



POA Bulletin



POA4US.org

JANUARY 2022

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UPCOMING POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

SEE PAGE 17

January 18, 2022 – 7 PM

LAUREL MANOR RECREATION CENTER

Speaker: Richard Campbell President
UFHealth – The Villages Hospital
Auxiliary Foundation



POA 2022 SHREDDING EVENT

DATE: Saturday, April 9, 2022
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Please consider donating a gift card to SOS (Support Our Soldiers). See page 12.

Developer's Revenge?

Sumter County Commissioners Miller and Search Charged with Perjury

“Florida’s Friendliest Hometown” started to look a lot like “Yellowstone” without guns (a top-rated TV show about a Montana rancher and his desperate efforts to maintain control) when, in what can only be described as a revenge plot, two newly elected Sumter County Commissioners Oren Miller and Gary Search who defeated The Villages Developer’s longtime incumbents were charged with criminal perjury in December.

The charges stem from an ethics investigation reportedly initiated by Sumter County Commissioner T & D Executive Doug Gilpin soon after the new commissioners took office, although Mr. Gilpin has not admitted his role in the plot. Gilpin and Commissioner Garry Breeden, along with defeated candidates Steve Prinze, Al Butler and Don Burgess, shifted the burden for growth and voted for a 25% increase in property taxes in 2019, largely because of a \$40 Million road deal they made with the Developer to fund growth south of CR 44.

Since defeating the Developer’s candidates in 2020, the **Developer-owned** *Daily Sun* newspaper has relentlessly conducted a smear campaign against Miller and Search and their efforts to even up the costs for the Developer’s growth by raising one-time road impact fees and lowering property taxes.

The POA supported the three candidates for Sumter County Commissioner that ran against the Developer’s incumbents. In a landslide, voters in

Sumter County voted out the Developer’s cronies and opted for Commissioners who were willing to listen to resident concerns.

The POA does NOT back down from its support of the candidates and believes they ran for the right reasons. The POA believes this has been a calculated process since the night of the election in 2020, and only now is the revenge plot starting to unfold.

The POA is anxious to have all of the facts of this case come out. The Board of Directors urges residents to wait for facts to be uncovered before passing judgement on these two individuals, and to seek out sources other than the *Daily Sun*.

Undoubtedly there will be other fall out from these charges. Good people with servant hearts to represent their neighbors in local government will likely be scared off the ballot. This appears to be intimidation at its very worst, and if proven so, it is a sad day that it has reached this level in The Villages. ■

Mission Statement

The Property Owners' Association, Inc. (POA) is the original property owners' group in The Villages. Established in 1975, the POA operates with complete independence from the Developer of The Villages. Membership is open to all property owners and residents of The Villages. The POA is committed to acting as a watchdog to ensure that the Developer and local government are responsive to the needs, interests, and rights of residents.

Vision The Property Owners' Association, Inc. (POA) is a champion for the rights of residents of The Villages. Guided by member input, investigation and determination, the POA brings attention to and acts on issues that may impact property values and quality of life.

Goals The POA provides 1) a forum for discussion of issues; 2) research and analysis; 3) programs of interest; and, 4) is a conduit for objective and accurate information. Specific attention is given to resolving housing, community and local government issues.

Values

Independence	Honesty	Fairness
Objectivity	Respect	

The POA Declaration of Independence

The POA is free of any outside influence. This is the only way we can assure our members of absolute autonomy to act on their behalf. From the very beginning in 1975, we recognized this need for independence, and we've cherished and nurtured it ever since.

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 POA 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. The POA assumes no liability for any information published, opinions expressed, or delivery to any person or location. The POA does not endorse or recommend the products or services of any advertiser or discount partner. All publication rights are reserved. Publication or reprinting of any material contained herein is by written permission only. The POA reserves the right to remove and/or discontinue any advertisement or advertiser from its *POA Bulletin* at any time at its sole discretion.

2022 POA Watch List

Every year people look forward to new beginnings, good health, safety, and peace in the world. The POA and residents of The Villages are no different. Some people long for The Villages of long ago, when traffic was light, people knew their neighbors, and they could have conversations with Harold Schwartz and Gary Morse about things that were important to them and their lifestyles in The Villages.



There continues to be a wonderful lifestyle in The Villages that "old" Villagers and new continue to enjoy with more housing opportunities, recreation centers, golf courses, and other amenities.

But clearly, The Villages has changed. Housing has burgeoned along with traffic, bringing crowded golf courses, crowded stores, and restaurants. Most residents would not recognize a member of the Morse family if they passed them on the street. And, unfortunately, politics has gotten as ugly as it is on the national level.

The POA has existed since 1975 and operates with complete independence from the Developer of The Villages. Membership is

open to all property owners and residents of The Villages. The POA is committed to acting as a watchdog to ensure that the Developer and local government are responsive to the needs, interests, and rights of residents. The POA Reports, explains, and acts on behalf of the residents.

Each year the POA identifies a watch list of issues that may affect the lifestyle, property value, and quality of life for residents of The Villages. The POA does not have a crystal ball, however, and more often than not things occur that no one saw coming, such as the 25% Sumter County property tax increase in 2019 or the proposed consolidation of fire departments in 2021.

Watch List continued on page 4



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Watch List continued from page 2

Here is the POA's list to begin 2022 but rest assured that we are watching everything that is happening so that we can report it to you *factually* and take action when necessary.



Big Shoes to Fill

One thing no one saw coming was the resignation of District Manager Richard Baier, effective January 7, 2022. Mr. Baier took over as

District Manager in 2018 and brought with him a wealth of knowledge in managing local government with a strong engineering background that was well utilized in a number of key issues. He created a culture of transparency and accomplished a long list of long-overdue projects that resulted in improved delivery of services, quality, and savings.

The POA wishes Mr. Baier the very best in his future.

Filling his shoes as District Manager is Kenny Blocker, chosen by Mr. Baier first as the Chief Financial Officer and then as Deputy District Manager. Mr. Blocker also brings a wealth of knowledge, particularly in the financial arena.

He and Carrie Duckett, who was formerly the Assistant District Manager now elevated to Deputy Director, will lead the team of capable and dedicated employees to serve the residents into the future.

The complexity of issues that face The Villages as it continues to grow at such a rapid pace will require strong leadership, negotiation, and communication skills. Managing this hybrid "city" of 130,000+ people and some 20+ mini "town boards" (Community Development Districts also known as CDDs), utility boards, Advisory Boards and Committees, and all of the personalities that come with them, is a yeoman task.

The POA wishes Mr. Blocker and Ms. Duckett well and hope to maintain the transparent and cooperative working relationship with them.

Watch List continued on page 5

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Special Independent Fire Territory



Many meetings and much reporting occurred during 2021 regarding the Fire, EMS and Ambulance services provided in Sumter County. One result of that debate was The Villages District Government proposal to create a Special

Independent Fire District, an action that was ultimately supported by the Sumter County Commissioners. State Representative and The Villages Developer employee Brett Hage has submitted a bill for state legislative action that is the required first step in the process of creating the new independent district.

In a written memo presented to the Ad Hoc Committee that looked into the ten options for Fire, EMS, and Ambulance services for Sumter County, Villages Public Safety (VPS) Fire Chief Edmond Cain described several benefits of an Independent Special District, such as:

- Standards, direction, and procedures concerning operations and governance.
- Provides greater uniformity in operations and authority.
- Provides greater uniformity in financing authority without hampering efficiency and effectiveness; and,
- Provides improved communication and coordination between local governments in short and long-range planning to meet the service delivery demands while maintaining fiscal responsibility and stewardship.

There are many pieces of information that will need to be shared with Village’s residents prior to the required voter referendum to create the special district, The POA has identified a few preliminary key issues and questions.

The proposal before the State legislation is only for Sumter County versus all the areas covered by the Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD), including those in Marion and Lake counties, which raises these concerns:

- A new board will be voted in by the residents of Sumter County, with no representation from the other counties/entities within the VPSD area. Even if The Villages setup Interlocal Agreements with these groups, they would have no voice.
- Will the Developer appoint the first Board for the Fire District, instead of being elected by the residents? This could mean that the Developer will make all the decisions about how the fire district is set up, operated, etc., instead of the residents.

The second result of the Fire, EMS and Ambulance debate was that the Sumter County Commissioners decided to go forward, effective October 2022, with separate fire departments. One will be operated by VPSD. Some actions have been taken to allow for a smooth transition, such as Sumter County setting aside an almost \$2 Million dispute over fire funds and deeding Fire Station 43 at Morse and CR 466 to District government.

Nothing is known yet about the overall costs for residents, given the ambulance responsibility that VPSD will pick up in October 2022. Residents currently pay a \$124 per year fire protection fee that is currently paid to the County. Commercial rooftops also pay that \$124 fee, however, counts multi-tenant commercial buildings as single rooftops. For example, The Villages Commercial Property Department pays just \$124 for the rooftop at Colony Shopping Plaza that spans from Beef O’Brady’s to the Mexican restaurant with a dozen or so separate businesses, including Publix – the same as a single resident pays for a home’s rooftop. Will this change now that VPSD will be a separate department? Who will make these decisions? In the absence of an independent fire district, there is no board, other than the VCCDD who usually oversees these kinds of contracts. And the VCCDD Board is comprised of mostly non-resident, Developer employees

Stay tuned. This is likely going to be the biggest issue for 2022 and will have the most financial significance for residents.

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State and Local Elections

State and local elections will also take center stage in 2022. Key races the POA will be watching:

- State Senate District 12 – currently held by Dennis Baxley
- State Representative District 33 – currently held by The Villages Developer employee Brett Hage
- Sumter County Commissioner District 2 – currently held by T & D Executive Doug Gilpen
- Sumter County Commissioner District 4 – Garry Breeden
- Villages District Government:
 - CDDs (resident elected) – 1 (2 seats), 2 (3 seats), 3 (3 seats), 4 (3 seats), 5 (2 seats), 6 (3 seats), 7 (3 seats), 8 (3 seats), 9 (2 seats), 10 (3 seats), 11 (2 seats), 12 (3 seats), 13 (3 seats)
 - Commercial Districts (landowner elected) – VCCDD & SLCCDD (3 seats each), Brownwood (2 seats)
 - AAC (landowner elected - 3 seats)
 - NSCUDD (4 seats)
 - WUDD (2 seats)

The key race to watch at the state level is for the Representative District 33 seat, currently held by the Developer's 6-figure employee Brett Hage. Mr. Hage co-sponsored the bill in 2021 that stripped local government of its home rule with regard to setting road impact fees. Newly elected County Commissioners who defeated the three incumbents that voted for a 25% property tax increase on residents in 2019 attempted to make the tax burden fairer by increasing already discounted impact fees. It is projected that the proposed increase on the one-time impact fee could have raised an estimated \$2.9 Million for every 10,000 homes built.

Those efforts were thwarted by Representative Hage, the state legislature and the Governor with legislation backdated to January 1 that limited increases on road impact fees to 3%.

County Commissioner Elections

Seats for the two remaining 25% property tax increase Commissioners are up for election in 2022. Seat two currently held by T & D executive Doug Gilpin and Seat 4 held by Garry Breeden are both up for grabs. Neither has filed for re-election as of publication. Andrew Bilardello, currently a supervisor for CDD 12 had filed for the District 2 seat, however, the districts have been redrawn and he no longer lives in that district.

Both Gilpin and Breeden were also against a fairer system of local taxing, each voting against the proposed increase in impact fee. T & D is a conglomerate of businesses that maintains significant contracts with The Villages Developer.

CDDs, VCCDD, SLCCDD, Brownwood, NSCUDD, AAC

The Villages District Government is a complex system of special community development districts allowed by Florida Statute 190. There are numbered Community Development Districts (CDDs) each with elected 5-person Boards of Supervisors. There are thirty-five supervisor seats open amongst the current thirteen Community Development Districts (CDDs) elected by residents in their CDD and are responsible for setting the annual maintenance fee paid by residents of that district.

Non Ad-valorem Maintenance Assessments are paid annually with the property owners' county property taxes and are set annually by each Community Development District (CDD) based on budgetary needs. Annual maintenance budgets are established and managed by each CDD to pay for routine maintenance items such as villa roads (all roads in CDD 4), flowers, landscaping, etc. The annual maintenance fees vary from CDD to CDD. In addition, a percentage of each CDD's (5-11) are allocated to Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) for identified shared infrastructure maintenance, such as multi-modal paths. Each CDD 1-4 pays individually for all maintenance expenses.



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The umbrella districts that make all final decisions regarding hiring/firing of the District Manager, execute all umbrella contracts, and approve/spend Amenity Fee budgets are the Village Center Community Development District (VCCDD) for CDDs 1-4 north of CR 466 and Sumter Landing Community Development District (SLCDD) for districts between CR 466 and CR 44. Districts south of CR 44 are owned by the Developer and are not part of either the VCCDD or SLCDD. The Developer contracts for services and operation of facilities from the District.

A key fact about the VCCDD and SLCDD is that the residents do NOT elect the supervisors of those boards. They are commercial districts and the people who serve on those boards are elected by the landowners of those commercial districts. In other words, the Developer decides who serves on those two significant boards, and nearly all of them live OUTSIDE of The Villages. They represent the Developer, NOT the residents.

The Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) is a committee of VCCDD. The AAC is responsible for amenity services north of C.R. 466 which involves recommending budgets, developing policy and the operation of amenity facilities and services. The facilities under their purview include recreation centers, executive golf courses, gate houses and postal facilities.

The AAC is comprised of six members including a representative from the VCCDD and a resident from each of the five geographical areas that comprise the VCCDD service area which includes the Lady Lake/Lake County portion of The Villages, and Village Community Development Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Seats 1 and 2, and Lady Lake/Lake County, currently held by Carl Bell, Ann Forrester, and Sandy Mott respectively, are up for election this year.

The Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) was established by Resolution 13-05 of the Sumter Landing Community Development District (SLCDD) and is comprised of a Board Supervisor

from Village Community Development District No's 5-11. The establishing resolution provides the PWAC will provide input, explore issues, and provide advice and recommendations to the SLCDD on issues related to the maintenance of Project Wide Improvements. Members of PWAC are NOT elected by residents directly to serve on PWAC, act only in an advisory capacity and have no real authority.

Resolution 17-11 was subsequently adopted by the SLCDD on May 18, 2017 to expand the duties and responsibilities of the PWAC to provide input, explore issues and provide recommendations on issues related to SLCDD owned Amenity facilities.

The North Sumter Utility Dependent District (NSCUDD) is the water, wastewater, and non-potable irrigation water service providers to properties within District's 5 – 11 and are also the provider of the solid waste sanitation services for the Marion, Sumter, and Fruitland Park portions of The Villages. In addition, the services are

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provided to Sumter Landing and Brownwood. NSCUDD consists of a seven-member Board of Directors representing Districts 5-10 and one at large seat. The members are elected by registered voters residing in Districts 5-10.

There are four seats up for election to NSCUDD this year.

The Wildwood Utility Dependent District (WUDD) is a five-member board with 2 seats up for election this year.

That makes a total of forty-one residents elected seats up for a vote this year. The POA urges residents to understand what is happening in their individual districts and how the money is being spent by their Board of Supervisors. You can find out what district you live in by going to **DistrictGov.org**. Once you know your district you can find it on the Your District tab at the top of the home page. There you will see who is

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representing you on that board. You will also find meeting dates, agendas, and minutes. You will find NSCUDD in that section as well and can see who is representing your area on the utility board.

Under committees you will find the AAC and PWAC. Residents north of CR 466 will vote directly for those members. PWAC members, as stated, are appointed from the CDD boards south of CR 466.

The POA also recognizes there is a wealth of talented and experienced people who have moved to The Villages, many who served in local government positions in their original communities. We encourage those who still have the call to serve to consider running for one of the open seats at any level of government that represents the residents of The Villages.

To file or obtain information about how and when to file to run for office, visit the Supervisor of Elections page for your county. The deadline to submit petitions to run is May 16, 2022 at noon.

Applications for AAC and other landowner-elected seats are filed through The Villages District government. ■



POA Website and Member Database POA4US.org

Now, POA members have easier access to their membership records, submit questions, and stop/start Bulletin delivery including signing up for e-delivery.

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Project SOS-Support Our Soldiers

Project SOS-Support Our Soldiers, a 501(c)3 charity operating in the Tri-County Area, has been assisting our US Military, their families, and those in need for over five years. By working directly with Veterans in Sumter, Lake, and Marion Counties we have been able to provide mobility devices and wheelchairs to our disabled veterans and also feed, clothe, shelter and provide healthcare to hundreds of military families who live in our local forests. After working with our homeless veterans and their families for the past five years it has become clear that the only way to end the terrible cycle of poverty is through education. For many of our older veterans beginning a new life is difficult but for many of their children who are bright and eager to learn there is still hope for a better future.

More than 10 years ago Villager Gary Kadow got a call from his son in the middle of the night – from Iraq! He said he needed help to provide desperately needed medical supplies to help children who had been injured. Gary got right on it and enlisted help from The Villages Regional Hospital. Five boxes of materials were sent postage free to the 528th Medical Unit in Iraq. Initially, Project SOS provided medical and surgical supplies to our US Military personnel who were carrying out humanitarian missions in Iraq

and Afghanistan. This resulted in the opening of 22 medical clinics and one pediatric hospital being opened to treat the innocent children caught in the middle of these terrible wars. All these facilities were operated by US Military Medical Battalions, and thousands of children's lives were saved as a result of our troops' efforts.

The effort was shut down after three years when the Taliban started targeting the military getting the supplies where they were needed and the locals receiving them. Since then, the focus for



the last eight years has shifted to providing local veteran support, mainly to the homeless veterans living in the Ocala Forrest.

The statistics about issues veterans are facing are sobering:

- About 5% of veterans come home to broken families.
- Many suffer from long-term post-traumatic stress disorder. Gary mentioned a meeting of over 250 veterans a couple years ago (mainly from Vietnam and earlier wars), where 86% raised their hand to state they still had nightmares about their combat time.
- About 150,000 veterans are homeless nationwide with about 1/3 in Florida (especially during January and February) and 1,200 are in the Ocala Forrest, which is a dangerous place.

Support for veterans and their families living in the Ocala Forest involved five steps:

1. **Health** – provided clean water capability, then medical and dental care.
2. **Finance** – got the SR-42 Veterans Affairs (VA) facility director involved resulting in over 650 veterans starting to receive their VA benefits.



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Feb. 25th Tina Turner Tribute - Kitei
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Project SOS continued from page 12

3. **Jobs** – worked with T&D Pool & Spa to provide jobs to veterans; other businesses followed.
4. **Housing** – worked with Housing and Urban Development to find veterans affordable housing.
5. **Children** – provided books and started a scholarship program six years ago. Have provided 81 scholarships (free college for 2 years) to date working with the Take Stock in Children organization.

COVID caused a huge setback in 2020. SOS is now distributing food every Saturday morning (about 20,000 to 25,000 lbs.), providing over 2,000 families with more than 350 children under 12 with a weeks' worth of food. They also sponsored a kids Christmas party for the first time.

For every \$1 donated, 2 cents is for administration and 98 cents is for direct support to the project. All veterans' groups in The Villages provide support, mainly monetary for scholarships. If interested in helping or providing a donation, please contact Gary Kadow, Executive Director for Project SOS-Support Our Soldiers. Email: gkadow@aol.com. ■

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POA Board Slate of Officers and Directors to be Inducted

Officers and Directors for the POA for 2022 nominated by the membership at the POA General Membership meeting in November were inducted at the December 21 General Membership meeting are:

OFFICERS

President – Cliff Wiener – Piedmont

Vice President – Jerry Ferlisi – Poinciana

Treasurer – Donna Kempa – Glenbrook

Secretary – Reb Benson – Palo Alto

DIRECTORS

Andrew Curtis – Mallory

Tita Dumagsa – Fenney

Karen Lambert – Poinciana

Sal Torname – St. James

Dan Warren – Gilchrist

Cliff Wiener, President

Before retirement he was a member of Local 38 IBEW and retired after 41 years as an electrician. Since moving here he has been a Guardian Ad Litem, a member of the CIC for 4 years, on the ARC for 4 years (Chairman), and has been a District 4 board supervisor for 3 years. He has also been a member of the Ohio Buckeye Club (treasurer), is a member of Forest City Masonic Lodge 388, Village Masonic Lodge 394, Bahia Shrine, Village Shrine Club (treasurer), Scottish Rite of Ocala, and the High Twelve Club of the Villages. He also started a bowling league and was secretary for 15 years, worked at the golf courses and was an outside manager at Havana Country Club. He has served on the POA board for the last 10 years and the last 7 years as president.

Jerry Ferlisi, Vice President

Jerry and his wife, Maureen, acquired their “Village” home in 2005, but became full time residents in the Village of Poinciana, in May 2010, upon Jerry’s retirement.

He’s had a long and distinguished career in Finance. He holds a BS in Accounting from Long Island University. He was trained in Public Accounting (Pannel, Kerr Forster) and

moved into Hospital Finance where he served as Controller, St John’s University, South Shore Division. He held senior positions at Staten Island University Hospital including Controller, VP, and Sr. VP and CFO. He’s held similar positions (CFO and Sr. Director) for the NYU Hospital For Joint Diseases. He has served on numerous Finance Committees, including the Hospital Association of NYS (HANYS) and Greater NY Hospital Association (GNYHA). Earlier in his career, he served as treasurer for the New Springville Civic

Association, (a not-for-profit civic organization).

In addition to being Vice President of the POA, Jerry has been re-elected as a Supervisor for District 5 and serves as its representative to the Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC). He was a member of The Villages CERT (Certified Emergency Response Team). He and his wife are trained responders for their block AED program. Jerry loves to bowl and golf, as well as attend various clubs, and is an avid member of SOSB

POA Officers continued on page 15

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POA Officers continued from page 14

(Seniors on a Spring Break). He is the proud father of two sons, with two daughters-in-law & two gorgeous granddaughters and has the pictures to prove it.

Donna Kempa, Treasurer

Donna and her husband, Tony, live in the Village of Glenbrook; originally from a suburb south of Buffalo, New York. She is a cum laude graduate from the University of Buffalo, with a BS in Registered Accounting and Finance and also holds a degree in Computer Programming. Donna is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA); Fraud Investigator (CFE) and Information Systems Auditor (CISA). She has worked in Public Accounting and most recently, the health insurance industry. Currently, she is an offsite Information Technology Audit Consultant for Independent Health, a regional health insurance payer and former employer.

Donna currently serves as the District 3 representative to the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC). In her spare time, Donna can be seen jogging along Talleyridge, watching her husband's softball games, playing pickleball, golfing, participating in yoga or enjoying the entertainment at the town squares.

Reb Benson, Secretary

Mr. Richard E. (Reb) Benson is from Virginia and lives in the Palo Alto Village. Reb retired from Air Force Civil Service as a GS-15 in February 2018 after 11 years of negotiating and implementing international arms control treaties and agreements. Reb is a retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel with 23 years of distinguished service in space and missile operations, serving as crew commander, staff officer and strategic planner. In addition, he commanded a Recruiting Squadron and served in a variety of staff assignments for Strategic Air Command and Headquarters, Air Force. Reb was also a Program Manager and Senior Analyst for Scientific Applications International Corporation (SAIC). He is currently an SAIC Senior Consultant plus a Golf Ambassador at The Villages Tierra Del Sol golf course. Reb enjoys playing golf and flying radio-controlled airplanes. He is a Deacon at First Baptist Church at The Villages. ■

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Geraniums

THE FANATICAL GARDENER

by Anne Lambrecht Fanatical Gardener

The plants you think are geraniums aren’t actually geraniums. They are part of a larger family known as Pelargonium but botanically lumped in together. For us mere mortals and for this article, we will call the ones we know and love GERANIUM.

Geraniums are old, undemanding favorites. My Garden Buddy thinks they look like cemetery flowers because they are likely to be planted at grave sites. Memorial Day is when flowers are left at grave sites in remembrance. According to the horticultural experts at Barry’s Flower Shop and Greenhouse in Muskegon, Michigan, the most popular cemetery plant and the most common is the Geranium.

Common geraniums have a pleasant, distinctive fragrance, kind of like marigolds. There are 422 species of geranium and are natives of South Africa. They made their way to Europe, where they remain popular plantings, especially in the Mediterranean.

The genus name is derived from the Greek word *geranós* meaning crane. The English name ‘cranesbill’ derives from the resemblance of the fruit capsule of some of the species to a crane’s head and bill. Interestingly, our native fruit, cranberry, also derives its name from crane.

The geranium flower symbolizes happiness, good health, good wishes, and friendship. They are associated with positive emotions, with the exception of the Victorian symbolism of stupidity or foolishness. Yes, we’ve got it all.

The palm shaped leaves are circular and can be plain colored or variegated. Sometimes the leaves can feel a little sticky. The flowers have five petals and are mostly colored red, pink, white, and sometimes salmon colored, often with distinctive veining.

Geraniums are eaten by the larvae of some moths but not as to become a worry to us here in North Central Florida.

In our North Central Florida gardens, geraniums pose some problems: they cannot tolerate a freeze and they also do poorly in our summer heat and humidity.

Geraniums grow best in full sun, but will tolerate partial afternoon shade. Geraniums grow well in pots and planters with adequate drainage.

Geraniums prefer well-drained enriched soils. Allow to dry between waterings then water thoroughly. During the winter, they will do best when given a period of dormancy during which time they use less water and do not grow much. Do not let the roots dry out.

I remember some people up north would bring them to their basements in the fall, near a cool window or near their window wells. They cut them back and let them sit there for a couple months. So “old wives” are effective!

To encourage blooming, deadhead spent flowers regularly and pinch back the stems down to the stem to curtail legginess.

During active growing months, fertilize every 2 weeks or so. Use a water-soluble fertilizer at half strength. Don’t fertilize in winter, when the plant should be dormant.

Geraniums can be re-potted in spring to encourage new growth—or just buy new ones.

There are many cool species of Geraniums called Pelargoniums and Erodium. The Pelargoniums are most easily found here in special nurseries and the Erodium, called Stork’s Bills, are rarer. The shape of the flowers is one way of distinguishing between the three genera.



Pelargonium x domesticum is also known as Martha Washington pelargonium. These plants have dark green leaves that are heart-shaped. They produce clusters of showy flowers in white, pink, red, and purple hues. They’re also known as Lady Washington pelargonium or regal pelargonium.

Among the pelargoniums are Scented Geraniums, grown for their foliage.

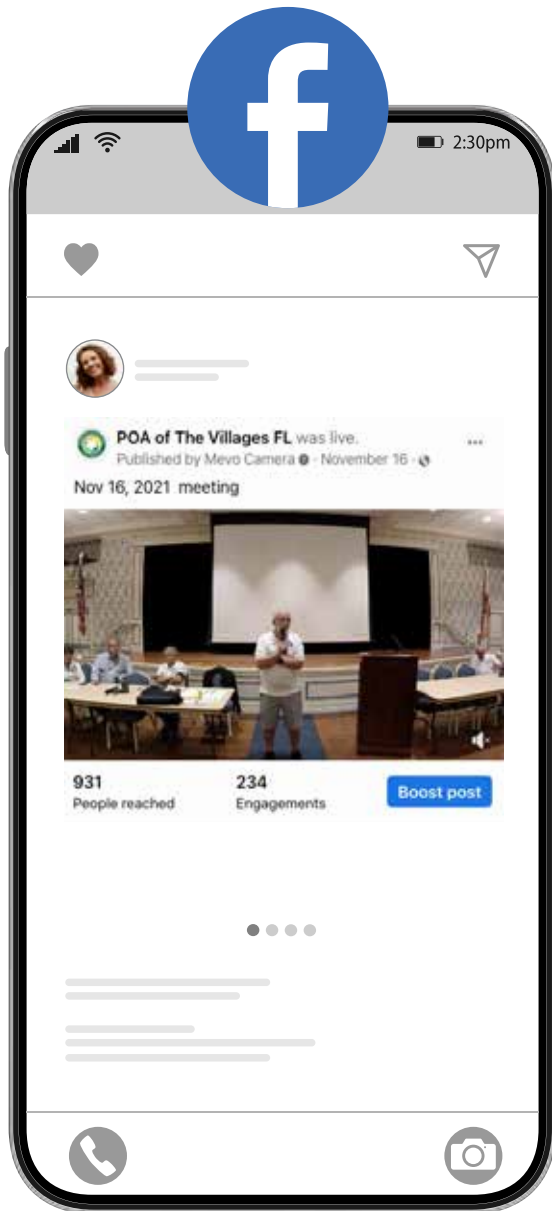
Scented geraniums have long been favored for their fragrant leaves, which release aromatic oils when rubbed or crushed. They can smell like mint, rose, lemon, cinnamon, or even chocolate.

In Victorian times, people would float the leaves in small bowls of water as a way to cleanse their hands before eating, earning the plants the name “fingerbowl geraniums.” The leaves are also edible and can be used to flavor sugars, jellies, or baked goods.

Like their flowering cousins, scented geraniums can be grown outdoors in containers, and just like regular geraniums, they struggle in summer’s heat and will need to be protected from frost.

They’re in the nurseries now. Go get some! ■

Sources: *Southern Living Garden Book*



Stay Connected for the latest Announcements and to watch Membership meetings livestreamed!

We have 1,183 total page likes and 1,342 total page followers!

The POA now live streams its meetings so residents can either attend in person, watch live from home or at a time more convenient. You will hear all parts of the meeting – announcements, open forum Q & A, and the program. **You will always be connected to your POA!**

Type **POA of the Villages FL** in the search on Facebook and you will find our page. Click **LIKE** and or **FOLLOW**, and then, suggest our page to all of your friends and neighbors that live in The Villages! Meetings and relevant information will be posted on a timely basis. *Please continue to send questions or comments via email or call the POA at (352) 418-7372.* ALL content will be monitored by the Administrator and posts containing opinion or debate will be removed. ■

UPCOMING POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Jan. 18, 2022 – 7 PM

**LAUREL MANOR
RECREATION CENTER**
Speaker: Richard
Campbell President
UFHealth – The Villages
Hospital Auxiliary
Foundation

Feb. 15, 2022 – 7 PM

**EVERGLADES
RECREATION CENTER**
Speaker: District Manager
Kenny Blocker
Topic: State of the District

Mar. 15, 2022 – 7 PM

**LAUREL MANOR
RECREATION CENTER**
Speaker: Cheryl Chestnutt
Chief Clinical Officer
UFHealth –
The Villages Hospital



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SENIORS VS CRIME

Facebook “Like” Farmers – How They Can Cause You Problems

A recent news release from the Better Business Bureau discussed “Like-Farming” on Facebook and it goes like this:

What exactly is Like -Farming?

Like-Farming is a technique in which scammers create an eye-catching post designed to get many likes and shares. Posts often give people emotional reasons to click, like, and share, such as cute puppies or kittens, sick children, a promise to WIN BIG, or a political message.

Why do scammers “Farm” for Likes?

As with many scams, like-farming has several different aims. When scammers ask you to “register” to win something or claim an offer, they intend to steal your personal information. Other versions can be more complex. Often, the post itself is initially harmless- albeit completely fictional. But when the post collects enough likes and shares, scammers will edit the post and add something malicious such as a link to a website that downloads malware to your machine. Worse yet, once scammers reach their target number of likes, they can strip the page’s original content

and use it to promote spam products or resell the page to buyers who can use the page to spam followers or harvest information from Facebook.

Protect yourself with these tips:

Use your good judgement: Don’t believe posts that say you can win something just by sharing the post – it’s not true. If the post tugs at your heartstrings and isn’t about someone you know, be very wary about the truthfulness of its contents.

Don’t “like” every post in your feed:

Scammers hope to get as many mindless likes as they can, so be sure to only “Like” posts and articles that are legitimate. Don’t make it easy on them.

Be cautious when sharing your personal information: NEVER give out your personal or financial information to a person or company you don’t know or trust and never as a result of an unsolicited contact.



Update your web browser: Make sure you always have the latest version of your browser so, if you accidentally click on a scam post, your browser will be more likely to warn you about suspicious sites.

For assistance with this topic or with any other concern, contact information for Seniors vs. Crime is available on our website at: **seniorsvscrime.com**.

Seniors Vs. Crime also has a Speakers Bureau that will gladly come to your club, church, or group to speak about scams. To schedule a presentation, contact any of the offices. There is never a charge for their services. Seniors Vs. Crime can be reached at:

The Fruitland Park Police Department Annex
in the Moyer Recreation Center in The Villages
(352) 674-1882

The Marion County Sheriff’s Office in The Villages
(352) 753-7775

The Sumter County Sheriff’s Office in The Villages
(352) 689-4600, Extension 4606

The Wildwood Police Department Annex at
Brownwood in The Villages – (352) 753-0727

You can also file online, or by calling 1-800-203-3099. Our staff will call you back and you can file your complaint over the phone.

Volunteers’ at all four offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. To keep up with the latest scams, LIKE ‘Seniors vs. Crime Region 4’ on Facebook. Hablamos Español. Por favor pregunte por Yolanda. Martes a Viernes: 10:00 A.M. a 2:00 P.M., (352) 689-4606. ■

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