

The POA Bulletin

Free Copy

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages



Issue 36.04

Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

April, 2010

This is an Artist's Rendition of the VPAA Proposed New Performing Arts Center



April 20, 2010

**THE NEXT POA
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**Third Tuesday of the Month – 7:00 p.m.
Laurel Manor Recreation Center**

Jean Corley-Wix, Vice President of the Volunteer's Performing Arts Alliance, will speak on the Plans for a Performing Arts Center close to The Villages

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

BRINGING THE DREAM TO REALITY

THIS COULD BE "OURS"!

Last month we identified some of the problems with using the Savannah Center as the 'Performing Arts Center' (PAC) for Villages residents. Now we would like to recommend an alternative way to have a PAC appropriate to a community of this size. Why not Savannah Center? Good reasons:

The building was constructed as a community and recreation center (replacing the big white tent that had been used near Spanish Springs Town Center for a couple of years). It belongs to the VCCDD, and its 'bond' and operating expenses are being paid for by the amenity fees of Villagers north of 466.

Prior to the arrival of new residents south of CR 466, many of whom now attend shows at Savannah Center, the building was used about 50 percent of the time for recreational activities. Now, almost all of the recreation

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Performing Arts

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activities that had been provided in the building have had to move out because of its expanded use as an 'entertainment center.' And if it were "improved" by raking (slanting) the floor, it could no longer serve for such things as quilt shows, and for exercise classes that originally were held there.

The Savannah Center and an additional comparable facility in the southern end of The Villages are not the REAL answers to our entertainment needs/desires. Such a second facility would eventually present the same problems we have with the Savannah Center. We would have two limited facilities instead of one! The REAL answer is a stand-alone Performing Arts Center (PAC).

But where are we going to get the money to construct and operate such a facility? While it would be wonderful if the developer showed interest in the performing arts and offered to provide significant financial support for a PAC, that is not the case at this time, as has been made clear to us. Nor do we believe it is the responsibility of the developer to build a performing arts center, as that is not his business. He builds homes, recreational facilities and commercial districts.

We have learned that almost every successful PAC, throughout the country, functions as part of a 'non-profit' organization, thus making PACs eligible for grants, federal and state funding, and philanthropic donations.

So, now what?

Actually, the entertainment pressure on the Savannah Center has given the POA a great opportunity to bring forward and help promote an ongoing grass-roots effort by a not-for-profit organization called the VOLUNTEERS' PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE (VPAA), which was established in 2006. It is a **totally independent** volunteer

organization, and is comprised mostly of Villages residents. We interviewed two VPAA Steering Committee members and were excited about their progress and believe that they are on the right track.

The VPAA's vision is to provide a venue for the performing arts that meets the needs of this community as it grows: The main thrust is to build a center for the entertainment arts, both professional and amateur. (Many people here love the performing arts, both performing and enjoying others perform!). Its mission, says the VPAA, is to promote the arts for The Villages and surrounding communities by providing entertainment (consider venues that are artistic, cultural, popular, amateur, professional, etc.) – and civic, social and educational opportunities as well.

Doing all of this, the VPAA says, will require a state-of-the-art facility where patrons can enjoy such opportunities in comfortable and handicap-friendly surroundings.

The VPAA envisions a venue that encourages residents of The Villages and surrounding communities to share their talents and skills both as performers and as educators, and that provides an opportunity for introduction of cultural, technical, and artistic components of the performing arts into the curricula of area schools.

The VPAA has more than five hundred (500) supporters on its mailing list, and is now moving into the next phase, which is to actively seek many more supporters while at the same time establishing a Board of Directors for the organization. Two years ago the VPAA hired a consulting firm to conduct a feasibility study to determine the likelihood of raising funds for such a program. The results were positive. The most interesting finding was location. The study indicated that the facility should be located in or near

(Continued on page 3)

POA Mission Statement

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

The Vision/Objective of the POA is to make The Villages an even better place in which to live, where Residents' Rights are respected, and local 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, un-slanted news reporting from local news sources.
10. Be informed beforehand by the developer on any major change in our community. □

The POA Bulletin is published monthly by the Property Owners' Association of The Villages, Inc. Articles represent the opinion of the POA or the writer, and Letters to the Editor or Forum postings represent the opinions of the writers. Care is taken to insure 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.

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Performing Arts

(Continued from page 2)

The Villages.

No apparent affordable and appropriate opportunities have arisen in The Villages proper, but possibilities exist nearby.

The VPAA also has been exploring partnerships with other entities in the surrounding area in order to make the focus of the PAC a Tri-County effort. The VPAA hired a second consultant to create a Cash-Flow-Pro-Forma/Business Plan. The research determined that it will cost \$8.9M to put up the building and another \$2M to furnish and equip. Both consultants advised that a \$5M endowment would be needed beyond that money to open the doors and begin.

We talked with the VPAA about various aspects of the plan for the facility, which has a tentative name of The PALMS – The Performing Arts for Lake, Marion and Sumter.

Neither the facility nor its operation would be supported by amenities or maintenance bond fees, but rather through donations, grants, tickets, room rentals, etc.

Entertainment envisioned includes not only local amateur offerings but up to a level of professional entertainment somewhere between what is offered at Orlando or Tampa and what is offered at Savannah Center now. Levels of professional entertainment are driven mostly by seating capacity. The pro-

(Continued on page 4)

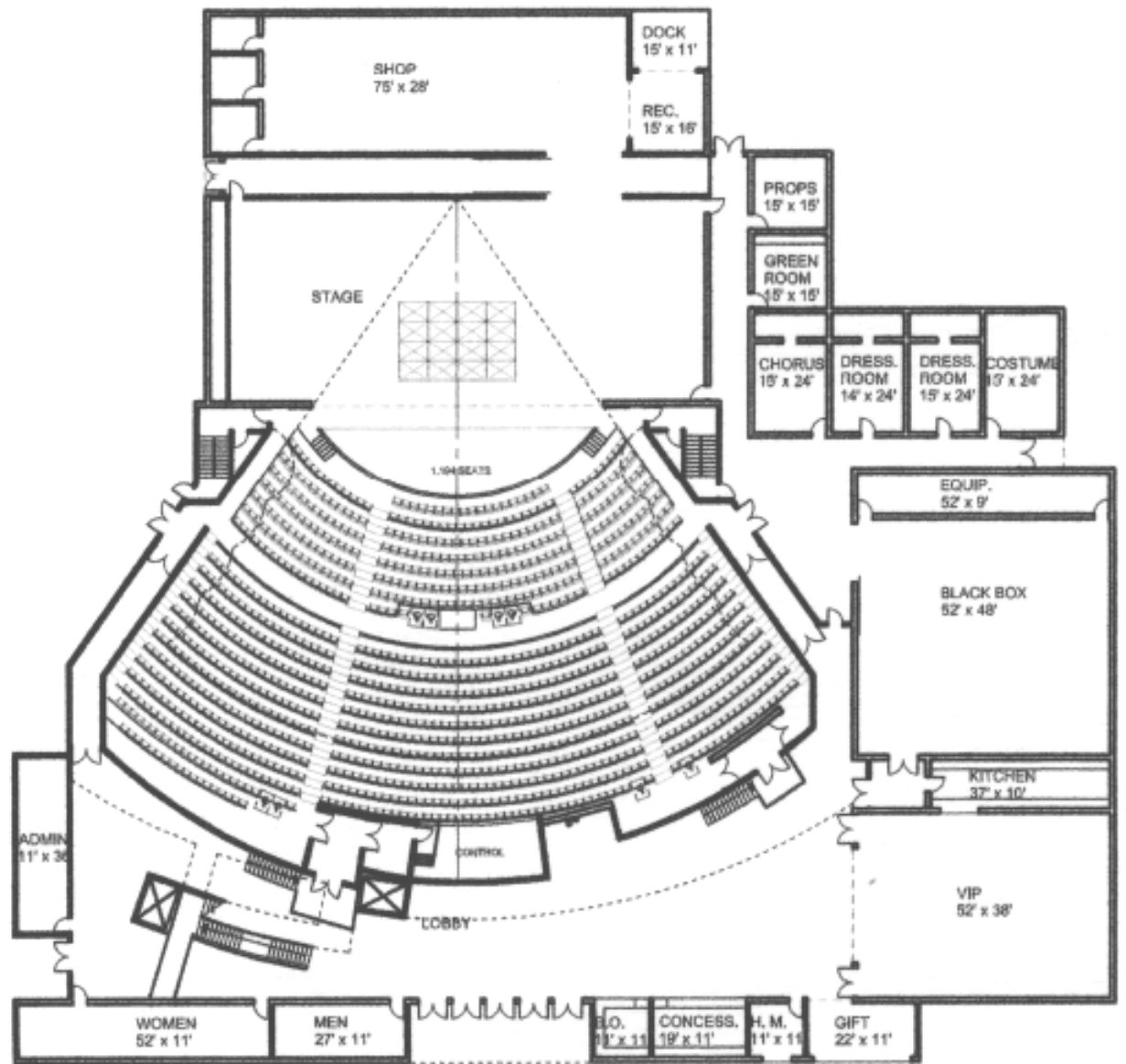


Diagram of the Performing Arts Center showing the main floor seating arrangement.

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Performing Arts

(Continued from page 3)

posed PAC will have 1200 seats vs. the 834 seats at maximum capacity at Savannah. That difference makes the new facility marketable to a new level of professional entertainers. Of course, the kinds of amateur and professional shows presently offered at Savannah would not be excluded.

Other significant aspects:

Ergonomic seating will provide optimum comfort while reducing chances of stress or injury to patrons. Acoustics will be enhanced from the outset by the design of the facility itself. A 'drop curtain' concept will enable use of a 350-seat section in the front of the theater for intimate 'little theater' productions with all light, sound, etc. The stage design will allow the orchestra to be lower than the stage, yet retain the ability for the stage to come forward and be larger when no orchestra is needed. A "fly space" will allow multiple sets and backgrounds for a play or performance. Also planned: professional sound and lighting systems, wide aisles, and a slanted or "raked" floor, plus a real balcony.

Among other aspects, the center is envisioned to include a VIP Lounge, a 'catering kitchen' to enhance the multipurpose potential of the rental facilities, a concession area, a large lobby with bench seating, and display facilities for visual and three-dimensional art work; such displays envisioned include paint-

ings in various media, sculpture, ceramics, pottery, etc. See the diagram of the overall floor plan on page 3.

We are confident that most Villages residents will be interested in supporting a Performing Arts Center in or around The Villages. Our real hope is that there are enough donors out there, big and small, who will come forward to support the project right away once the VPAA secures the land. The group has been exploring land opportunities for several years and now has reason to believe that a potential opportunity may emerge in the near future for 15 to 20 acres.

We live in a beautiful, well-planned community that provides almost every type of vehicle for 'fun' that can be imagined. In addition, we have good government, good schools, and good libraries. It is time now to add the final piece – an appropriate facility for entertainment and cultural opportunities. □

Supporting the VPAA

So how can Villages residents show their interest and support the project?

- Attend the POA meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 20, at Laurel Manor. Jean Corley-Wix, a member of the VPAA Steering Committee, will do a presentation, show slides, answer questions and listen to suggestions.

- Attend the next VPAA meeting, 7 p.m. Monday, May 3, at Laurel Manor.

- Volunteer your support! Let the VPAA

know you are with it! Go to the VPAA web site (www.vpaa.org) to do that.

-You can send an email to Jean at jeancorley@hotmail.com with questions or suggestions or if you will be unable to attend either meeting.

- Volunteer to become active as a VPAA Steering Committee member or even step up and volunteer to share your expertise and knowledge toward the cause.

- Nominate yourself or a person you know for the VPAA Board of Directors (See page 5 story for details on qualifications.)

Remember that "It takes a Village" -- Let's all get behind this project and, with this local volunteer organization, help "bring the dream to reality." □

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Advice for the VPAA?

The volunteer organization that is spearheading a drive among residents of The Villages and surrounding area is looking for advice as it goes about selecting a Board of Directors.

The Board would decide upon and approve land acquisition for a performing arts center, as well as other issues related to creating, building, and operating a theatre.

What might the qualifications be? A Board member would be committed to the arts, network in the community, and be seen as a leader. A Board member would represent the case for a performing arts center in a positive and energetic way. A Board member would be a central figure in any financial campaign undertaken. Board members would represent a variety of community interests across Lake, Marion, and Sumter counties.

To offer your suggestions, please contact Richard St. Amant, President, at email (vpaarichard@yahoo.com), or Jean Corley Wix, Vice President, at email (jeancorley@hotmail.com). □

If you need to contact any Sumter County official, rather than paying for the call to the Bushnell offices, just use the toll-free number at 1-866-878-6837 (1-866-8SUMTER)

Cancer Center

We have learned little more about the proposed Cancer Center being considered by The Central Florida Health Alliance and Tampa's Moffitt Cancer Center. We are trying to determine whether the final decision has been made or whether we still have a chance to get the Center located in or close to The Villages.

We sent copies of the previous issue of the Bulletin to the heads of both organizations trying to make our case. Also, we trust that many residents have written to each to urge use of the Alliance's building here for the Center. We heard from Moffitt that it received about 12-15 letters which it forwarded to the Alliance. There is still time for residents to write their personal letters.

We also contacted the Sumter County Board of Commissioners to ask whether Sumter County can make a pitch for the Center. We told them that the Cancer Center could be one of the crown jewels of the superb medical facilities in The Villages.

We have not received support from the VHA on our call for the Center to be located here. Nor have the three VHA officials on the board of the Health Alliance told us what efforts they have made on behalf of Villagers to get the Cancer Center located here. It is disappointing that the VHA, with its prominent position in this community, has not voiced support for the POA's position on this

important issue. It should.

As we hear more, we will report details in our monthly meetings and in future issues of the Bulletin.

If you haven't already sent a letter to the two organizations which are planning the center, here are the addresses:

William S. Dalton
CEO/Center Director
H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center
12902 Magnolia Drive
Tampa, FL 33612

and:

David L. Sustarsic, M.D.
Chairman of the Board
Central Florida Health Alliance
600 East Dixie Avenue
Leesburg, FL 34748 □

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AAC Meeting March 10, 2010

Old Business Topics:

- Executive Golf Trail Fees - Staff had prepared a presentation explaining the Executive Golf Rate Structure Program. The presentation included for consideration a slightly discounted rate for single golfers, comparable to what a spouse pays for executive trail fees if the husband/wife is a priority member. Any such rate change would have to also be approved by the SLCDD board, and district management did not feel they could recommend it to the SLCDD at this time due to insufficient funds, so the presentation and consideration were deferred until next year.

- Multi-Modal Paths - The committee received an updated report from Engineer Jonathan Thigpen of Kimley-Horn regarding the Recreation Trail reconstruction project status. While the project is on schedule and budget, there are several newly opened issues with CDD3 regarding crossings at Buena Vista gates in Polo Ridge, Glenbrook and Belleaire. At a March 17th workshop, the CDD3 Board committed to decide by March 24th whether they want the AAC to consider moving the trail behind each of these three entry gates. With the late breaking news that the Summerchase trail is actually CDD3 responsibility rather than CDD2, CDD3 has

also asked to reopen the consideration for AAC refurbishment of this trail that goes around the Summerchase Cottages. At the March 17th workshop, the AAC agreed to fund the engineering and construction planning expense for refurbishment of the Summerchase trail. Once this information is available, CDD3 and the AAC will meet to discuss who will pay for the actual cost of the refurbishment.

- The AAC reviewed the staff cost analysis of the landowner election planned for this November. The committee agreed to include absentee ballots to allow landowners who are not in The Villages in November to be able to vote. While the total cost will be in the \$14,000 to \$16,000 range, most of the expense will be for promotional costs (\$6,000) and allocation of existing staff expense (\$6,700).

- The Committee received the selection committee results from the RFP for Architectural Services for the Scarlett O’Hara Theater. The Committee determined that more input was needed from the recreation department and the developer’s Entertainment group, before proceeding.

- The AAC approved the draft RFP for Scope of Work to Solicit Proposals for Pro-

fessional Services to Determine Feasibility and Provide Alternatives for a Gate Telecommunications Network, with the additional requirement that it include connectivity to pool sites.

Informational Items Included:

- The staff program to replace all ID cards has begun as of March 15th. It is expected to run until March 15, 2011. There is a deployment plan whereby residents are issued their new ID card based on the first letter of their last name. This applies to both appointment and walk-ins at the Customer Service Center (753-4508). A “roving” Customer Service Representative will also be stationed at Recreation Centers throughout the community to issue new IDs for residents within that com-

(Continued on page 7)

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AUTHORIZED RETAILER

AAC Meeting

(Continued from page 6)

munity. Please check the district website for details.

Staff Report:

- Staff reported that the Mulberry Dog Park hours have been extended and the park is now open from 7:00 a.m. until dusk. Also, children under the age of 13 will not be allowed into the dog park without supervision.

Misc:

- Please go to the www.districtgov.org website for the official minutes, agendas and meeting schedule.

- The next AAC meeting will be held Wednesday, April 7th, 1:30 p.m., at the Savannah Center. □

New 20 Page Bulletin

Yes !! The Bulletin is thicker this time !! What's Up ??

We have expanded by four pages and now the Bulletin is 20 pages of red-hot content for your reading pleasure.

This means more editorial comments about life in The Villages, more information about your hometown, and more ads to inform you and also to help us pay the bills for publishing and distributing your Bulletin.

So, schedule a few extra minutes to read your Bulletin – it's your hometown newspaper in your hometown. □

Cheers and Jeers

Cheers - To Sumter County for the great job renovating Morse Blvd. north of CR 466. And, the intersection at San Marino is now aggravation-free. But, the Law of Unintended Consequences seems to have reared its ugly head, for we now have the San Marino left-turn problem and backups materializing at many of the other intersections.

Cheers - To the new Sea Breeze Recreation Center as a wonderful addition to our amenity facilities. And, the opening festivities were great, including the hula girls. But, we were disappointed that John Rohan, Recreation Director, didn't join with the hula girls in a demonstration of his outstanding hula skills he had displayed previously.

Jeers - To Katie Belle's for its lax policy of allowing too many non-residents to get in, often without resident escorts. Katie Belle's is often much too crowded in the evenings to be the relaxing and fun place that it should be. Jeers, also, to Margarita Republic for its eardrum-shattering music volume.

Cheers - To the Center District's new website, www.districtgov.org, for its comprehensive information and helpful style. Also for the Customer Service Center at 753-4508.

Jeers - To the two Villages movie theaters for not having a 3-D capability for the two recent blockbuster movies, Avatar and Alice in Wonderland. This forced residents to go to Leesburg or Ocala to see the 3-D versions.

Jeers - To Comcast for jacking up TV and cable rates again, and again without notice. If you are renting a modem, it went from \$3.00 per month to \$5.00 per month, a 67% increase. Wouldn't good business practice and basic courtesy suggest an advance notice of the increase and an explanation?

Cheers - To the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) and the Center District staff for marshaling the tedious approval process for the renovation and widening of the recreation trails in many areas north of Hwy. 466. We are finally going to see improvements and a smoother ride with new asphalt surfaces.

Jeers - To the Villages TV stations for the same old thing. It's time for some new faces, new programming, and some pizzazz....

Cheers - To Fire Chief Mike Tucker and his Public Safety staff for securing an improved fire rating for The Villages from ISO, a non-governmental rating agency. The reduction from a 4 to 3 rating may also reduce our home insurance premiums. □

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Boil Water

We were disappointed with the actions of the Center District office regarding the recent Boil Water Order affecting several villages south of CR 466.

The order was issued on Monday, March 8, and carried in the Daily Sun on Tuesday, March 9, as a "Briefs" article inside the newspaper. Affected villages were: Amelia, Hadley, Hemingway, Largo, Bonita, Mallory Square, Poinciana, and Duval. A problem in the water treatment plant may have caused drinking water contamination.

What concerned us was the potential seriousness of this situation, which has happened before. We received comments from several residents with compromised immune systems who could have been seriously injured by drinking the water if it were not boiled first. For some, this could have been a life-

threatening situation

The problem was with the way the notice was disseminated throughout The Villages. The approach was too casual and the timing was too late. Furthermore, some people who may not subscribe to or read the Daily Sun or see the TV announcements could have missed the order and been adversely affected.

We would suggest that in the future the following actions should be taken to insure that the greatest number of people are notified on a time-urgent basis about serious problems like this:

1. The notice in the Daily Sun should be in a bold-outlined box, on the front page, above the fold, and run daily until the situation is resolved.
2. The Villages TV station should carry the notice in the crawler at the bottom of the screen, repeated daily several times an hour, until the situation is resolved. The warning should also be verbalized by the news readers in every 20-minute cycle.
3. The Villages radio station should carry the notice daily several times an hour until the situation is resolved.
4. Notices should immediately be posted at all postal stations in the affected villages until the situation is resolved.
5. A sign, perhaps 3' by 4', should be displayed with the notice at all gate entrances to the affected villages until the situation is resolved.
6. For those who have signed up for

email notices from the Center District office, daily emails should be sent out repeating the notice until the situation is resolved.

7. A reverse-911 call capability, similar to what Sumter County has for crime and weather alerts, should be used to notify affected residents via land-line phones until the situation is resolved.

The Daily Sun said that the notice in the newspaper remained in effect until further notice. But, this is not adequate if some residents did not get the notice via the newspaper or other means in the first place.

There may actually be some legal liability for our Center District office if fully appropriate actions are not taken to notify our residents on a timely basis.

Summary – We cannot have inadequate responses to serious situations that may affect the health and well being of our residents.

We would further suggest that the appropriate parts of this methodology also be used for other serious situations needing resident notice, including: evacuation orders during hurricanes, area brush fire warnings, smoke and respiratory alerts, rabid animal warnings; crime alerts, severe weather alerts, etc.

We would also ask the Villages Safety department, the Center District office, and the VHA to support this POA position. We all need to be on the same page when it comes to these critical safety alert matters. This is important for all of us. □

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Lightning Matters

By Len Hathaway
The Study Group on Lightning

This month we will address a popular misconception that is often repeated around The Villages. There are some who believe that the installation of a lightning protection system (i.e. rods) will attract a lightning strike to their home and this overriding negative is frequently cited as a reason not to install lightning protection.

So what does the science, 258 years of experience with lightning protection systems, and the experts say about the attraction of cloud-to-ground lightning and lightning protection systems? The lightning bolt is complex and unpredictable. It does not know what it is going to strike when it begins its millisecond journey to the ground. It does not know if your home has a lightning protection system or not. If the lightning is close enough to your home it is going to hit it either way.

If you have a properly designed, installed, and maintained lightning protection system according to the national standard on lightning it will send the potentially destructive force harmlessly into the ground. If you don't there is likelihood that it could cause a devastating fire to your home and possessions.

The preeminent authority on this matter is Dr. Martin Uman, Distinguished Professor, University of Florida, Department of Electri-

cal and Computer Engineering, in Gainesville. Dr Unman has written four books on lightning, authored 200 research papers and conducted rocket-to-wire lightning research at the International Center for Lightning Research & Testing at Camp Blanding. Here is an excerpt from Chapter 1, page 17, from one of his books, *The Art and Science of Lightning Protection*, found in The Villages Public Library, 325 Belvedere Blvd.

“The probability of a lightning strike to the general region of a protected object is only marginally increased, if increased at all, by virtue of the presence of a lightning protection system. Thus the not uncommon belief that the presence of a lightning protection system significantly increases the likelihood of a structure being struck and damaged is not true. The benefits of having lightning protection far outweigh any marginal increase in the lightning strike probability.”

The Study Group on Lightning, a small group of volunteers, with no affiliation to any

firm or organization related to the lightning protection industry, offers a 30-minute Power Point presentation, *Lightning Tips for Villagers*, that addresses direct lightning, indirect lightning, validation of lightning protection systems, CSST gas pipe, common myths and misunderstandings. It is intended to help homeowners make an informed decision on their own residential lightning risk. If your group or organization would benefit from a presentation contact Len Hathaway at lhatha@aol.com or Bob Freeman at STALIT1@aol.com. □

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Villages Greens Renewable Energy

A note from The Villages Greens Chair, Sue Michalson:

If you are anything like me, you have often said to yourself, I would LOVE to have my home powered by renewable energy, decrease my energy cost and cut down on the CO2 in the environment... but then come the *buts*.

BUT:

- The up front costs are in the \$45,000 range: I can't afford that!
- I am in my 60's or 70's and I may not live long enough to pay that off.
- I hear there are state and federal incentives but I never know what they are or how to get them or.... if they've changed.
- I don't have time to become an expert in renewable energy and do all of the research

required to:

- Find a reliable company, get the best system, determine how much electricity I need to generate, find out if my house is even suitable for producing solar energy efficiently, and sell surplus energy back to the utilities at the most favorable rate to me.
- Who is going to maintain the panel, the entire set up?
- What about insurance?
- What will I do if a new and better system comes along?

BUT, WHAT IF I DO NOTHING!

I know that if I do nothing my electricity bills will keep going up every year.

No progress will be made to reduce our dependency on foreign oil or reduce CO2 emissions and more coal-powered plants and nuclear plants will be built.

Sure wish there was a way for me to have my house produce renewable energy.....*and not take me to the poor house.*

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The Village Greens April 28th meeting will blow you away!

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3 Green House Energy will reward you with "Greenbacks" for the energy generated by the solar panels on your roof to be redeemed in a number of ways.

4. Your house is still tied to the grid so you will experience absolutely zero change in the quality of electricity you receive.

If this sounds too good to be true....

You need to come to our meeting, hear more, ask questions and judge for yourself!

Save the date! – April 28th

The Villages Greens Environmental Club Meets at 6:30 PM at Laurel Manor Recreation Center. □

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Letter to the Editor:

Sprinklers and Katie Belle's

The sprinklers in my area of the Villages (Poinciana), adjacent to both the roads and recreations paths, are not directed properly and are in immediate need of adjustment and frequent monitoring.

I saw a friend of mine deluged with spray while riding with him in his golf cart 9:00 at night resulting in his ingesting water not safe for human consumption. I try very hard to keep my shiny black car clean, but when I'm out after 9:30 at night the side of my car is constantly hit with spray or I encounter wet road surfaces which leave my car spotted with sprinkler water. Today after the heavy rain, the sprinklers on the roads were misdirected, directly hitting my car windows and not because of the wind.

Katie Belle's is advertised as a "residents only" facility. Katie Belle's is overrun with "outsiders" who brag about their easy access without providing Villager or Villager guest I.D.

The entertainment at Katie Belle's has been changed dramatically to appeal to the "younger crowd" much like the change on the Villages radio station. As a minimum, "easy listening and danceable music" could be played during the intermissions taken by the live entertainment.

I would very much appreciate a "Residents Only" night club, tailored to all age groups. One to be proud of.

Michele N. Ferfett

Editor's Note: Whenever you see malfunctioning sprinkler heads, please call the Customer Service Center at 753-4508 to report the location of the problem. □

Letter to the Editor:

Lightning Considerations

I found the articles on lightning protection [in a previous Bulletin] to be very informative. In addition to considering this protection for their homes, all residents should be aware of the need to protect valuable papers and documents against damage from a fire. Ideally, these items should be kept in a bank safe deposit box. If this isn't practical, then they should be kept in a fire resistant, waterproof

safe in their home.

Such a safe could also be used to store any form of photos that show the contents of every room in your home. Also, be sure to keep receipts for all major purchases in a safe location. If your home suffers major damage from any catastrophe, the first request from your insurance adjuster will be "please make a list of everything destroyed or damaged along with its estimated value." I'm sure everyone will agree this would be impossible to do after a destructive event occurs without photos and documentation made before such a disaster happens.

Rich Cardillo □

Letter to the Editor:

POA: Watch Dog

I've always believed that every bureaucracy requires a watch dog group to exercise some checks and balances, to insure a reasonable exchange of ideas, and to provide an honest inquiry into problems when warranted. We're so fortunate here in The Villages that the POA is there for benefit of all. Keep up the good work!!

Robert King □

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Letter to the Editor:

Priority Pools

I have been a resident of the Villages and a priority pool member for over ten years.

Because of the liberal guest program in the Villages, I and many of my friends are having problems accessing the Hacienda Hills pool. Last week we were turned away because all the chairs were taken, not by paid priority pool members, but by guests.

As the population of the Villages increases so does the number of guests. I understand that a committee is presently reviewing the Villages Guest policies. I would like to offer the following for consideration.

1. Designate One of the priority pools, with a hot tub, as a adult only pool.

2. When guests arrive at the pool, the pool monitor would present them with a handout outlining the pool rules (same as what is posted but never read). If accompanied by small children, a print out explaining the use of the "Family Pools," where there is more freedom for kids to do what kids do. Included in this would be a list and location of the family pools.

Many residents that do not regularly use the pools, are not aware that the family pools would better serve their guests with small children and mistakenly invite guests with these children to the priority pools where there activities are severally restricted.

Much of the over crowding of the priority

pools during the holiday and school vacation season could be relieved and residents paying extra for the use of these facilities would again enjoy what we are paying for.

Nancy Lee Storck

Editor’s Note: Remember that the priority pools at the country clubs are private enterprises owned and administered by the developer. These facilities are not part of the amenities of The Villages. Your suggestions should be directed to the developer. □

Letter to the Editor:

Dogs

We are having problems with people letting their dogs do their duty on our lawn. I have spoken to the violators but they are still doing it. Is there any kind of ordinance or someone I can report this person to? People with dogs have no respect for other people's property. They believe that everyone’s grass is their dogs toilet.

Terry Conti

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Editor’s Note: Walking a dog on a leash and picking up after is compliant with deed restrictions. However, county Animal Control will issue a citation for intentionally and consistently allowing a pet to defecate on one person’s property, because it is not right to make one person’s property “fido’s port-potty.” Start with a polite request that the owner not allow a dog on your property. Also consider spreading animal repellent granules (with moth ball flakes) on your lawn so dogs will avoid the area. If all else fails, call your county Animal Control officer. □

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POA Financial

The Treasurer's position is open on the POA Board of Directors. Several candidates have expressed interest – and, we plan to talk with other interested candidates. So, if you are interested and have a background in finance or accounting, please contact Joe Gorman at 259-0999 for more information.

Also, we are thinking about performing a financial and accounting audit of our operations and records. If anyone has financial auditing experience and would like to help the POA on this single project, please also call Joe Gorman at 259-0999 for more information.

Both of these are volunteer positions – but, we can offer you all the coffee and donuts you want at our monthly meetings. That's a heck of a deal. □

POA Bulletin Delivery

Snowbirds or seasonal residents, please let us know the months you are gone, and we will stop delivery of the Bulletin during that time. Just email our distribution manager at delivery@poa4us.org with your name, village, address, and the months you will be away, and we will add you to our "No Throw" List. If we inadvertently deliver to an unoccupied house, thanks in advance if you or one of your neighbors can pick up the Bulletin and either keep or discard it. □

Letter to the Editor:

Acronyms for Villagers

I've been a resident of The Villages for the past three years and I still don't have all the acronyms used in every issue of the POA Bulletin sorted out in my mind. I am sure there are vast numbers of new residents and snow birds who don't have the acronyms memorized either.

I would encourage and recommend the POA Bulletin editors consider inserting in every issue a small box indexing all the acronyms commonly used with their meaning spelled out such as: AAC, VCCDD, SLCCDD, VPAA, VHA, POA, CDD, LRMC, etc. This would be a big help as well as an educational tool for the reader. This box should be included with each issue.

Sym Terhune

Would it be possible to include on the front page of every issue as a reference what the acronyms (VCCDD, SLCCDD, VHA, etc.) stand for and who's responsible for each, i.e., developer, home owner, or government (local, city, state), etc.? This would be very helpful, particularly to newcomers, since

there are so many acronyms.

Why do "Community Watch" vehicles bear a "state" license tag?

Is there available a map that indicates the areas contained in the different wards/districts, and what's the difference between them?

I look forward to your response and appreciate receiving The POA Bulletin.

Paula E. MacGregor

Editor's Note: Please refer to the POA website (www.poa4us.org) for the listing and explanation of Acronyms For Villagers.

Community Watch vehicles are subject to state licensing requirements.

There is a map on the Center District's website (www.districtgov.org) which shows the map requested. □



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Letter to the Editor:

Golf Rain Checks

In response to the letter about the Rain Check in last month POA newsletter. I also played on Feb. 6th and there were brutal wind conditions. You didn't really know how difficult it was until you got playing and then you were wondering, why you were even trying to play in those conditions. But, the point is that I was playing Glenview and I was talking to the starter, when he got a call from the pro-shop. They told him that because it was so windy, they were declaring the day to be an inclement weather day and people could get a Rain Check for 9 holes if they choose not to finish. The kicker was that they were not to publicize it, but only grant it if it came up. So, it seems that there is latitude in the Rain Check policy that doesn't involve rain.

Jeff Harper □

Letter to the Editor:

Under/Over Age 55

I think it is a bit presumptuous of Joe Kaelin to decide who is "desirable" or not to live in The Villages - much less to base this decision on age!!! The individual who stole the neighbor's water would have been "undesirable" regardless of his age. Last time I checked, there were plenty of rude and law-abusing citizens over the age of 55.

You might also point out to him and everyone else that the "requirement" is for only ONE person in the household to be over 55, and that up to 3 additional people in the house can be under 55 and qualify as a Villages resident. There are plenty of nice, respectable, mature people who live here and may or may not meet the over 55 age requirement. They don't all seem to be detrimental to society.

Joan Moser □

Letter to the Editor:

Dog Park South

...families need a dog park south of 466 where they may take their dogs for exercise and sociability. This benefits the dogs, their owners and their neighbors. Exercised dogs need less walking through neighborhoods resulting in less problems with properties and their owners. There must be a way that the developer can free up property as so many of the new home owners are also dog owners. This is the one area of concern that the developers failed to take into account.

Since the schoolhouse by the Liberty Park Circle is the halfway point of development there will be many more dogs!

I think the dog park issue is extremely important to those of us south of 466. In fact, we will need two dog parks by the time Brownwood is finished.

Patty Colhoun □

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Letter to the Editor:

Traffic and Gates

Enclosed, please find a check for \$10. We would like to join POA, and hope to be able to attend the [next] meeting. We find your services very valuable, and, NO, we don't think you're too negative at all. You tell us the "side of the story" that we don't/won't get from the developer. We love living here and appreciate all the amenities. But we appreciate honesty and having the whole story before we form an opinion.

Our pet peeve here is the traffic. Mainly the excessive speed and often lack of consideration the vehicular traffic demonstrates for the golf carts. Why can they NOT understand that it's unsafe to travel faster than 30 mph on streets like Morse and Belvedere, where the cars and carts are sharing the same pavement? The accident on Buena Vista a few months ago demonstrates just how quickly something can happen. Fortunately there is a dedicated cart path along that road, and no carts were affected.

We are also bothered by the game of "chicken" that many like to play at the traffic circles. They either have no idea what a red Yield sign means, or don't care. Of course the contractors running around here are yet another story. We've asked The Villages media to put more articles in the paper, and announcements on the radio, reminding people of the "rules of the road." We understand that enforcement ultimately lies with the local sheriff's and police departments, but we think that The Villages has a stake in keeping the roads safe around here.

We agree that the gate attendants need

more education on traffic control. They seem oblivious to the big picture some times. We voiced our opinion against the idea of a "fast pass" through the gates, as we need the cars to stop long enough to give the carts a chance to get across. The gate attendants could be more helpful in this area. We see the gate up on the visitor side, and don't know if it's safe to cross (in our cart) or not. Often it's put up pre-maturely, and the attendant is still chatting with the driver of the vehicle. Many times, it's the VCCD vehicle making his rounds. The gates should not go

up until the vehicle is ready to proceed.

We disagree with those who think the gates are a joke. We feel they have their value, and do perform a service. One reason many of us chose a home here was because of the extra security that the gates provide. Whether monitored in person, or only by camera, it is another layer of security. We'd be very disappointed if the gates were dismantled, and believe the majority of residents share that feeling.

Thank you for your services.

Joe and Virginia Mammone □

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Letter to the Editor:

Poor Lawn Care

I just received the March, 2010 issue of the POA Bulletin and noticed that you did not print my request to inform Villagers of the outcome of my survey [regarding poor

service from a lawn care company].

This letter concerns lawn care or the lack of it here in the Villages. My first letter concerning this problem was answered by 87 Villagers who had lawn care concerns. I knew there was a problem but I didn't know it was this big. One lawn care company had more complaints than all the rest of the com-

panies put together. I guess Mr. Big is big in all ways, apparently too big to be responsible. In the near future I will be contacting 18 newspapers in the central Florida area concerning this matter to establish a data base to help you stay informed on this matter. With the help of the POA Bulletin this should be a help to all. I can be reached at: erstocker@aol.com

E R Stocker

Editor’s Note: It might be worthwhile for you to contact Seniors vs. Crime at the locations listed on the POA website (www.poa4us.org). Please keep us informed about your efforts. □

Letter to the Editor:

Good Article Less Strident

Your article about the Bond disagreement was very good. And, I do appreciate the less strident reporting lately. Keep that approach.

Judy Dobrowolski

Editor’s Note: Thanks for your kind comments. We will try. □

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Letter to the Editor:

Deaf Residents

Many thanks for delivering your POA newspapers to my house. It was very informative and straightforward. We appreciate your good investigation and being a watch dog.

We deaf residents of The Villages are unhappy with the Morse family who refused to provide closed captions to VNN in TV and movie theaters in The Villages.

They [do not] provide an interpreter [when] we take a class thru LifeLong Education. They said it is our responsibility to pay for our interpreters.

Mr. and Mrs. Dyess □

Letter to the Editor:

Wrong Side Parking

Are we going to wait until someone gets hit or killed before something is done about people coming in to do work and parking wrong on the street.

Again if it is wrong why is Community Watch doing nothing !! I thought they are there to watch and make sure things are done right.

Just today a biker was going down the street and had to go on the wrong side of the street because of outside vans and pickup trucks parking on the wrong side and was almost hit by a car !!!!!

Jim Horning □

Discount Partners Continued from Page 20

(Continued from page 20)

Sonic Drive-In - Wal-Mart Shopping Center, 352-347-2860. Tuesday Nights: 5 single patty burgers for \$5 after 5 PM. Add-on at extra charge. Wednesday Nights: 1/2 price single patty burgers; 99¢ single topping sundaes. Valid at the Summerfield location only.

Southern Image Photography - 97 Del Mar Drive, Spanish Springs, 352-430-2056. 10% POA discount on the Special of the Month.

Stewart Lawn & Landscape Maintenance 352-347-3792. 20% discount to POA members.

Tip Top Tree Experts - All tree work, landscaping, paving, pressure wash, auto body & paint. 10% POA discount. Call 352-516-8820.

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Vic's Embers - 7940 US Hwy. 441, Leesburg, 352-728-8989. Complimentary after-dinner cocktail or dessert for each person in the party. Not valid with other special offers.

Villages Car Wash and Lube - Bichara Blvd., La Plaza Grande Center, 352-753-1306. \$1.00 off the reg. price of silver or gold wash.

Villages 24/7 Kart Aide - Triple A Rescue Service for golf carts. 10% POA discount on yearly membership. Call 352-409-5853 for details.

Villagers Home Watch - call us at 352-753-6545. 10% POA discount off reg. price of \$40 for first three months of service for POA members.

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Our Monthly Gardening Column:

Tree Alternatives to Palms

By Anne Lambrecht
Master Gardener

If you are thinking of replacing your palm trees, you might consider other Florida trees more suitable for our zone. We are on the edge of Zones 8b and 9a. But if you must have a tropical tree, put it in a pot so you can give it protection in the winter.

If you want a palm, try a Sabal palmetto or cabbage palm, the Florida State tree. You haven't seen any dead Sabals around, right? Highly under-appreciated, most people feel that compared to some other palms, the cabbage palm is kind of ugly for planting in residential landscapes. However, it is perfectly adapted for Florida's soil conditions and climate, which includes hurricanes. The Needle palm, European fan palm and Lady palm are all very nice and hold up to the elements.

Longleaf Pine is found throughout the state, are fast growers and require little care. I have two that I paid \$6 for 6 years ago and they are now slim and fluffy and 25 feet tall.

Slash Pine is another fast-growing tree. It is fluffy and fast growing. This kind of pine is usually given away at national Arbor Day celebrations, which this year is April 30.

If you have a wet place in the sun, a Bald Cypress is for you. It is found in deep swamps which are usually flooded for long periods at a

time. I'm sure you've seen them around all our ponds here. They are such beautiful trees. I really like the "fuzzy" soft look of the needles which shed in the fall.

Maples are nice trees, too. The Florida Maple, also known as Southern Sugar Maple, closely resembles the well known northern sugar maple, and the Red Maple are medium sized and quick growing trees. Just plant in the right spot (full sun, rich, organic soil) and they'll give you great fall color for years.

How about a holly? Evergreen, easy to care for, hollies are great additions to the landscape. And the trimmings make wonderful holiday decorations. To get berries, you're going to need two to cross pollinate but a neighbor's holly can do that. Most types of hollies are fabulous here.

The Live Oak is one of the most desirable trees for ornamental planting. They are hardy and durable, relatively slow growing and very pretty. Their leaves "fall" in the spring.

Shumard Oaks make lovely shade trees. The Shumard Oak is not as common as other Florida oaks but it is found in distinct areas (ours being one of them). It is a good looking, large tree with lustrous foliage. Shumard Oak trunks are tall and straight which is another good choice for the homeowner. Their leaves are beautiful in color and shape which is the shape of the true oak that we all know. Note: any oak with "water" or "swamp" in the name is not a good choice. Those oaks tend to be short lived and rot from the inside out and are costly to remove.

Here are interesting trees that will do well

here: Flowering Dogwood, Eastern Redbud, Persimmon, Magnolia, Buckeye, Fringe Tree, Hawthorne, Chaste Tree, Wax Myrtle, American Plum, and Carolina Cherry Laurel.

When planting your tree, digging a hole wide enough is very important. The hole should be at least two times the diameter of the pot, three times is better. You need to make ample room for the roots. Only dig as deep as the pot. Plant your tree in most of the native soil that was removed. Of course, if you have tons of clay or too much sand, supplement your soil with leaves, organic matter, compost, etc. Do not plant the tree too deep. Planting higher in the hole is better than low in the hole. Fertilize all around the tree with slow release fertilizer and mulch, leaving 6" of space between the mulch and the trunk. It's a lot of work, but worth the health of your tree in the end.

It's important to check out the root system when planting trees to make sure the roots have not made a circle in the container. If they do, the roots will continue to encircle and eventually choke out the rest of the root system. Just cut the roots away where they would hit the side of the pot, before they begin to circle. That way when you plant the tree, the new rootlets will grow out straight.

Now where can you get these trees? They might sell them at the big box stores and the box stores may be able to order them for you. I find interesting trees and shrubs at local nurseries and plant sales. Many nurseries may be able to order trees for you also.

I am happy to report that the Husband has been working diligently at getting my little pond in order. And he happily observes that since Spring arrived, I have been mostly outside in my garden, allowing him to stay out of harm's way.

You may contact Anne Lambrecht by emailing: annegarden@embarqmail.com

Cited: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: Forest Trees of Florida at the website: <http://flame.fl-dof.com/apps/trees.php> . □

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(Continued on page 17)