the May 5th Workshop, District Manager Tutt received the following email from Mr. Busche:

"As a follow up to the meeting today, our advice to the committee is summarized as follows:

1. Centerline striping is neither required or warranted. We do not support centerline striping. It is not consistent with the intent of a multi-use facility and it will make the trails less safe for anyone not in a golf cart. We think this discussion should be closed.
2. Warning markings at the medians need to be consistent. I recommend that KHA provide a typical detail and District staff can get that work contracted through your vendors. We recommend reflectors in lieu of striping at these locations.
3. Edge line striping is not warranted or recommended. However, it does not conflict with the multi-use aspect of the trails like the centerline stripe does. If the governing agency wants to install them, a specification needs to be developed so you can hire a contractor. It is allowable by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices to use reflectors in lieu of the stripe, but we will need to analyze the issue and make a recommendation should you go this route."

District Staff then forwarded the following memo to members of the CDD1-10 Boards and the AAC:

(Continued on page 7)

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Trail Marking Update

(Continued from page 6)

"Attached for your review is the presentation made to the Multi-Modal Path Discussion Group by Richard Busche of Kimley-Horn and Associates.

"As a result of the discussion that occurred during the Workshop, the following will be posed to the AAC and District 1-4 Boards this week:

"As it pertains to the Multi-Modal Path Discussion Group Workshop, the request to the Boards is:

"Are you interested in moving forward, cooperatively, with the other Districts on two areas:

"1. Is your district interested in addressing the center medians so that there is consistency, in light of the Engineer's recommendation for obstructions or center areas?

"2. Is your District interested in moving forward with some type of side markings, i.e. striping, Reflective Pavement Markers (RPM's) subject to an analysis and design by the District Engineer? For Districts 5-10, the PWAC will be addressing these items at their monthly meeting..."

The Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC), which represents Community Development Districts 5-11, then met two days later on May 7th, and had very little problem with any of Mr. Busche's positions. When all was said and done, and each of the Committee members had an opportunity to speak, they agreed to focus on the issues of visibility on the paths that were presented by Mr. Busche, specifically, median and curb markings.

They agreed not to be concerned with the "How" (Paint vs. RPMs), but rather, the "What" – (Medians and Curbs) that needed to be addressed and those decisions need to be based on the safety of all users of the paths.

The AAC and CDDs 1-4 each met and voted to move forward in addressing the markings on the medians/islands in the paths and edge markings (paint and/or RPMs).

Additionally, in CDD4, where center stripes have been put in place, supervisors have suggested that an additional opinion and/or study is needed to determine whether center line striping is beneficial and provides a safer environment. The group moved to have staff vet additional engineering firms to provide a second opinion, or a "data driven study" as Supervisor Paul Kelly put it, to determine if centerline striping down the multi-modal paths



provides "additional safety to the residents of the District."

The Multi-Modal Path Discussion Group met again on May 18th to review the Project Proposal from Mr. Busche regarding the median and curb markings.

His charge is to "conduct a review to determine the suitability of (Paint vs. RPM's): 1) edge line marking and 2) median obstruction marking on the existing Multi Use Trails." He will provide a written report to the District summarizing the findings of the evaluation and include recommended alternatives to be considered for design and construction. He will be paid on an hourly as needed basis, "not to exceed" \$6,500, exclusive of direct expenses.


During audience comments, CDD2 Supervisor Bryan Lifsey urged the Committee to seek a second opinion from a different Traffic Engineering Company, since KHA had come out firmly against centerline striping without any empirical data to back up that position and was unrelenting in their stance. The Committee did not respond.

Ms. Tutt stated that Mr. Busche would perform this service as expeditiously as possible and hoped that his report would be available for the Residential CDD Supervisors and the AAC to review at their June meetings. □

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Owens Corning Defective Shingles Update

The POA continues to be proactive in trying to help remedy the inconsistent treatment of residents by Owens Corning in regard to replacement of defective shingles.

We have been working with Seniors vs. Crime (SVC), funneling all of the complaints we have received to them, and on March 16, 2015, the **Sumter County Office of Seniors vs. Crime** transferred approximately 180 cases involving complaints of **defective** Owens-Corning roofing shingles to the Florida Attorney General's (AG) Office in Tallahassee. Her Office of Special Investigation has now assumed responsibility for pursuing those investigations.

The POA was recently contacted by a representative from the Attorney General's (AG) office and advised that they have received the complaints which went from the

POA, to Seniors vs. Crime, to the AG's office and are currently contacting Owens Corning, The Villages of Lake Sumter, Inc. and The Villages Warranty Department to get additional facts and information.

The investigation has been assigned to Investigator Tim Bivens, a Financial Investigator with the AG's Antitrust Division.

Mr. Bivens reported that, "At this point in the process we are reaching out to all parties involved and are moving forward with the investigation. If any of the complainants would like to contact me directly they can do so." Be sure to include your SVC case number for reference and send to Investigator Tim Bivens, at tim.bivens@myfloridalegal.com.

We have no further details at this time, but we will continue to keep you apprised of any progress. **(Seniors vs. Crime will continue to accept new cases from Villagers and will forward them to the AG's Office for further action.)** □

It's CDD Budget Time In The Villages

During the month of May, all of the Community Development District (CDD) Boards held their annual Budget Workshops to review their Budgets for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015-2016 and their updated five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which outlines the replacement and major maintenance projects for each District's roads, fences, walls, irrigation, etc. along with the funding sources, (your Annual Maintenance Assessment), as presented by The District Office of Management and Budget.

During the summer, residents in CDDs which are considering increasing their assessments, will receive a notification outlining the reasons for the proposed increase. Residents will be provided a date and time of the **public hearing in September** when the increase will again be considered by the CDD Board before voting to finalize their budgets. (The percentage increase could be lowered at this meeting,

(Continued on page 9)

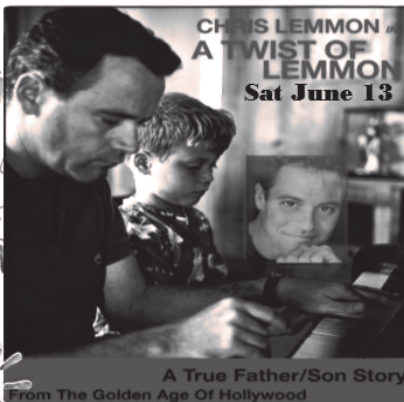


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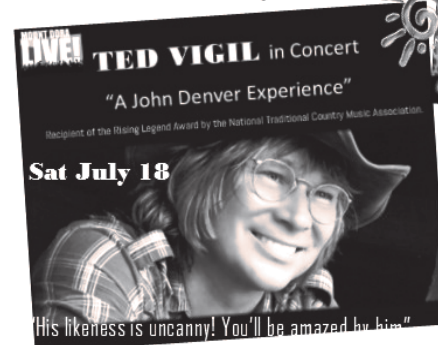
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CDD Budgets

(Continued from page 8)
but not increased.)

All CDD landowners must pay non-ad valorem assessments related to the operation and maintenance costs of their District facilities and services. "Non-ad valorem" means these are NOT based on property values, as opposed to how your ad valorem real estate property taxes are determined.

The **maintenance component** of your non-ad valorem assessment is an **annual assessment for the operation and maintenance of District infrastructure and facilities.** Each year, the Boards of Supervisors hold a public hearing to adopt the annual budget and set the level of operations and maintenance assessments.

The operations and maintenance assessment may vary from year to year based upon the District's general fund budget adopted each year after an advertised, public hearing. The District operates in the same fiscal year (FY) as other governmental entities, which be-

gins October 1 and ends September 30 the following year.

While these District assessments are not taxes, they will appear on your property tax bill that you receive in November of each year from your County Tax Collector, and will be collected in the same manner as real estate property taxes.

CDDs in The Villages are responsible for the maintenance of:

- Landscaping (includes mowing, shrub trimming, weeding and flower change-outs) rights-of-way, including street lighting and irrigation;
- Entry features;
- Recreation trails (multi-modal paths) and sidewalks;
- Tunnels;
- Hardscape (e.g., fences, walls, signs);
- Ponds, shorelines, conservation, storm water management systems, buffer areas, and aquatic weed control;
- Villa roads*

***CDD4 - (INFORMATION FOLLOWS)**

At their May budget workshop, CDD4, (which includes the Villages of Springdale, Woodbury, Piedmont, Briar Meadows, Chatham and Calumet, plus all of the villas therein), also reviewed their proposed annual

budget for FY 2015-2016, as presented by the District Office of Management and Budget.

After three hours of analysis and discussion, two things became clear to the CDD4 Board. Starting in FY 2015-2016 and going forward for the next four years:

- 1) landscaping and road expenses will be significantly higher than expected; and,
- 2) anticipated income will not be sufficient to meet anticipated expenses.

Long-term, prudent planning is needed to avoid having a really large financial increase in one single year. Further analysis led the Board to the conclusion and unanimous decision to recommend a "proposed" increase of 20% to the Annual Maintenance Assessment.

This could mean an average increase of **\$48.48 to \$81.72 annually, (or \$4.04 to \$6.81 per month)**, per household to residents of CDD4. (Remember: This is only a "proposed" percentage increase. It could be lowered at the September meeting, but not increased.)

Why is a 20% increase needed now?

LANDSCAPING INCREASE

In FY 2006-2007, the CDD4 Landscape contract went out to bid by District Property Management. They are the entity that manages

(Continued on page 10)

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CDD Budgets

(Continued from page 9)

all landscaping contracts on behalf of all of the Districts. A great 5-year fixed-price landscaping contract, with three 1-year renewals at the same price, for a total of 8 years, was obtained to the benefit of District 4 residents.

However, as everyone knows, the minimum wages for labor are higher now than they were in 2006. The fact is that since 2006 the cost of doing business has increased significantly - wages, insurance, fuel, etc. Additionally, it was later determined that CDD4 residents also benefitted due to an error in the contractor's previous bid amount, which was based on only one flower change out, instead of three – a significant cost that CDD4 resi-

dents did not have to pay for seven years.

When the 8-year contract expired at the end of FY 2013/14, the landscape contract went out to bid again by District Property Management (DPM). They recommended **Commercial Companies (CC)** based on price/value, prior performance and reputation. (CC was rated #1 out of 10 bidders by the DPM committee.) So, District 4 hired the new landscaping contractor starting in FY 2014/15. However, the cost is \$100,000 per year higher than the 8-year-old 2006 contract, due to the factors just identified.

This \$100,000 increase in landscaping costs amounts to approximately 6% of the 20% proposed Annual Maintenance Assessment increase. Fortunately, CDD4 was able to obtain another 8-year fixed-price contract, so no further landscaping cost increases are expected for several years.

(Note: Also, in the past in an effort to contain costs, the CDD4 Board has explored the possibility of reducing the 4x/year plantings to 3x/year. However, there was an overwhelming negative response from residents on this suggestion.)

ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

CDD4, (located in Marion County), is the **ONLY** CDD in The Villages whose county

requires that the District be totally responsible for all maintenance and upkeep of roadways, (with the exception of Buena Vista Blvd, which Marion County accepted responsibility for because it is a "main connector roadway"). As a result, the majority of the proposed increase in the Annual Maintenance Assessment is to fund the ongoing repair and maintenance of the roads in District 4.

As such, the CDD4 Board commissioned an engineering study by Farner Barley in 2006 and actually mapped the condition of their roads by TransMap in 2009. Based on the data from this work and on their recommendations, the Board has been putting amounts into their road reserve annually ranging from \$199,000 to \$355,517 since FY 08-09, with no increase in the Annual Maintenance Assessment. They were able to do this through careful management of expenses by the Board and District Administration.

However, recent road evaluations indicate that CDD4 roads have had a greater amount of wear and tear than planned, due to higher than anticipated traffic volume, weather conditions, etc. The most recent information by Kissinger Campos indicates a need to provide an accelerated rate of road maintenance.

The CDD4 roadways are now approxi-

(Continued on page 11)

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CDD Budgets

(Continued from page 10)

mately 15 years old and the need for more expensive upkeep, including rejuvenator applications, resurfacing, mill and overlay for the collector, residential and villa roadways must now be addressed. According to public records, the current **balance in CDD4's Road Reserves is \$2,036,638**, but that is still not enough. CDD4's 5-year, (2014-2019) projected CIP calls for an expenditure of \$725,467 (of which \$608,867 would come from Road Reserves) for FY 2015-2016 on District roads.

Over the next four years, it is now **estimated** as much as \$3,071,366 could be needed for CDD4's road maintenance, so that means at least \$1,034,728 still needs to be raised (\$258,682 annually).

A 20% increase in District 4's maintenance assessment would raise about \$346,000 in additional funds annually. However, \$100,000 would be used to pay for the additional cost of

(Continued on page 12)



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CDD Budgets

(Continued from page 11)

the landscaping contract. That would leave a balance of \$246,000 annually for the General Road Reserves.

In addition, the restricted capital projects 2010 Phase I and 2012 Phase II generate \$25,796 and \$24,342 annually that can be applied to roads and other capital requirements for fiscal year 2019/20 and beyond.

Note: Road maintenance has also been affected by the increase in the cost of doing business since 2006, so that is another reason CDD4's current Road Reserves will be insufficient to meet future needs.)

The CDD4 Supervisors DID NOT, but could have, instituted 3% annual increases for the last six years and another 3% this year, to have the money which will be needed, but instead opted to wait until the money was needed and make one increase, in order to help residents during the "recession" – the proposed increase is 20%, (less than it would

have been, had they approved 3% increases over those seven years). Plus, there is a significant savings, because it is expensive to go through the required notification/approval government process in order to increase a CDD maintenance assessment each year. (In CDD4, a 3% increase would only net around \$52,000 new dollars each year.)

The good news for CDD4 residents is that they control the maintenance of their roads and do not have to be dependent on a County Board to determine when necessary repairs will actually be made. Additionally, District staff will hire and supervise the contractors, so that CDD4 roads do not end up like the recently 'redone' Enrique roadway, where the asphalt is not feathered over to the curb, thus creating a drop-off between the asphalt and gutter/curb of the golf cart lane.

All of the CDD4 Board members acknowledged that they recognize that any 20% increase comes with a lot of angst and questions, and they take their fiduciary responsibility to their residents very seriously.

Although District 4 is the ONLY District in The Villages responsible for maintenance of their collector and residential roads, in addition to their villa roads, prudent long-term planning has put them, along with all of the other districts in The Villages, in a position to handle problems of maintaining their landscaping and aging infrastructures, in an economy where prices tend to creep up and affect all residents (many of whom are on fixed incomes).

NOTE: This increase has nothing to do with your monthly Amenity Fees. □

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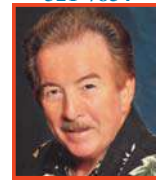


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APRIL FORUM QUESTIONS

RESPONSES BY POA PRESIDENT

1) We moved here about 3½ years ago and we were told when we moved in that Brownwood would be the last of the development. As we all know, it's getting more and more crowded. I realize there's not much we can do about it, but you can't get on a golf course, you can't get into a restaurant. We all know what this is like, I'm not telling you what you don't know. I just think that if we can get together, we could have the Developer build more 9 hole golf courses. That's what we enjoy. And, leave some area for additional restaurants. At least give us that, because with the amount of people, you can't drive on a street, you can't get a restaurant time and you can't get a golf tee time. What can we do? **A)** The Developer is all about putting up houses. He also puts in commercial districts. I've been here since 1999, and at that time there were 19,000 of us, and now there are 110,000. What you find is the houses go up first, with a few commercial establishments. You can't get additional grocery stores and any big box stores or restaurants to come in and build stores, until the people are here. Note that in the Brownwood

area, there's the one shopping center, but you will see that as the area builds out down there, they'll have more and more restaurants, stores and shops.

The other thing is the snowbird season. How many of you had visitors this year? Raise your hand if you had any visitors this year. OK, (almost everyone's hand went up) – see, it's not just the snowbirds, it's all of us bringing our friends and relatives down to visit in January, February and March. We should not mind sharing and being a little tight on the facilities during that time period, because the snowbirds who are typically here January, February and March, the three winter months, pay their amenity fees all year long. That allows us to have all this availability, in the 8 or 9 months, when they are gone.

As far as the golf courses – there is a formula used by the Developer – a certain number of rooftops sold, means we get one more golf hole. Notice that in Fruitland Park, they are going to put in two new executive courses.

It is important that you know how to use the Tee Time System. It is designed to give all residents fair and equal opportunities to obtain tee times and it works very well. However, if you want to play at 10AM in the morning and you want to play 5 days a week; guess what, you're not going to get it. (You can go to golfthevillages.com and click on the Golfing in The Vil-

lages Brochure and find out exactly how the system works.) You couldn't build enough golf courses to have preferred times available to everyone. If you have a country club – 200 members – and they all want 10AM tee times – guess what, the tee times are going to be open from 7:30AM to 4PM and everyone cannot get their 10AM preferred time. Golf courses are unique facilities and there is only so much you can do with them.

Lastly, we know that build out is a moving number. It's probably more of a sales pitch so prospects will buy now, even though they are not planning to retire for three years, because they want to be able to buy a 'new' house.

2) I've been a resident in The Villages since 1999 and as such I don't want to appear to be an old fogey who's against change or whatever else, but I'm concerned and I would like the POA to get involved in the changes that are being executed by the Developer or the Morse Family in Spanish Springs Town Square. First it was the Church on the Square and we're suffering the consequences now which is the point of my question being posed here this meeting. The second one is now we're losing Katie Belles as we knew it. **A)** Remember, the Developer owns all or almost all of the buildings in the three squares. Resi-

(Continued on page 15)

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April Forum Q&A

(Continued from page 14)

dents have absolutely no control over what he does with them. They are not part of our amenities. They are his commercial entities. The conversion of the Church into a golf cart accessible Performing Arts Center, paid for by the Developer, has been very well received by the residents. (Contrary to when the Church was constructed, residents now have numerous golf cart accessible Churches to select from.)

Katie Belles was fun and when you had folks in, you took them there because of its uniqueness. It is possible that they were losing too much money to support the building, the staff and the entertainment. Part of it was likely because there was only a \$5 minimum and some residents would go in there, spend the \$5, stay there all night, take a table and dance.

Let's give the Developer's staff a chance to see what they can do with the upstairs Katie Belles because we can't do anything about it. We are at his mercy, so all we can do is encourage him to fix it so we'll be happier with it.

3) The valet parking deal – is this for long-term? That's the first thing. The second thing

is I hope they don't take a lot of public parking spaces and make it valet parking. **A) The lease of the parking spaces is for five years and it is renewable.** We have followed the valet parking lease request and the drawings indicate that the valet parked cars will be at the far end of the parking lots where their reserved spaces will be located. So, those spaces nearest to the activity will be available for the public to park their vehicles. That was a good part of it. These cars would be parked in the lots anyway, but the advantage to the rest of us is that if they valet park, their vehicles will not be using close parking spaces. Additionally, the provision of valet parking will make the use of the squares more available to residents who previously did not go to them because they cannot walk long distances. Considering the fact that we have an aging population, we already know that the currently provided handicap spaces are limited.

4) I've been told that, if they are having an event over at the Sharon Morse Center, then they are not going to have any entertainment on the Square. When I first moved here we were told that we were offered entertainment at the Square every night of the year, and it didn't say if the Sharon Morse Building was busy or not. I don't know if that's true or not, but I would like to find out. **A)** There have been lots of rumors to this ef-

fect, but the latest information we have, is that nightly entertainment on the square will continue as usual. The construction of The Sharon included special sound barrier materials – at significant expense – in the construction of the walls, so that no sound from the inside can be heard outside, and vice versa. I was down there last Saturday night and they had the high school groups performing in The Sharon. They had a pretty full crowd for that event. They also had the Cruise-In going on, and they had the bands playing in the square, and there didn't seem to be any problem with the parking.

5) With regard to roping off chairs at Spanish Springs. It's now starting to filter over to Sumter as well. I just don't think this is right. People come in and rope off chairs, and some of them never even show up to enjoy the show. We were there one night around 3:30-4PM, and everything was roped off. **A)** If it is a popular venue, we see this happen. This was addressed by the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) several years ago, so we are asking the District representatives who are attending this meeting to ask District Manager Tutt if she can address this problem with the Developer, who leases the square, and others who are involved with the nightly setup. I know for a while, at least at Lake Sumter, they had the chairs on trailers and didn't bring them out until it was near the time to start the activities. However, if there is something else going on (Market Night) at the square, then the chairs may be set up prior to the entertainment. □

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Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) Meeting Highlights

May 6th, 2015

Audience Comments:

- A Silver Lake resident requested that District Staff contact the contractor who was storing demolition equipment on a residential lot, where a home had been demolished, and require the contractor to move the equipment. District Manager Tutt stated they would follow up and see that it was removed.
- George Perkins, a Calumet Grove resident submitted a petition, with 113 signatures on it, to the AAC and requested that four additional pickleball courts be added to the Mulberry Grove Recreation Complex if CDD4 accepts the 300 additional homes requested

by the Developer. The AAC accepted the petition and advised that they would consider the request, after they have all of the information related to the possible expansion, including data being collected by John Rohan regarding usage of the various outdoor facilities and rooms, at both Mulberry Grove and Chatham Recreation Centers.

- A resident of CDD4 expressed a concern that amenity facilities north of CR466 were significantly fewer than areas south of CR466 and urged the AAC to continue renovating and adding additional recreation facilities, even if it means issuing a bond in order to finance them.

New Business:

- Improvements to and staffing of the Del Mar Gate, where there continues to be concern

about the high volume of traffic, was presented to the Lady Lake Town Commission and they were very much in favor of the proposed modifications to the intersection. The AAC approved the hiring of Kimley-Horn and Associates to provide engineering services related to the Del Mar Gate Concept Development.

Old Business:

- Capital Projects Update: Santiago Recreation Center: The foundation is now complete and the walls are being erected. The project is progressing on schedule, towards the December 2015 completion date. The estimated total cost is \$2,262,381. (Paid for with lawsuit settlement funds.)

Tierra Del Sol Recreation Center: The grand opening of the new center took place on May 7th. The estimated total cost is \$1,902,027 (Paid for with lawsuit settlement funds.)

Gate Connectivity: The "Plug In" ceremony took place on April 1, 2015. The final cost which includes fiber/installation, cameras, servers and other necessary equipment was \$912,166 (Paid for with lawsuit settlement funds.)

Pool Lighting: The updated pool lighting at the Chula Vista, Paradise, Hilltop and Southside pools has now been completed and the pools are

(Continued on page 17)

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AAC Highlights

(Continued from page 16)

open for night time swimming.

- Regarding the CDD4 expansion proposal, Staff reported that they are investigating the status of the property adjacent to CDD4 that previously housed the Baptist Church (before they built their new and larger facility).
- Indoor/Covered/Shaded Swimming Pool - Staff will report their findings relative to the possible construction of this type of pool, including feasibility, costs, land availability, and pools that could be converted with a cover, etc., at the June 10th, AAC meeting.

Supervisor Comments:

- Supervisor Deakin requested a clarification as to what a District Rule was as regards to the recent letter from Janet Tutt to the Life-style Groups advising them that there could be NO BUS PICKUPS at any District commercial property parking lot or Villages Recreation Center parking lot. (For more information, see page 1.)
- Chairperson Forrester reported on the Multi-Modal Path Safety Workshop, and a discussion followed regarding the requested position of the AAC, on the following two questions:
 1. Is your district interested in addressing the

center medians so that there is consistency, in light of the Engineer's recommendation for obstructions or center (islands in the paths) areas? The AAC voted Yes.

2. Is your District interested in moving forward with some type of side markings, i.e. striping, and/or Reflective Pavement Markers (RPM's) on the concrete curbs, subject to an analysis and design by the District Engineer? The AAC voted Yes.

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

Schedule. Next AAC Meeting – Wednesday, 9AM on June 10, 2015, at the Savannah Center. □

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Verizon Cell Phone Reception Update

Upon receiving an email about problems with Verizon reception, we (POA) requested the residents with Verizon cell phone issues either email, or fill out and mail in a questionnaire, which was included in the April POA Bulletin.

To date, we have received approximately 325+ comments and we have contacted Verizon with the list of these concerns. As an update, the President of Verizon, in Florida, responded with the following letter:

"As we celebrate 15 years as Verizon Wireless in this community, I want to reaffirm our commitment to serving The Villages.

"Verizon Wireless is the largest wireless com-

pany in the country, with more than 108 million customers, and we operate the nation's largest and most reliable 4G LTE network. Headquartered regionally in Tampa Bay, with more than 80 corporate retail stores and a strong network of authorized resellers across the state, we're making vast investments in our network infrastructure, workforce, customer service and other functions for greater success, now and in the future, for residents of The Villages.

"We are the leading company in this vibrant industry because we care for excellence and focus on our customers and their communities. In The Villages, we're making investments to enhance coverage and capacity including:

- A new cell location completed in May, with another planned for later this year;
- Two new scheduled cell locations, planned for 2016;
- Two new retail locations, scheduled to open by end of this year.

"However, we can always do better and it's apparent that we need to do even more to keep up with Florida's largest retirement community and the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan area. To that end, it is imperative that we continue to partner with The Villages to invest in and build technology that will meet the ever-growing needs of the Villagers.

"I appreciate your business, your loyalty and your feedback and look forward to working in partnership with you to offer services and products upon which you can rely."

Sincerely,
Mariano Legaz, President,
Florida Region Verizon Wireless

LETTERS

Letter to the Editor:

Golf Cart Warning Side Mirrors Can Be a Hazard

I have noticed that there are golf cart accidents that are not turned in as accidents. These events happen mostly in three locations: the Morse Bridge, the golf cart bridge over US 27, and in the tunnels.

Many golf cart mirrors are of the same height and if carts get too close to each other in the opposite direction, bang, there goes your mirror and creates a possible injury. This situation that can be resolved by folding in your driver's side mirror whenever going over the bridges or through the tunnels. D. Rybandt

Editor's Note: Good information. Readers with side mirrors on your golf cart(s), please take heed.

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LETTERS

Letter to the Editor:
**Attention Golf Cart Operators:
 MERGING
 RESPONSIBILITIES**

We keep coming across a situation that really needs to be emphasized more - *golf carts running in the golf cart lanes on roadways, making left hand turns directly from the golf cart lane, without first merging into traffic lanes.*

We have had this happen, sometimes with almost disastrous results. We are in our car, and suddenly, a golf cart makes a left hand turn without first merging into the car lane, turning directly from the golf cart lane. One would not do that with a car. Can you imagine a car in the outermost lane, making a left hand turn from that lane, crossing over the inner most lane in front of another car?

Golf carts MUST merge into the car lane BEFORE making a left hand turn. Golf carts DO NOT make a left hand turn directly from the golf cart lane. Thanks, M & C Poole

Editor's Note: If you travel in the golf cart lane on Morse Boulevard, north of CR466

(Continued on page 20)

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**Letter to the Editor (continued):
Merging Responsibilities**

(Continued from page 19)
and/or on those residential roadways that have a golf cart lane sharing their roadway, **You Must Merge Into The Lane With The Automobile Traffic In Order To Make A Left Hand Turn—You May Not Cut Across In Front Of The Vehicular Traffic.** Also, As It Is When Operating An Automobile, You Must Be Sure You Have ADEQUATE CLEARANCE TO MERGE And We Suggest You USE YOUR TURN SIGNAL and HAND SIGNAL When You Are Attempting To Merge. □

LETTERS

**Letter to the Editor:
Sinkhole Insurance**

About two years ago, several residential areas in The Villages experienced sink hole damage, some, very significant. Sinkhole events are not unusual to The Villages, the surrounding area, or of Florida. They do occur, and will continue to occur. Knowing that recent Florida legislation had changed to allow insurance

companies to eliminate sinkhole coverage, or significantly raise deductibles for such if they even provided coverage, I contacted the POA, the VHA, and the Villages Developer asking them to investigate the possibility of creating a self-insured entity to provide sinkhole coverage to interested Villages' residents. Only the POA responded.

The POA not only responded, but created a committee to explore the possibilities. My several recent contacts with them, as well as information from their print updates, have shown that the POA continues to work tirelessly on this task (active discussions with local elected officials, the Florida Insurance Department, etc.), as well as on other important issues that can benefit all Villages' residents. One can only wonder why the VHA and The Villages' Developer didn't think this was an important enough issue to become involved.

My compliments to the POA for all its meaningful efforts on making The Villages a better place for all of us. Its efforts are recognized and sincerely appreciated. Gary Heller

Editor's Note: Thank you for your comments. We are continuing to investigate this issue and have been in touch with officials in Tallahassee with questions regarding our plans. We have not given up yet. □

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Lightning Matters

By Len Hathaway

Lightning Safety Awareness Week

WHEN THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS!

The National Weather Service (NWS) has designated June 21-27, 2015, as LIGHTNING SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK to highlight the dangers of lightning in advance of the peak lightning months of June, July, and August that account for 70% of all lightning.

This is particularly important to residents of The Villagers, as Florida is the Lightning Capital of the USA. According to the NWS, we experience an average of 80 thunderstorm days each year, which may be two to ten times more than you experienced in other places that you may have lived. In 2014, we experienced 110 thunderstorm days.

Florida typically leads the nation in lightning deaths and injuries. According to the NWS, your chance of being struck by lightning is 1:775,000 each year, but 1:10,000 in a lifetime. The odds that you will know someone affected by lightning is 1:1,000. Compare those odds to 1:22,000,000 of winning the lottery!

Lightning Safety Awareness Week coincides with the anniversary of Ben Franklin's famous kite experiment. That was the beginning of the scientific study of lightning that continues to this day. Several universities study lightning, including the University of Florida at Gainesville, and at their International Center for Lightning Research & Testing at Camp Blanding.

So, this is a good time to review lightning safety for both outdoor and indoor activities.

Outdoors: NWS's advice is to plan ahead. Their theme is WHEN THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS!

To reduce your risk, you need to recognize that no place is absolutely safe, but some homes, hard topped metal vehicles, and substantially constructed buildings, particularly those with lightning protection systems (rods), are better than most. It is recommended that you not resume outdoor activities for 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder or sight of lightning.

It is important to remember that lightning is highly UNPREDICTABLE as it can strike ten miles or more from the thunderstorm, and it does not always strike the highest point in the area. Avoid large bodies of water. Last year more lightning deaths involved fishing - even

more than other outdoor activities, including golf. Also avoid trees, bleachers, metal fences, dugouts, open picnic shelters, flag poles, street lights, softball & polo fields, tennis & pickleball courts, golf courses, shuffleboard, bocce, basketball & horseshoe venues, convertibles, bicycles, motorcycles, power lines, hill tops,

(Continued on page 22)

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Lightning Safety

(Continued from page 21)

swimming pools, and GOLF CARTS.

Indoors: Once you are in a home or substantial building there still may be a lightning threat to your personal safety. There have been reports of injuries to Villagers who were in their homes, taking a shower or talking on a corded telephone, when their homes were struck by lightning during a thunderstorm. Therefore, avoid corded telephones, plumbing fixtures, electrical equipment, and windows.

Lightning 101 - If your club, organization, church, or civic group would benefit from a free non-commercial Power Point presentation,

Lightning Tips for Villagers, addressing personal lightning safety, lightning protection systems (rods), lightning surges to electronic equipment, and the susceptibility of corrugated stain-less steel tubing (CSST) gas pipe to lightning, contact Len Hathaway at lhatha@aol.com or Bob Freeman at stalit1@aol.com. □



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Susan Weiss beat breast and uterine cancer with the help of RBOI.

Cancer can't cripple love, shatter hope or conquer the spirit. Those are just a few of the things Susan learned through her battle with not one, but two types of cancer. At times, she was so fatigued that she lost interest in the hobbies she loves, but she never lost faith. Working with her team of specialists, Susan got the advanced treatment and emotional support she needed. She's now strong enough to offer that same support to others with cancer, showing them exactly what cancer cannot do. We helped Susan write her success story. Let us help write yours.



Visit RBOI.com or call 352.259.2200 to schedule a consultation.

