

The POA Bulletin

Free Copy



The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

Issue 37.07

Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

July, 2011

Questions & Answers About Life in The Villages

If you have never been to a POA meeting, you may not be aware that at each meeting we conduct an open forum for thirty minutes during which time audience members can ask any questions or make any comments they wish. As resources, in addition to the POA Board, Janet Tutt, Villages Community Development District Manager, and Richard Lambrecht, Amenity Authority Committee member and former Chair, are present to provide the responses. Questions and responses (R) from recent meetings which we believe will be of interest to residents are as follows:

Developer Related:

1) I am very disappointed in the conditions, especially the crumbling cart paths, uneven tee boxes (especially the forward tees) and lack of replacement landscaping at the championship courses north of CR466. Is this an omen of what we can expect in the future for all of our championship courses as they age? **R:** We have heard a number of residents express similar concerns. Our advice is to address this issue with the club professional at the course and point out specific areas that need to be refurbished. If enough of us complain, we might see some action. Remember, it often takes a wheel to squeak before it will get oiled.

2) I live near the water treatment plant on Buena Vista and at times it is emitting a bad odor. Is anyone working on this? **R:** Yes, testing has been done and upon receipt of the test data, the manufacturer has agreed to provide the recommended resolution regarding the odor issue.

3) Is the El Santiago Restaurant going to be turned into a recreation center, and if so, who would pay for the renovation? **R:** The El Santiago restaurant building is owned by the developer. It is true that the restaurant has

closed. According to District Manager Janet Tutt, there has been no contact between the developer and the district government regarding any transfer of this facility, so there are no plans on the part of the District to turn it into a recreation center. The AAC would have the final say regarding any inclusion of this facility into the VCCDD recreational amenity system. (You may recall similar situations with the Chula Vista and Silver Lake buildings - the developer paid to renovate them into more "recreation friendly" facilities and then donated them to the district.)

4) What is the construction on CR466 East of Morse Boulevard and across from Santa Fe Shopping Center? **R:** There will be approximately 390 new homes built by The Villages. They will be in CDD 9.

District Related:

1) Can I pay off my infrastructure bond anytime, and, if so, where would I do it? **R:** A homeowner can pay off the bond on his/her property anytime at the District Customer Service office on Wedgewood Lane.

2) I know nothing is cheap, including hidden cameras, but the graffiti on the golf

cart bridge and the buildings around there is terrible. Is there anything we can do for some temporary hidden cameras. **R:** First of all, they caught the first group. Community Watch and Lady Lake police were both inte-

(Continued on page 2)

Gate Security Then & Now

It was stated in two articles in the June, 2011, VHA's Villages Voice that local law enforcement agencies agree that additional surveillance with improved video is a good thing and that they are also in agreement that **strategically placed manned gates**, as in The Villages, provide one of the highest levels of deterrence possible against unwanted "visitors". The POA has also been advised by others that signs throughout the community that state, "THIS IS A VIDEO MONITORED COMMUNITY" also serve as one of the highest levels of deterrence.

In order to maintain the integrity of the strategic placement of the gates in the original Villages Development of Regional Impact presentation (DRI), they must be continually monitored so as to be modified if factors establishing their position change. For example, at the time the District 3 DRI was approved, the roads behind the gates were not open to the public. Without a resident gate card, a visitor had to enter CDD3 through the manned gate at Glenbrook. That being the case, the Belle Aire, Polo Ridge, Southern Trace, Summerchase and Summerfield gates were all unmanned and no one could enter without a resident gate pass.

However, due to an edict by the Sumter County Board of Commissioners which stated that since the roads had been accepted from The Villages developer by the County

(Continued on page 2)

July 19, 2011

POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Third Tuesday of the Month - 7:00 PM

Laurel Manor Recreation Center

Cancer Therapy Series - Part II

Dr. Norman Anderson

Robert Boissoneault Oncology Institute

Radiation Oncology - 2011 and Beyond

Presentation followed by

Question & Answer Session

COFFEE AND DONUTS

FOR ALL AFTER THE MEETING

ALL RESIDENTS WELCOME - COME AND JOIN US

Questions & Answers

(Continued from page 1)

gral in finding the individuals and they are using cameras as they continue to monitor the situation.

3) Why is it that there is a big difference in the performance of gate cards? I have some friends that can hold their card up near their car window and the gate goes up, but I have to reach out to about 3 inches from the sensor to operate the gate. Is there some deterioration of the cards, or some performance standards, or can they be replaced? **R:** They can be replaced for a cost. Bring them to District Customer Service and they can test them, and determine if it is the gate or the card, as some gates are more sensitive.

4) What is the status of the repair of the tunnel under CR 101? **R:** The District has received the signed and sealed drawings from the engineer. They have been sent to Sumter County because the tunnel is under the Sumter County roadway and they must approve those signed and sealed plans and they have also been sent to the Engineer for CDD 3 because the District wants their own structural engineer to review the plans before they are sent back to the manufacturer. It is going to require a lowering of the pathway itself (scooping out) because as they put the sleeve in, it will lower the ceiling and the District is requiring that the same tunnel height be maintained. What still needs to be worked out is the path connections to allow an even grade and slope. Hopefully, the contractor will be able to enter into an agreement and then it will all be presented to the CDD 3 Board for their approval in early July. It will then take approximately six weeks for the construction of the tunnel.

General:

1) Do you know anyone here in the immediate area who will accept used batteries

for recycling? **R:** Marion County will, we cannot speak for Lake or Sumter. Marion’s location is just off of CR 42 in Weirsdale - street address 13535 SE 164th Street - Hours: M, W, Sat from 7AM-5PM and F, Sun from 9AM-7PM. They recycle both home and automobile batteries. (Telephone number to confirm hours of operation before you travel is 352-671-8465.) □

Security Gates

(Continued from page 1)

for maintenance, they were now PUBLIC roads and all entrances had to be open to the public – there could no longer be resident only gates and said gates would need a button to allow “visitors” to push to lift the gate. A single camera has been placed at each of the 5 unmanned gates in CDD3 to compensate for the loss of controlled access, but is that sufficient?

Hopefully the recently AAC approved pilot study on the effectiveness of multiple gate cameras will be helpful in determining if these gates, and others similarly situated throughout the VCCDD, primarily in CDDs 3 and 4, need to be provided with additional security cameras in order to make their security service equitable with that being provided South of CR 466.

In the other areas of the VCCDD where there is an abundance of gate attendants, the AAC should evaluate the results of the pilot study to determine the most effective use of our amenity funds. It might be beneficial if the AAC would ask Community Watch to have the gate attendant at the one gate in the study which is manned (Chatham) maintain a daily log of all actions he/she performs other than simply opening the gate. This could be a simple chart with columns and blocks under each were the time of day could simply be recorded for such activities as: directions

(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 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.

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Security Gates

(Continued from page 2)

given; lost item turned in; forward report of an accident; call in for a patrol car for suspicious activity or person, etc.; and a footnote could be placed beside the time entered if further explanations and descriptions were needed and they could be provided on a separate sheet. (It could really be helpful if all gate attendants would be required to maintain such a log during the time period of the pilot study.)

The second gate in the study is Del Mar which is unmanned. This gate has experienced a number of what appear to be purposeful gate ‘crashes’ by golf cart drivers who have not been able to be identified by the single camera. The pilot study will provide us the knowledge of whether additional, higher quality, strategically placed cameras will be able to identify the perpetrators so that they can be charged with either a misdemeanor or felony (depending upon the cost of repair), both of which carry potential jail time and fines.)

If the developer has discovered technology advances for certain gate situations, then the AAC should seriously consider incorporating these improvements, especially if they provide enhanced security at reduced expense.

Clearly no one is suggesting that The Villages should remove the gated entries. While a “manned” gate provides an onsite person to open the gate and answer questions, “video monitored,” gates would have a button to open the gate and utilize an existing phone line button to connect drivers with Community Watch dispatch to provide assistance and answer questions.

The camera purchase and installation costs provided by the Community Watch staff at the June 8th AAC meeting indicated that the enhanced cameras and associated recording equipment could be placed at a typical manned gate for about \$21,000. The expectation is that the equipment will last about five years with an annual maintenance expense of less than \$2,000 each.

While (1) there clearly are differences between the two approaches for gate security, (2) most likely additional expenses that have not been covered here and (3) some gates

(Continued on page 4)

POA Announces Monthly E-Mail Newsletter To Members

We initiated our e-mail contact program in June, commencing with an announcement reminding members of the speaker and date of the June 21, 2011, POA membership meeting. If you are a POA member and have provided us with an e-mail address and you did not receive this Newsletter, please e-mail your name, street address and e-mail address to database@poa4us.org and we will correct it in the database. Chances are that it was because the e-mail address was hand written on the application and we made an error in reading it when we put it in the database. Also, if you have a high level filter, the email may be blocked so please add the following address to your safe sender list: poa@poa4us.org.

We will use the Newsletter to remind you

of the monthly speakers, as well as to inform you of any matters that we believe you should be aware of on a timelier basis than what our monthly Bulletin can provide. For example, should the IRS Technical Advice Request decision be issued shortly after our Bulletin is distributed, rather than have to wait three or four weeks to provide you with our input on the finding, we will be able to send you our analysis by email immediately.

Thank you to all who have responded to our invitation to join the POA. We have a record number of members this year. If you have not yet joined, and you appreciate the efforts the POA is doing on your behalf, please join now – the membership application is below. □

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Gate Security

(Continued from page 3)

that might need to be manned for other reasons (i.e. Morse North and South), the indication is that the enhanced camera solution is dramatically less expensive and provides better documentation of activity at the gates. (Apparently the enhanced camera coverage would cost about \$6,000 per year per gate compared to the current manned gate setup which costs about \$70,000 per year per 24/7 manned gate.) □

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SECO Provides Free Energy Audits

Sumter Electric Cooperative, Inc. gave a PowerPoint presentation at the May POA membership meeting. The presentation, "SECO – Who We Are & Where We Get Our Power" was very interesting and informative. It briefly covered the beginning of the Sumter Electric Cooperative and how and where SECO gets their power.

During the presentation we were advised of the following free services that SECO provides to its customers:

- Energy audits
- Infra-red analysis
- High bill inquiries
- Meter testing, and
- Public speaking.

We were especially interested in the free energy audit and infra-red analysis, so as a follow-up we contacted SECO and arranged for an energy audit so we could provide you with additional information.

This is what they do:

- 1) Check the exterior of the home for cracks in the caulking at the windows and doors as well as the tightness of the weather stripping;
- 2) Inspect the home using a spot radiometer which measures an object's temperature. For example the solar tube opening vs.

the ceiling several feet away from it to make sure that it was letting in light and not heat; the ceiling differentials (walls which extend above the base height of the walls in the home vs. the base walls) to determine if you have adequate insulation to keep the walls at attic level the same temperature as those below that height;

3) Inspect the attic to make sure the insulation is even and using the spot radiometer, check to see that there are no leaks in the duct work. If a problem is determined they will make a second free visit with an infra-red camera which they can use to identify the location of the leaks and show you where insulation problems are located as identified in (2) above..

4) Check the temperature of the air conditioning return and the temperature of the air coming in. The temperature coming in must be sufficient to cool the home efficiently. There should be approximately 20 degrees difference between them.

5) Check the air conditioning unit in the garage to make sure there was no leakage around the various openings.

6) Suggested changing to a digital thermostat if you are not using one. It will be cost efficient over a short period of time as the old aneroid ones have too much variance and may be off as much as 2 degrees above or 2 degrees below your desired temperature setting.

(Continued on page 5)

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SECO Energy Audit

(Continued from page 4)

7) Windows exposed to direct sunlight should be double paned. If not, it was suggested that you have 3M window film placed on them. (We were also advised that once windows are in it takes a very long time to have a change out to double panes make a positive financial difference.)

8) We were given the ideal thermostat settings for energy efficiency, which are as follows: 78 – 80 degrees in the summer and 68 to 70 degrees or below in the winter. It was noted that there can be an annual cost savings of 6% to 8% for each degree higher you set the thermostat when cooling your home during the summer and a 3% to 5% savings on your annual heating costs for each degree lower you set your thermostat in the winter. When you're away for an extended period of time, set the thermostat up to 85 degrees in summer and down to 55 degrees in the winter.

We found this to be a beneficial service and would recommend it. If you are interested in scheduling a free energy audit with SECO, here are the numbers to call:

Sumter County – 352-793-3801 EXT 8019

Lake County – 352-357-5600

Marion County – 352-237-4107

NOTE: The energy audit is free, but if they identify a problem for you, you are on your own to get it repaired. □

AAC Meeting Summary June 8, 2011

Old Business Topics Included:

- Scott Wilder from Community Watch provided the Committee with a "Gate Camera Pilot Project" proposal. The proposal detailed camera location layouts and associated costs. The AAC accepted the pilot proposal for implementation at the Del Mar (unmanned) and Chatham (manned) gates. Four cameras will be installed at Del Mar and seven cameras at the Chatham entry. These cameras will record all activity both in front of and behind the gates and on both the entry and exit sides. A status update will be provided in six months.

New Business Topics Included:

- A Budget workshop will be held on June 22nd at the Laurel Manor District Office Board Room at 1:30.

- A Consent Agenda containing the ratification of bid awards for the Chula Vista and Mira Mesa golf course renovations, irrigation system renovations and bunker renovations was approved. These renovations total approximately \$350,000 and are expected to keep these two courses closed for at least 90 days this summer.

Reports Included:

- The District and legal counsel reviewed the revised facts for the Technical Advice Memorandum (TAM) in mid-May and replied to the IRS on May 16th with "points necessary to a proper and accurate presentation of the facts." On May 27, the IRS agent contacted the District's outside counsel and agreed to the facts provided and a majority of the wording changes suggested. District Manager Janet Tutt stated "Although some information remains that the District does not feel is relevant, the modified document is factually accurate." The TAM will now be sent to the IRS Chief Counsel.

(Continued on page 6)

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AAC Meeting

(Continued from page 5)

• District Counsel Archie Lowry stated he was not finished with his review of the amenity fee CPI increase process currently in place for resales, as requested by the Committee. Mr. Lowry declined to provide a completion date for this contract review.

Audience Comments:

• The Committee deferred to Marion County on a resident request to change the "exit only" gate on Langham Court (Forsyth Villas) at Mulberry Lane to allow two-way traffic. The exit only gate was part of the development plan approved by Marion County and would require the County's approval to change the usage of this gate/roadway.

The meeting was continued to June 22, 2011 at 1:30 p.m. to be held at the District Office Board Room, 1894 Laurel Manor Drive in order to discuss a request from the Lake County Board of County Commissioners regarding a traffic signal at the La Zamora entrance and CR 466. This item was tabled from the June 8, 2011 meeting at the request of Lady Lake/Lake County AAC member Jo Weber who was unable to attend the meeting. The June 22nd meeting will be followed by the previously mentioned budget workshop.

Please visit www.districtgov.org website for the official minutes, agendas, and meeting schedule. Next AAC Meeting - Wednesday-**August 10th, 1:30PM** at the Savannah Center (No July Meeting). □

AAC Meeting, Cont. June 22, 2011

TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT THE INTERSECTION OF CHULA VISTA AVENUE AND CR 466

On May 24, 2011, Lake County Department of Public Works officially requested the District to assist them with providing a traffic signal at the intersection of Chula Vista Avenue and CR 466, by **donating the easement** they needed for the installation of traffic signal poles behind the entry walls on the VCCDD property. Ms. Tutt, District Manager, brought it to the AAC for their response. At the 'continued' AAC meeting on June 22nd, the Committee decided as follows:

The motion to grant the easement was made, and the vote was 3 (Weber, Lambrecht and Wilcox) in favor and 3 (Moyer, Forrester and Bell) against, so the motion failed. Those in favor appeared to lean toward the fact that

the vast majority of area residents who had spoken on this issue and signed petitions wanted the traffic light, and those voting against the motion suggested that there might be better options (i.e. right turn only when exiting with a U turn further West and a left turn lane for those going East on CR 466 who wished to enter the gate), and that they did not believe the District should give its property away.

They further stated that the traffic light was a Lake County decision and that the AAC/VCCDD should not be involved in making that decision, in light of the fact that Lake County has the power to take the land needed for the placement of the poles by eminent domain, in which case they would have to pay the District the fair market price of the land they acquired.

The AAC instructed Ms. Tutt to inform Lake County that the AAC would not grant the easement, but that they would be open to review other proposals should Lake County wish to submit them. □

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Medigap/ Supplement Plan Not Accepted??

The POA has received a number of telephone calls and letters from residents who have recently found that their Medigap/Supplement insurance is no longer accepted by The Villages or Leesburg Regional Hospitals and that they must travel to Ocala in order to be covered in their network required plan. We discussed this issue with Betty Cunningham, The Villages SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) Coordinator and she has provided us with the following information on what it means and what you can do about it:

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) volunteers have also received numerous inquiries about hospitals in the area not accepting their Medigap Plan. The common problem is the individuals have a Medigap policy called "Medicare **Select**" (a Medigap policy that requires one to use specific hospitals and, in some cases, specific doctors to get full coverage, except in an emergency). The "select" plans can be cost saving, but have restrictions which one must follow. If an individual uses a hospital out of the network, except in an emergency, he/she may have to pay the deductible for the first

day when admitted (2011 cost is \$1132) and Medicare covers the next 59 days. Days 61-90 and life time reserve days 91-150 have co-pays that the individual could be responsible for. The first day is determined by a "spell of illness", which means if a person is out of the hospital or skilled nursing facility for 60 days or more, a new spell of illness starts and the first day charge and co-pays start over. Medicare will still pay its share of the approved charges no matter which hospital or doctor one uses.

What can you do? You have several choices. (1) Stay with current plan and use the required hospital. (2) Stay with current plan and go to the hospital of your choice and you may have to pay the deductible towards the first day costs in the hospital. (3) Change Medigap policies or companies by applying for a new policy that is **not** a "Select" policy and will allow you to go to the hospital of your choice. If you select this option, you must apply for the new policy. **Do not cancel your current plan until you have been approved for the new policy.** Medigap Policies do not have an annual enrollment period. One can change anytime, but you are not guaranteed coverage except under certain circumstances.

See page 57 in your "Medicare and You 2011" book for more information.

For help, you can call the Elder Helpline 1-800-963-5337 or visit your SHINE volunteers at the sites in The Villages. We are at

Chula Vista Recreation Center on the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month from 3-5:50 p.m. (be there by 5:30) and at Lake Miona on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 9-11:50 a.m. (be there by 11:30).

SHINE is here to serve you and answer your Medicare and Insurance questions. Our services are free and it is our pleasure to help you.

Betty Cunningham, Area Coordinator for Lake-Sumter Counties and The Villages

(Editor's Note: We spoke with representatives of The Villages Hospital and they advised that plans are constantly changing and The Villages Hospital may be "In Network" while "Leesburg Regional" may be "Out of Network" or vice versa, so always check with your insurer). □

POA SPEAKERS AVAILABLE
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IRS Update

In the April POA Bulletin (see poa4us.org – use archived bulletins link) we advised that the IRS agent and the District’s attorney were in the process of negotiating an agreed upon statement of facts on the issue of whether or not the District meets the IRS requirements to be classified as a political subdivision within the meaning of section 1.103-1 of the Income Tax Regulations. On June 14th Janet Tutt, District Manager, announced that the final version of the Request for Technical Advice has now been submitted to IRS Chief Counsel and that the entire document is now posted on the District web site. (districtgov.org – first column on the left - click on IRS Updates.) □

Springdale Trail

The Developer has contracted to complete repairs and resealing of the Springdale Transportation Trail from SE 86th Belle Meade Circle to Buena Vista Boulevard. This work will commence on June 20, 2011 and is estimated to be completed within approximately 120 days weather permitting. This work will be completed in contiguous phases. As the project will require the presence and operation of heavy equipment, it is in the best interest of everyone’s safety that portions of the trail be closed to all traffic (foot, bicycle, golf cart, etc.) as work is being completed on each particular phase. Signs and barricades will be placed indicating areas that are inaccessible.

This work will also impact the golf courses at Legacy Golf & Country Club, Briarwood & Walnut Grove Executive courses. Commercial Property Management has been working diligently with the Golf Pro in regards to shifting course traffic and play as to minimize any inconveniences. Should anyone have any questions and or concerns, please direct them to Tina Robbins with Commercial Property Management – 352-750-9455. □

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*** Letters to the Editor ***

A Case For Seat Belts Re: “Golf Carts Can Kill” Article

The story regarding the dangers of golf carts is an appropriate reminder to every Village resident. We live in an area that probably has the largest number of golf carts in any community on the planet, and this mode of transportation is one of the major attractions of why we live here. Golf carts are an inexpensive and enjoyable perk to our lifestyle. But like anything that is fun, there are certain risks inherent with that enjoyment. As the article points out, we must not view these mobile attractions as toys, but as serious machines that can sometimes run us into danger. Overall, they are usually safe and harmless, but moving objects can sometimes get in the way of other moving or stationary objects.

I was not alarmed to read that possibly ten deaths have occurred from the use of golf carts in The Villages within the past five years. When I moved here about ten years ago, I was quite surprised that many carts were not equipped with seat belts. I was especially shocked when a few years later, a statement was made by a woman who headed up a safety body within The Villages condemning the use of belts in carts. I recall her statement saying something that they were not necessary, because golf carts are

“crushable”, whatever that has to do with lifesaving. There is a mindset of some people who believe that it’s safer to be thrown from a moving vehicle than staying with it. It is the culture of some manufacturers as well, who have fought against State and Federal regulation of seat belts for many years. Without acknowledgment of this being a safety issue, it lessens their liability. This is the same reason that car manufacturers resisted seat belts for many years, until it was studied and finally mandated by government.

I applaud Chairman Carl Bell of the AAC in pursuing more statistical information of past injuries and deaths resulting from golf carts within our community. These numbers should not be withheld from Village residents because they are not conducive to the warm and fuzzy strategy that the developer favors in selling homes. All of the fatal and serious accidents may not have resulted because of the lack of seat belts. But if something can be learned from each of the past incidents, then our generation is not too old to be instrumental in making the future of The Villages a better place for our children to retire to.

I spent a great deal of my life associated with the sport of open wheel auto racing, and recall how opinions varied greatly on the value of seat belts. After many lives were lost, the racing bodies conceded that all race-cars must be equipped with restraining devices. The idiocy of the old thinking was sud-

denly scrapped when rollovers proved to be mostly harmless with this new style of thinking, strapping the drivers to be attached to the vehicle. This followed to passenger cars, and statistics and most people accept its value today.

Some people will resist this line of thinking to golf carts because they don’t usually go at a high rate of speed. But I’ve seen a few cart accidents, and when struck by autos or another cart from the side, they tip very easy. A head striking concrete is not a pleasant site, especially when it’s a child’s. Hit a curb with a cart, and see how quickly it can flip or throw you out. People of any age do not have the instant ability to react by hanging on to a part of the vehicle as it throws them out. Folks, seat belts are for saving lives and serious injury.

While I don’t advocate more government interference in our lives, I do advocate com-

(Continued on page 10)

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*** Letters to the Editor ***

Seat Belts

(Continued from page 9)

mon sense in saving lives. If you don't have seat belts installed, consider doing it before more deaths and injuries prompt authorities to pass laws to make people protect themselves.

Jim Speckbrock

Editor's Note: In addition to considering the use of seat belts in your golf cart (they are required in all LSV's) when you are not on the golf course, another safety item we have read about often in our research is the recommendation that children wear helmets when riding in the golf carts (you wouldn't let them ride a bike or rollerblade without a helmet) if they are not in a seat belt. As a convenience for you, listed below are the prices quoted to us at some of the area golf cart dealers for the purchase and installation of golf cart LAP seat belts.

The Villages Golf Car - (Yamaha - and other brands if purchased used from Villages Golf Car) - \$29.75 installed per seat belt, plus \$10.00 pick up and delivery charge. Phone # 352-751-6750

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Underground AC Copper Tubing Problems?

HELP US HELP YOU!

Many of our neighbors in Lynnhaven and friends elsewhere have had to replace their copper piping for freon in their air conditioners. Sun Kool is saying that, 1) poor copper piping was used, and 2) bending the copper pipe to go underground is causing a weak-

ness in the pipe that eventually gives out. Another contractor said he thought the problem was that the contractor probably bought a 50 ft roll of copper pipe and soldered a 10 ft section on to make it long enough and the solder is going bad.

It is costing residents between \$600 and \$800 to reroute the copper piping in the attic. In some cases, residents were told their condenser went bad and they needed to replace it. When it was replaced, it didn't work more than a few weeks since it was actually the copper pipe that was bad. So they still had to reroute the pipe.

If the POA has not investigated this problem, can it become an issue of concern? We are having our freon line run up the back of our villa to the cost of \$599. We are the 16th villa in Southern Oaks to have to do this. In addition, 4 years ago 12 villas had the freon line pulled and replaced through the concrete. The Villages or SunKool or someone paid for their replacement. I called SunKool and was told they would do a 5 year warranty on the line but I would need to pay them \$188 to diagnose the problem which 2 other AC companies had done through my home warranty. I have talked with other villa owners who are having similar AC problems outside of Southern Oaks. The service guys say they are having the problem all over The Villages. The really sad thing is I think that they are

(Continued on page 11)

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*** Letters to the Editor ***

AC Copper Tubing

(Continued from page 10)

still installing the AC this way in new villas. I would appreciate any help the POA can give the villa owners. This is like the vinyl siding problem.

Sue and Phil Peregrine

Editor's Note: (We have also had inquiries from residents of other Villa neighborhoods).

The VHA has taken the leadership on this issue and presented the following report in the May, 2011, edition of the 'Villages Voice': "The Village Homeowners Association working with The Villages Home Warranty Department and the three major HVAC installers in The Villages (Sun Kool, Munn's and Sun Shine) have reached a good faith agreement in dealing with refrigerant line set failures (principally in some Patio Villas south of 466). That agreement is as follows:

"After December 9th 2010, any Villages customer whose installation was done by the above mentioned installers will be provided as a courtesy service a replacement of their underground copper line set if a failure occurs for up to 5 years from their original closing date of the home with The Villages. Also at this time if it is determined that the underground copper line set needs replacement at any time within 5 years from their original closing date, installers as a courtesy service

will provide the parts and labor necessary to replace the line set. If the underground copper line set is replaced by the installers then those customers will at this time have a further 5 year replacement service on their replaced line set counted from the date of replacement. This includes any customer that may be outside of their 5 years of the original closing on their home and may have to pay the installers to replace a failed line set. The original installer must perform all work for this 5 year offer to remain in effect."

The POA applauds the VHA on its work on this issue thus far: their efforts to determine the underlying cause of the AC refrigerant line failures, and their achievement in obtaining a 5-year extended warranty for Villages homeowners. Our concerns, expressed by a number of affected residents, is that residents who had this problem before the VHA investigation and had paid to have the repair were not reimbursed, and those resi-

dents who have owned the property for 5 years and ONE DAY or more are being required to pay for the parts and labor to re-route the copper refrigerant lines. The average person would think that if you put refrigerant lines in a conduit with limited access under a cement slab, it should last longer than 5 years. The homeowner should not have to pay for the same AC line installation twice: first with the purchase of the house, then again a few years later to replace the original installation.

While line set failures have occurred in many of the affected homes when they are only 2 or 3 years old, there are also many others that are experiencing the same prob-

(Continued on page 12)

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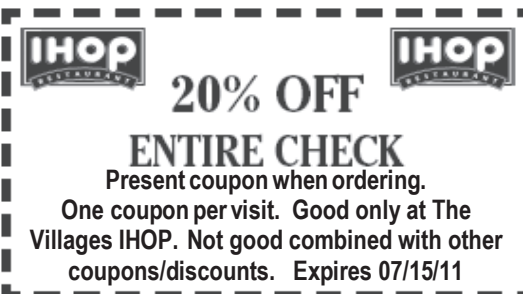
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*** Letters to the Editor ***

AC UNDERGROUND REFRIGERANT LINE PROBLEMS

If you have had a problem with your underground AC refrigerant lines, **your participation is appreciated**. Please let us know about your experience. Contact Ray by e-mail at rym101@aol.com providing the information requested below, or fill in and mail this form-- Attn: AC Line Sets, POA, PO Box 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158. (Attach additional pages if needed.)

NAME(S) _____ PHONE NO. _____

ADDRESS _____

VILLAGE OR NEIGHBORHOOD _____

HOME MODEL _____ YEAR BUILT _____

PURCHASED NEW? _____ If Pre-Owned, Year You Purchased _____

NAME OF BUILDER (if known) _____

MAKE AND MODEL OF AC UNIT _____

ORIGINAL AC INSTALLER _____
(sticker on the unit in your garage)

Brief description of underground AC refrigerant line problems you have encountered: _____

DATE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED? _____ DATE RESOLVED? _____

IF YES, HOW? _____

NAME OF COMPANY? _____

COST OF REPLACE/REROUTE LINES? _____

WAS OTHER WORK DONE ALSO? _____

IF SO, WHAT? _____

NAME OF COMPANY? _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP IN THIS EFFORT.

AC Copper Tubing

(Continued from page 11)

lem well after the 5-year mark. There is a very high percentage of affected homes within some neighborhoods, and few or none in other areas. The cause of the problem has yet to be determined and the effectiveness of various installation changes is still unknown.

We believe consideration should be given to a longer time period for the extended warranty and the warranty should include all homes that have this problem, regardless of whether they have continued with the original installer for regular maintenance. We also feel that the warranty coverage should be retroactive with a refund provided to those homeowners who have already paid for replacement or rerouting of the refrigerant lines.

The increasing number of copper AC line failures show that these are not isolated occurrences. Regardless of who is at fault in the failure of the line sets: whether it is the cop-

(Continued on page 17)

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*** Letters to the Editor ***

24 Hr Central Lost & Found For Valuables Needed

I've lived in The Villages almost 15 years and there is a project that I believe is needed here. There needs to be a Lost and Found room in each of the sales offices. It's true that things get returned if they are in or near a certain store or bank, and this is reported gleefully in the Daily Sun as an example of how honest Villagers are. But what about items that fall from moving golf carts? It is heartbreaking to see fat bunches of keys and

prescription eyeglasses at the post office on the historic side. But the saddest sight was a young woman sobbing over a lost wallet. She was visiting her parents and could not board a plane home without her ID. There was probably nothing in the wallet to indicate who she was visiting in The Villages. We desperately need this service - ONE ROOM – and it should be publicized. Please talk this over, and thank you for the wonderful work you do. Nell Mardell

Editor's Note: Your suggestion that there be one place for lost and found items of value – (jewelry, wallets with non-village addresses and/or telephone numbers, prescription glasses and medications, etc., vs. a golf club head cover, hat/visor, shoe, etc.) has great merit. Rather than make it a responsibility of the sales office, a better place might be to have it coordinated through Community Watch which is available 24 hours. Residents finding a valuable item could either give it to a gate attendant who could call it in, or if one is not nearby, simply call Community Watch and report what you found and how it can be retrieved. That way, residents as well as guests who lose something of value would be able to call Community Watch and determine if their item had been found and where to retrieve it in a timely manner. In any event, we hope the District will look into providing this service. □



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***** Letters to the Editor *****

**Dogs On Leashes
Follow-Up**

Here's the exact wording of the deed restriction for our property: "Birds, fish, dogs and cats shall be permitted, with a maximum of two (2) pets per Homesite. Each Owner shall be personally responsible for damage caused to dedicated or reserved areas by any

such pet and shall be responsible to immediately remove and dispose of any excrement of such pet and shall be responsible to keep such pet on a leash." Since the leash statement is part of the sentence about dedicated or reserved areas (streets, paths, mail pick-ups, recreation facilities and so forth), EITHER dogs need to be kept on leash while in those dedicated or reserved (public) areas OR all pets need to be on leash at all times, including in the house. Fish on leashes too.

Please ask Ms. Tucker to check with their lawyer and re-issue a statement based on the legal interpretation of this covenant. If keeping dogs behind invisible fences is found to be a violation of the covenant, she should also notify the companies that have installed hundreds of these fences in The Villages.

Thank you for your fine service.
Diana Mirkin

(Continued on page 15)



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*** Letters to the Editor ***

Dogs on Leashes

(Continued from page 14)

Editor's Note: Ms. Tucker met with the District Attorney and provided the POA with the following response:

"It is important to note that the particular deed restriction Ms. Mirkin refers to regarding pets, leashes and excrement is a restriction that the District boards are not authorized to adopt for District enforcement as it does not pertain to the use or appearance of 'real property.' That said, in regards to the particular sentence in the deed restriction Ms. Mirkin refers to, it appears it consists of 3 parts (i.e. 3 separate rules) as follows:

- 1) Each Owner shall be personally responsible for any damage caused to dedicated or reserved areas by any such pet;
- 2) Each owner shall be responsible to immediately remove and dispose of any excrement of such pet, and
- 3) Each owner shall be responsible to keep such pet on a leash.

In regard to fences, the specific 'fence' language found in the adopted deed restrictions vary from one unit to another. Generally speaking fences are prohibited. Fence is defined in the adopted Standards as including but not limited to "a vertical structure or a dividing instrumentality."

Until the appropriate District board decides otherwise it is staff's current position

that an underground electric device for dog control is not a fence.

In regards to whether a dog may be kept in its own yard without a leash (with or without such an underground electric device) is an issue beyond the district's authorization under Chapter 190, F.S. as it does not pertain to 'the use or appearance of real property'.

However, the residents subject to the deed restrictions (your neighbors) and the decla-

(Continued on page 16)

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***** Letters to the Editor *****

NPH Follow-Up

Allow me to express the gratitude of the many villagers who responded to my letter about the dangers of NPH. It would take pages to tell their stories, some happy, some sad, some tragic and some now better prepared to go forward with medical actions which may improve, even save their lives.

Many were aware that publication of my letter was not in keeping with standard policy of POA, but all were most appreciative that it was done.

Together, we may have improved or even saved some lives today. Thank you from all of us.

Del Lasley

Editor’s Note: Good luck to all of you. □

Your POA wishes you a Safe and Happy 4th of July!

Dogs on Leashes

(Continued from page 15)

rant (the developer) have the authority to enforce all deed restrictions. “

Also, remember that Lake, Sumter and Marion Counties each have ‘leash laws. For example, Marion County Code, Chapter 4, Section 10 reads as follows: “Animals must be kept on a leash at all times when off of the owner’s property.” Refer to the actual section for information on exceptions. □

Sexual Offenders

It’s that time of year when grandchildren will be visiting. We live in a safe community, but like everywhere else, we still have sexual offenders and predators living in our midst. Easily check out their location, online <http://offender.fdle.state.fl.us/offender/homepage.do> and click on ‘Offender Search’ – enter your address/zip code to get the identity and street location of offenders living within 5 miles. □

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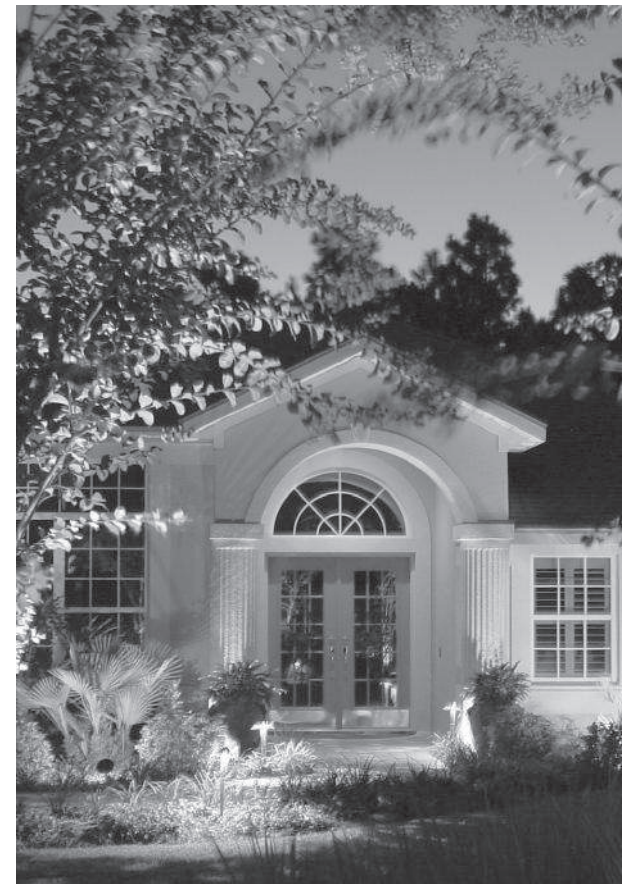
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AC Copper Tubing

(Continued from page 12)

per tubing, the design of the homes, the installation of the systems or other building practices, it is definitely *not* the fault of the homeowners and they should not have to bear the cost of repairs.

Like automobiles that are assembled from parts made elsewhere, but ultimately carrying the manufacturer's brand, when widespread failures occur, it is up to that manufacturer to recall the product and correct the failure. With something as essential as air conditioning in a Florida home, just as in an automobile recall, our laws offer protection from defective products and installations. Regardless of whether it is the manufacturer, supplier, sub-contractor, contractor or seller/developer, jointly or severally, who is responsible for this defect, the innocent homeowner or purchaser should be made whole. The problem should be fixed without any cost to Villages homeowners and without a warranty deadline or other requirements that exclude a large portion of the affected homes from coverage.

The POA is now coordinating information from residents who have encountered this

AC line failure problem in order to evaluate the extent of occurrences and to see if anything further can be done about it.

For the benefit of Villages homeowners, we hope to work in cooperation with the VHA members who have already put so much time and effort into troubleshooting this problem. In that regard, we are requesting information from residents who have experienced this problem.

You can use the form printed on Page 12 and mail it to

Attn: AC Line Sets
POA
PO Box 1657,
Lady Lake, FL 32158

or you can contact Ray by e-mail at rvm101@aol.com.

Please include your name, address & phone number, your Village or neighborhood, the model of your home, the year built, the age of your home when the problem occurred, the make & model of your AC unit, the name of the original AC installer (there's

probably a sticker on the unit in your garage), whether you are the first or subsequent owner of the home, a brief description of the related AC problem you have encountered, whether it has been resolved, and if so, how, at what cost, and by whom.

The POA will pursue this issue to the ex-

(Continued on page 18)

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AC Copper Tubing

(Continued from page 17)

tent of our ability, but we need the cooperation of residents who have had problems with their underground AC refrigerant lines.

If you have had a problem with your underground lines, your participation is appreciated. We would also appreciate the help of any residents who are HVAC engineers and would be willing to share their ex-

perience to help their friends and neighbors.

A note to those of you who may be in touch with friends and neighbors who are away for the summer:

Please remind them to read The Bulletin online at poa4us.org and send us their information if they have been affected by leaking AC line sets.

Homeowners that are away for long periods in the hot summer months should also be aware of the potential for damage from heat and humidity if their air conditioning fails during their absence. □

Lightning Matters

By Len Hathaway
Study Group on Lightning

Over the last two years the Study Group on Lightning has given our Power Point presentation, *Lightning Tips for Villagers*, nearly 50 times, to interested clubs and organizations in and around The Villages. This is a free, non-commercial, 45 minute program that typically leads to 10-15 minutes of Q&A.

It was developed to combat the many myths and misinformation about lightning with the science, research, and actual experience. It is presented as a community service to help Villagers make informed decisions on personal and 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.

Here is what you will learn:

- What do I need to know about personal lightning safety?
- Do I need lightning rods for my home?
- If so, how do I select a qualified installer, and how much will it cost?
- Do I need surge protection for my appliances and sensitive electronic equipment like computers, televisions, microwave ovens, etc?
- If so, what type of equipment, where should it be located, and how do I procure the necessary equipment?

(Continued on page 19)

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Lightning Matters

•What is the latest update on the susceptibility of corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) gas pipe to lightning damage?

•What are nine myths about lightning that I need to have debunked?

•Answers to your questions about lightning issues.

This presentation is also being offered to individuals through the Lifelong Learning College. □



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