

# The POA Bulletin

Free Copy



The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

Issue 39.03

Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

The POA Website – [www.poa4us.org](http://www.poa4us.org)

March, 2013

## Questions and Answers February Open Forum

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 question 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 usually present to provide the responses.

1) Is there a privacy policy that is written any place that tells us what they do with the information which is scanned from our ID cards? There should be a disclosure statement somewhere. I would like to know anything that The Villages is doing with that information every time the card is swiped. There is a big difference between individual data and aggregate data. A) Janet Tutt stated that scanned data is retained for purposes of verifying resident complaints and other statements such as a resident claiming their card had not been scanned over the last year of active usage of the facilities, etc. The data has also been used to refute claims that a resident has been physically unable to use the facilities as a result of an injury at a District facility. Ms. Tutt pointed out that the data is not typically reviewed other than in instances such as these and that only District Staff has access to the individual data for risk assessment purposes. Previously, John Rohan, Director of Recreation, had informed us that the aggregate data was used at times to determine usage of various facilities. As a result of this issue being raised at the POA meeting, there was a follow-up discussion at the AAC Workshop meeting on February 13<sup>th</sup> where staff agreed that it would now be District policy to purge the scanned data after three years had elapsed.

2) It is my understanding that our deed restrictions do not permit residents to utilize garbage CANS. There are several residents in the Cortez area who have been using them and we have called the deed compliance office several times and complained, but nothing has been done about it. Why not? A) If a complaint such as this is made, the compliance officer will go to the property where the violation is to be occurring and if there is a garbage can outside they will contact the property owner and advise them of the violation. (Note, the compliance officer must actually see the garbage can in use in order to be allowed to contact the property owner.)

3) I live in an area of south of CR 466 where the traffic is unbearable. Residents are actually turning around and using other streets because of the long delay at an intersection. Who can address this situation. A) Initially the roads are owned and maintained by the Community Development District that constructed them, but after they are completed and operational they are turned over to the County so you would need to address this with the Sumter County Board of Commissioners. You might ask Lt. Wolfe of the Sumter County Sheriff's Department to re-

*(Continued on page 2)*

**Tuesday, March 19, 2013**  
**POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**  
**Third Tuesday of the Month – 7:00 PM**  
**Laurel Manor Recreation Center**

**Law Enforcement**  
**In The Villages**  
**Speaker - Lt. Nehemiah Wolfe**  
**Sumter County Florida Sheriff's Department**  
**Video and Audio in overflow room**  
**Donuts and Coffee for All after the Meeting**  
**All Residents Welcome - Come and Join Us!**

### SNOWBIRDS - HELP!!

If you are a snowbird or seasonal resident, please let us know the months you are gone, and we will stop delivery of the Bulletin during that time (while you are away you can find the current, as well as archived Bulletins, on [poa4us.org](http://poa4us.org)). Email our distribution manager at [delivery@poa4us.org](mailto: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 for that time. If we inadvertently deliver to an unoccupied house, thank you in advance if you or one of your neighbors can pick up the Bulletin and either keep or discard it. Shelley Pfaff, POA Distribution Manager, 352-325-1540. □

## Leaping Leprechaun Resident Parades March On

**March 18, 3:30-4:30, Spanish Springs**

As you read in last month's POA Bulletin a group of residents formed a Resident Parade Committee (RPC) to partner with the Recreation Department to create The Villages Resident Parades in The Villages. We have successfully addressed the items needed in the proposal. Here is the latest update on this issue.

On January 28<sup>th</sup> the RPC met to discuss the type of parade we wanted. We brainstormed on some ideas and finally came up with a parade proposal that we knew would be entertaining and fun for everyone. On January 30<sup>th</sup> Jackie Campbell, Chairperson of the RPC hand delivered our Residents Parade proposal for review and approval to Janet Tutt and John Rohan and on February 5<sup>th</sup>, Jackie and Don Deakin met with Janet Tutt and John Rohan to discuss our proposal. The RPC received approval for an Irish Parade. It was decided that this year there will be **one Irish parade at Spanish Springs on Monday March 18th starting at 3:30 PM and ending at approximately 4:30PM.**

*(Continued on page 2)*

## February Forum Q&A

(Continued from page 1)

view this area with you. With his support for the need for a modification, you will likely have more success with the Commissioners.

4) What can be done about the condition of the golf cart lanes on Rio Grande and Del Mar? A) Both streets have been turned over to the county in which they are located. The respective county is responsible for the maintenance of the vehicle lane and the golf cart lane so residents would need to approach the respective County Board of Commissioners.

5) Is anything being done about the entrance sign into Rio Ponderosa? It is in bad shape and needs repair. A) Sam Wartinbee, District Property Manager, has advised us that they are budgeting for replacement in the 13/14 budget and that although it looks like there might be an immediate issue, it is solid at this time and it is his opinion that there is no problem with waiting. □

## Irish Parade

(Continued from page 1)

On February 6th, Jackie provided an update at the AAC meeting and informed the Board that the RPC proposal was approved by Recreation and the parade was moving forward. The parade will consist of 32 decorated Irish Clubs golf carts representing the counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland; four to six performing groups providing music, singing and dancing throughout the parade; and four to six non-performing groups. We will have additional decorated golf carts along with walkers. There will be a Sing-a-Long at the end of the parade.

The RPC objective was to create a Resident Parade in The Villages with a performance style component that would include music, singing, dancing, walkers and golf carts decorated with an Irish theme. All four Irish Clubs will participate together - St. Patrick,

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Shamrock, Claddagh and Celtic. This will be the **1st United Irish Parade in The Villages**. Working in partnership with the Recreation Department, the size of the parade is scaled down to a maximum of 20 entries. Motorized vehicles (cars, trucks, motorcycles) are prohibited.

We want the Resident Parade to be different, fun and entertaining. The parade will make several stops along the route to allow the performing groups to perform for the crowds. Some of the groups include The Village Twirlers, Irish Club Ceili Dancers and Cloggers to name a few. The parade will conclude with an Irish Sing-A-Long led by Banjo John and other musicians.

Our goal is to continue the traditional lifestyle of Florida’s Friendliest Hometown where we honor our heritage and have parades to celebrate them.

**The Theme for the parade this year is CEAD MILE FAILTE (Gaelic) which means 100,000 Welcomes.**

Staging for parade participants will take place at the far south end of the parking lot behind Katie Belle’s. The parade route will proceed from the staging area northwest on Alvarez Ave., right onto Cabellero Ct., left onto Calle Uno, left onto Main Street, right onto Alvarez Ave., around Spanish Springs Square, then right onto Alvarez Ave., and return to the parking lot staging area.

Parade Packets will be going out to the clubs participating in the parade which will include all the necessary information that they will need for the parade. We will utilize about 120 of our volunteers to assist at the registration table, set up tents, line up participants, parade marshals and clean up duty. We thank everyone who volunteered their time for this parade to happen. Our parade marshals will wear red STAFF tee shirts purchased by the Recreation Department.

This has been a great effort by a dedicated group of people starting with Janet Tutt, John Rohan, Elaine Dreidame, Don Deakin, Jackie Campbell and the other presidents of the Irish, Italian, and German Clubs. It shows that with hard work and a commitment by all 4 Irish clubs to come together, coordinate and sponsor a parade, we made the Irish Parade happen this year.

We hope to see everyone there!

Jack McTigue, Publicity Coordinator  
Resident Parade Committee □

## 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. □

## Animal Lover? Need Sensitive Papers Shredded?

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

Paper Shredding Opportunity on Saturday, March 23rd, to Benefit the Sumter County and Leesburg Humane Societies.

Hill's Shred Express, a licensed, bonded and insured shredding company will provide on-site shredding services on Saturday, March 23rd from 8:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. in the parking lot of the Buffalo Ridge Animal Hospital. The hospital, located at 748 Campus Circle, is just north of Highway 466 between Red Lobster and Golden Corral and behind Tire Choice.

Bring your documents and other personal items for shredding.

This event is sponsored by The Rainbow Family and Friends Club of The Villages, Buffalo Ridge Animal Hospital and Hill's Shred Express for the benefit of the Sumter County and Leesburg Humane Societies.

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## THE POA HAS YOUR BACK DO YOU HAVE OURS?

**We still have concerns in The Villages** – the eventual outcome of the ongoing IRS investigation; the desire for the creation of a resident elected Amenity Authority Committee for the Sumter Landing Community Development District residents, changes in the entertainment offerings as the Developer nears build out, to name a few. The more members the POA has, the better able it will be to help manage good results for residents if there are problems.

We are supporting you. We urge you to support us.

We put a Bulletin on almost every driveway in The Villages every month at a cost of \$80,000 per year. We believe it is important that all residents have all of the information about happenings and events in The Villages as

they make decisions on various issues. The POA has no ties or obligations to the Developer which might compromise the POA position or its advocacy of Residents' Rights.

We are making every effort to research the issues and advise you of any pertinent information which may not have been included in the various Villages media outlets. If you believe we are providing a service and you read the Bulletin, we urge you to become a POA member. (Membership form and information below – annual membership year is from January 1 through December 31.)

Paying a membership fee of \$10.00 per year will help to keep the POA financially sound and your membership numbers will increase our 'clout' if action needs to be taken. □

## Make an Investment in Your Future

### POA 2013 Membership – New / Renewal and Contribution Form

Please complete each section and return to: **The POA, P.O. Box 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158**

New     Renewal     Number of People in Household

**PLEASE PRINT!**

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(SAME LAST NAME)

NAME(S)(2) \_\_\_\_\_  
(DIFFERENT LAST NAME)

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CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

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E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

(We respect your privacy. Your E-mail address is for POA Official use ONLY)

**1. MEMBERSHIP NEW/RENEWAL:** Please enroll my POA membership for 2013 at the **Annual Rate of \$10 per household**. A check payable to POA is enclosed. Memberships are for Households and run annually from Jan 1st to Dec 31st. (check the box that applies)

I will include a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** with this form and my check. Please mail my Membership Card to me At the address above.

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

**2. ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION:** Please accept my additional contribution to the POA in the following amount:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Please indicate amount)

**3. TOTAL DUE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING FINANCIAL SUPPORT.**

Dues Paid Date \_\_\_\_\_ (Office Use Only)

## Consolidation of Districts

The Daily Sun has made several mentions, both in an article and reporting of an individual Supervisor in Districts 3 and 6, bringing up the possibility of consolidating districts in its reports on District meetings. The stated purpose was to “maintain the consistency of The Villages lifestyle”, which was not defined. We do not know for sure, but “consistency” would seem to mean no variation primarily in landscaping and maintenance throughout the districts, but the POA thinks of the Villages Lifestyle as being related to our amenity services and facilities which may not be affected by consolidating the districts. In any event, the POA has had several inquiries as to our position on the consolidation issue so we will address it.

While this appears to be a “new idea”, that does not appear to be the case. In 2009 State Representative O’Toole, presumably on behalf of the Developer, sponsored House Bill 821 which called for amendments to Florida Statute 190.012 to permit the CDDs to enforce deed restrictions. Just now coming to our attention is the fact that there were also amendments to Florida Statute 190.046 – “Termination, contraction, or expansion of district”. The latter amended language permits a district to petition to amend the boundaries of the district which exceeds the

amount of additional land previously permitted by the Statute. Additionally, it provides for a district to petition for a merger and requires that, “...the petition shall state whether a new district is to be established or whether one district shall be the surviving district.” Thus, this issue appears to be a part of the Developer’s plans as it completes build out.

As with any issue, there will be pros and cons and different opinions. The POA can see some of both, but it is way too early in the process to form an opinion as to whether or not residents would be better off as we are, or with some type of consolidation. We understand that Ms. Tutt, District staff and the residential districts Attorney are already reviewing Florida Statutes. Some of the “hurdles” which the POA believe will need to be addressed are as follows:

### QUESTIONS:

1) Would consolidation of the Districts deteriorate and/or dilute the residents’ voice in government? (Resident control is very important to the POA, but could 5 representatives do it, or do you need 50 {or 65 if commercial districts were included}? How would you determine the five supervisors?)

2) Would consolidation include the commercial districts or be confined to the residential districts?

3) What about Town of Lady Lake/Lake County residents? (They are not in a CDD.)

4) Would we all become liable for each other’s debts? (Districts north of CR 466

have a lot less infrastructure bond debt remaining.)

5) Would we all then pay the same annual CDD maintenance fee (residents south of CR 466 now pay more than twice what CDD1 or 2 pay)?

6) Would we all be assessed like the current Project Wide south of CR 466? (The POA does not believe the allocation methodology used for determining Project Wide assessments is fair.)

7) Would a large consolidated district have a hard time getting small things done for residents versus now where Districts can quickly direct the maintenance staff to take care of things?

8) How would enforcement of deed restrictions take place since most of the Districts have different deed restrictions?

9) Does the fact that residents live in three different counties impact consolidation? (Marion County is the only one that requires the CDD to maintain its own roadways.)

*(Continued on page 6)*



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## District Consolidation

(Continued from page 4)

Note: Florida Statute 190 provides that, "...The government formed by a merger involving a community development district pursuant to this section shall assume all indebtedness of, and receive title to, all property owned by the preexisting special districts, and the rights of creditors and liens upon property shall not be impaired by such merger. Any claim existing or action or proceeding pending by or against any district that is a party to the merger may be continued as if the merger had not occurred, or the surviving district may be substituted in the proceeding for the district that ceased to exist. Prior to filing the petition, the districts desiring to merge shall enter into a merger agreement and shall provide for the proper allocation of the indebtedness so assumed and the manner in which such debt shall be retired. The approval of the merger agreement and the petition by the board of supervisors of the district shall constitute consent of the landowners within the district."

There are many other unanswered questions so, as you can see, we are probably quite a ways away from seeing a formal proposal. Thus, at this point, the POA is neither for nor against "district consolidation" because we do not have a clue as to what will be proposed. □

## AAC Meeting Summary February 6, 2013

### Old Business Topics Included:

- Staff advised that a bid to will be issued for the construction of the restroom facilities and dugout modifications at the Knudson softball field.
- Staff reported that the repairs to the outside radio speakers at the Mulberry Recreation Center have been completed.
- The engineers completed their internal design plans process for the Paradise Park Master Plan, Area "A". Status will be provided at the 2/13 workshop.
- The AAC approved individual project order No. 10 (Tasks 1-4) for the Woodworking Club parking lot expansion project. The Town of Lady Lake has already approved. Kimley-Horn will provide project management services for \$33,000.

### New Business:

- Judy Glasel was appointed Architectural Review Committee alternate for the Lady Lake/Lake County portion of The Villages.

### Consent Agenda:

- The AAC approved the Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Budget Calendar
- The Committee recommended approval to "piggyback" on the SLCDD Invitation to Bid awarded to Allsolar Service Company for labor and materials to install so-

lar powered lighting in two tunnels.

- The Committee also recommended approval of the revised Architectural Review Manual for the Lady Lake/Lake County portion of The Villages.

### Reports and Input:

- A planning workshop will be held on February 13, 2013 at the Laurel Manor District Offices at 1:30 p.m.
- The new Paradise Park pickleball courts will officially open on February 18, 2013 at 11 a.m.
- The Resident Parade Committee has met with District Staff and a proposal outlining what type of parade has been submitted. The Committee is requesting an Irish Parade to occur this year at Spanish Springs Square only, on March 18, 2013 at 3:30 p.m. District Staff will be responsible for technical logistics. It was estimated that the District's portion of the parade budget will be \$10,000 - \$15,000, though some of this will be non-recurring and some purchased items will be reusable at future parades.

### Audience Comments:

An audience member requested that the restrooms/shower facilities at the La Hacienda sports pool be included in the workshop discussions. The AAC agreed to this request.

**Please go to [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org) for official minutes, agendas and meeting schedule.**

**Next Meeting - Wednesday, March 6, 1:30 P.M. at the Savannah Center.** □

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## AAC Workshop Summary

February 13, 2013

The AAC held a strategy planning workshop on February 13, 2013 to discuss several items with regard to improvements at certain older district recreational facilities and also to discuss future direction on longer range items. The purpose of meeting in a workshop is so that the committee members can actively discuss broad issues that could not be readily discussed in sufficient detail during a regular monthly Committee meeting. While no voting takes place at a workshop session, they are used to arrive at a consensus and provide direction to staff so that projects can proceed to a point where Committee action requiring a vote can then take place.

Presentation and Review of Recreation Facilities Information:

**Paradise Park** – Amber Gartner (Kimley-Horn and Associates) and Michael Pape (Michael Pape Associates) presented an overview of the Paradise Park Master Plan for Area “A”. This project is continuing through the process and the AAC will need to make a determination regarding the walking path surface (concrete or “Flexi-path”). In addition, the current restroom which was planned to be expended will likely now be converted to a storage facility and a new restroom structure will be constructed.

**Chula Vista** – the main discussion was a

request to enclose the lanai and remove the current exterior wall to create a larger meeting room at the facility. The proposal also included a movable divider wall that could divide the “new” large room into two smaller rooms when necessary. The consensus was to proceed with having plans drawn up to facilitate a more thorough review and provide a basis for a cost estimate. In addition, staff recommended that the requests for additional shaded area around the pool and additional fans in the large meeting room be included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). A further request for outside storage is included in the 2012-13 Budget.

**Tierra Del Sol** – It has previously been agreed that the current facility is too small for neighborhood meetings. The AAC is trying to determine what the right size for an expansion should be. The current proposal from staff would be to add a room capable of holding 144 chairs plus a kitchen, bathrooms and a storage room. The consensus of the Committee was to proceed with having plans drawn up for review, cost estimating and further action.

**El Santiago** – While there was agreement that the El Santiago facility is inadequate for most indoor activities, there was no consensus to expand the existing structure. Instead, the Committee directed staff to pursue the possibility of acquiring the former El Santiago restaurant building from the Developer (see related article on Page 8).

**Silver Lake** – The Staff presented the

resident concerns regarding this facility to the Committee for discussion. Recent renovation projects have significantly improved this facility. Staff agreed to work on additional projects at the facility such as better storage of puzzles and a new sound system. There are no plans at this time to expand the facility.

**Southside** – Staff was directed to proceed with creation of a plan and cost estimate to replace the structure at the pool which currently houses the restrooms and card room.

**La Hacienda Sports Pool** - The Committee agreed that the restrooms and shower area at the pool need a major renovation. Likely this will require demolition of the existing structure and construction of a new structure.

**Wi-Fi Capability Expansion** – The Committee agreed that if new facilities were constructed at Tierra Del Sol and El Santiago, inclusion of Wi-Fi would receive consideration. It was also recommended that Silver Lake be included in future Wi-Fi planning.

(Continued on page 8)

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## Workshop Summary

(Continued from page 7)

### Planning Session:

Staff presented a long range forecast of a likely scenario regarding RAD financials over the next 25 years. Even with very conservative assumptions, indications are that the amenity fund revenues will more than cover expenses and that fund balances (reserves) should remain more than adequate.

Staff was asked to provide the AAC with an historical analysis of room usage across facilities. This should help the Committee better understand the need for any future facility expansions.

The Staff was also asked to conduct a survey at the Saddlebrook Center to determine any additional space needs.

A broad discussion on infrastructure, level of amenity service, financials and overall vision was tabled and will be covered when the meeting is continued on March 13, 2013. □

## What's New at El Santiago???

For those of you who were unable to attend the February 13, 2013 Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) Workshop (see meeting summary on page 7-8), please be advised that major facility improvements seem to be headed our way. While nothing is set in concrete (no pun intended), the AAC laid the initial groundwork for some very significant construction projects. All of these projects will require further development – architectural plans, permitting, bidding, final AAC reviews and approvals, etc. As government projects, these activities when approved will take time, but we seem to be moving and headed in the right direction.

At the same meeting questions were raised regarding the El Santiago restaurant building. In a surprise announcement, District Manager Tutt advised the Committee that she and Ann Forrester, the AAC member who represents the District in which El Santiago is located, had met with a representative of the Developer who advised them that while the Developer did not have a firm plan on the use of the building, he did have three possible uses for the building.

However, he also indicated that if in fact, in light of the challenges that the District had with the El Santiago current facility, that if it would be a benefit to the residents of the community that the Developer would be open

to an acquisition of the building. He indicated that he would be open to the District moving forward and that prior to any use that he is contemplating, he would want the District to exhaust its desire one way or the other regarding the El Santiago restaurant building.

Ms. Tutt further advised the Committee that State Statutes regarding acquisitions requires that in the negotiation process each party receives a valuation on the property and that you either agree to high-low or you negotiate a figure something in between the two valuations. She further advised that the Developer has cleaned up the facility and put in improvements as far as the windows, the wood replacement, and has continued the gutting of the inside to open it up for his possible use (which would NOT include any type of restaurant).

The unanimous consensus of the Committee (they could not vote on the issue as this was a Workshop only) was that Ms. Tutt should move forward and start the process. The POA applauds the efforts of the AAC and the District Staff. These are projects that are needed and should move forward as quickly as possible. The law suit settlement funds that have been received (and will continue to be received though 2020) by the VCCDD/AAC were provided in part because there were insufficient renewal and replacement (R&R) funds included in the amenity transfer transactions. Some of the settlement funds were previously used to pay off the Paradise Center refurbishment bonds. □



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## Golf Cart Crashes With Injuries

Recent reports (**ONLY THOSE THAT INVOLVED EJECTION, FALLING OUT OF THE GOLF CART, AND/OR INJURIES are provided**) that we have received from Village residents, Public Safety, and area law enforcement. (Note: we cannot guarantee that the information we receive is completely accurate about all the details.)

### USE OF SEAT BELTS WILL KEEP YOU IN YOUR CART!

**January 21, 2013:** Vehicle 1 – a 2004 EZGo golf cart (V-1) was properly parked in a parking space at 2484 O'Dell Circle. As the driver of the golf cart began to back out of the space, a pedestrian walked into the golf cart's path causing it to strike the pedestrian. The pedestrian fell to the ground and sustained a head injury and was taken to The Villages Regional Hospital. The officer was unable to determine fault and no citations were issued.

**January 22, 2013:** Both Vehicle 1 – a 2003 Buick (V-1) and Vehicle 2 - a 2008 Yamaha golf cart (V-2) were traveling southbound on Morse Boulevard north of Carrera Drive. The Buick was traveling in the southbound lane designated for vehicular traffic while the golf cart was traveling southbound in the golf cart lane. The operator of the Buick intended to make a right hand turn into the postal station on the west side of Morse Boulevard and failed to ob-

serve the golf cart traveling to her right. The Buick pulled in front of the golf cart causing a collision. After impact the golf cart rolled onto its side causing moderate damage. The driver of the Buick stated that she must not have seen the golf cart before turning in front of it. She was issued a Uniform Traffic Citation for Failure to Yield the Right-of-Way. Both the driver of the golf cart and his passenger were transported to The Villages Hospital for treatment of injuries sustained during the collision

**February 8, 2013:** Vehicle 1 – an EZGO golf cart – (V-1) had been traveling eastbound on Woodbridge Drive passing Davenport Drive. The driver intended to turn into the postal station located at the northeast corner of Woodbridge Drive and Davenport drive. The golf cart operator made a wide turn into the parking lot and ultimately jumped the curb and struck a tree head-on.. The driver refused EMS and was transported home by a Deputy Sheriff as her golf cart had to be towed.

**February 8, 2013:** Vehicle 1 – a 2000 Yamaha golf cart (V-1) had been traveling on the golf cart path which runs adjacent to the roundabout of Morse Boulevard and El Camino Real. The golf cart came to a stop at the stop sign and was awaiting an opportunity to cross North Morse Boulevard. Vehicle 2 – a 2007 Lexus (V-2) – had been traveling in the inside lane of the roundabout and intended to exit the roundabout to travel northbound on Morse Boulevard towards US Highway 441. The golf cart pulled out onto

Morse Boulevard and struck the Lexus as it exited the roundabout. The golf cart sustained damage to the driver's side front while the Lexus sustained damage to the passenger's side front and down the passenger's side doors. A witness (W-1) who had been behind the Lexus stated that the golf cart had been stopped on the golf cart path, then pulled out to cross and struck the Lexus. The driver of the golf cart was determined to have violated the right of way of the Lexus and was issued a Uniform Traffic Citation for violation of right-of-way at an intersection. The driver of the golf cart was checked by EMS at the scene, but refused transport to a hospital.

**February 9, 2013:** The driver of Vehicle 2 – a 2011 EZGO (V-2) was traveling north on Pelican Path and began to slow down to make a left turn onto Southport Street. The driver stated she noticed Vehicle 1 – a Honda Odyssey (V-1) – backing out into the intersection of Pelican Path from Southport Street, attempting to turn around. The driver of the golf cart said she stopped the golf cart just before she could complete her left turn because she thought the Honda driver did not see her waiting to make a left turn – before she could put her golf cart in reverse, the Honda made contact with the front side of the golf cart which needed to be towed. The driver of the Honda told the officer she was just leaving from a garage sale and that the street was very crowded. The driver of the Honda was cited for improper backing. Fortunately, there were no injuries. □



**TIM BABIARZ**  
Lawyer

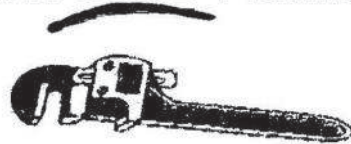
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## CDD 5 Supervisor Appointment “Do-Over”

As we mentioned in the Bulletin last month, we were disappointed that at its December Board meeting, a CDD5 Board member resigned and was immediately replaced by the only person in CDD5 who knew there was going to be an opening on the Board. While it was disappointing to see a Board act in a way that was designed to preclude any other resident from being considered for the position, apparently it was also done in a way not permitted by Florida Statute (Chapter 190).

At the December meeting, Supervisor Diane Spencer presented her letter of resignation and then made the motion to nominate Jerry Knoll to serve the remaining two years of her term. Her motion was seconded and the four members of the board present (Supervisor Ferlisi was out of town), including Ms. Spencer voted to approve. According to a February 16<sup>th</sup> Daily Sun report of the CDD5 February Board meeting, “Legal counsel Valerie Fuchs informed the CDD 5

board that she concluded the appointment of Jerry Knoll to replace Diane Spencer was improper.” The Daily Sun article went on to report that Ms. Fuchs also told the Board that “... the statute says there must be a vacancy before another supervisor is appointed. Because Ms. Spencer voted as a supervisor for the appointment, there was not a vacancy on the board.”

While Supervisor Jerry Ferlisi recommended that the board now allow any interested CDD5 residents to be considered for the open seat, Supervisor Wildzunas and Vice Chairman Kadow voted in favor of appointing Mr. Knoll (Chairman Martin was absent from the meeting). Following the vote to appoint Knoll, Supervisor Ferlisi motioned to adopt a formal process of notifying District residents in the case of a future vacancy on the board to allow any interested residents to be considered for the position. Supervisor Ferlisi’s proposal was unanimously approved by the CDD5 Board.

The POA encourages the other CDD boards to adopt a proposal similar to Supervisor Ferlisi’s. If our CDD Boards are to be representative of their residents, then all residents should have a fair and equal opportunity to be considered for board positions. □

## Annual Relay For Life of The Villages of Hope Local Survivors Join American Cancer Society To Celebrate a World With More Birthdays

Help Paint the County Purple Honors Local Survivors and Remembers Those Lost to Cancer. A birthday is a special day on the calendar for just about anybody—but it’s a particularly meaningful milestone to cancer survivors and their families and caregivers. The American Cancer Society’s Relay For Life of The Villages of Hope offers survivors and their loved ones a chance to celebrate all the additional candles on their cakes since diagnosis. The annual, overnight event, held at **The Wildwood Community Center on Friday, April 5, 2013**, is also a way for the community to honor and celebrate the lives of local cancer survivors; and it reminds us that cancer doesn’t sleep, and neither will we until we find the cure. □

## Cancer doesn’t define you. Survival does.

Ocala Oncology has been focused on bringing ground-breaking cancer research to The Villages since 1991. This means more proven treatments using evidence based guidelines so you can fight the battle and win.

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From left to right : Ketan Doshi, MD, Craig H. Reynolds, MD, Rama Balaraman, MD, Samuel E. Myrick, MD, Thomas H. Cartwright, MD, Maury B. Berger, MD

## A “Walk Thru” The District Website You Will Be Amazed At What You Can Find

Pull Out  
Pages 11-14

The POA frequently receives questions regarding a resident’s district, how to find out when the District Boards meet, if a rumor about a break-in is true, etc., so we invited Carrie Duckett, VCDD Manager of Customer and Support Services who oversees the VCDD web site, to do a presentation on it at our January POA Membership meeting. In order to assist residents who were not there for the presentation we are going to walk you through the web site using this POA Bulletin article and your computer.

First, go to the site – [www.districtgov.org](http://www.districtgov.org) (You can find it on the back of your ID card if you forget it.) Look at the links across the top of the home page. The home link will always bring you back to this page.

Your District link will have general information about each district. Once you have clicked on this link, just click on one of the districts that is listed. It will tell you about Board meeting information, the adopted budget, and the capital improvement plan. On the right hand side of the district page you can find a list of your District Supervisors along with their contact information (you can even e-mail all of them at one time or you can e-mail them individually and you can even telephone them). You can click on agendas and minutes and see all of the past agendas and minutes for that District’s meet-

ings. On the agendas you will note that some of the item numbers are in color – click on that number and it will produce the document that the Supervisors will be looking at for that topic, so it is a good idea to review the agenda before the scheduled meeting (the agendas are usually posted on the internet the Monday prior to the meeting date) so you can plan to attend if there is something on the agenda that interests you. You can click on your District’s operating procedures if they interest you or your District map. District facts, such as when it was established, how many total acres are in the district, how many villa homesites, premier homesites, etc. are

accessible here as well. WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED WITH “DISTRICTS” CLICK ON “HOME” ON THE TOP BAR. The next link is Departments. Each department in the District has its own home page (Administration, Budget, Community Standards, Community Watch, Customer Service Center, District Clerk, District Property Management, Finance, Golf, Human Resources, Public Safety, Purchasing, Recreation and

(Continued on page 12)

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## A “Walk Thru” The District Website You Will Be Amazed At What You Can Find

*(Continued from page 11)*

Utilities) and each of these has multiple links in the left hand column. For example, click on Community Standards and you will be able to find your deed restrictions by going to the last link on the left side of the page. Just click on that link, and then click on the County you live in, the District you live in and then the Unit or Villa name. Just click on it and you will have your Declaration of Restrictions, which you can print if you wish. (If you do not know your Unit number, it is the first number listed on the front of your Villages ID card.) Under Community Standards there is also a link identified as Forms and Publications, which you can click on if you wish to modify anything on the OUTSIDE of your home. You will find a link there for the Home Property Alteration Application Form which you can complete and print. Another Department example is

Recreation. Click on this and you can see all of the things you can find on this site on the links listed on the left hand side. You can even request your guest IDs on line. (You will still have to pick them up at a Recreation Center.) The monthly calendar has all of the activities going on at the recreation centers for the month. There is a link identifying which pools have an aquatic access lift and many other links. WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED WITH “DEPARTMENTS”, CLICK ON “HOME” ON THE TOP BAR.

The next link on the top bar is How Do I? These are questions which the District receives on a regular basis as well as the answers to those questions, such as how do I apply for a job with the VCDD? CLICK ON HOME AND GO TO THE NEXT LINK.

The next link is Contact Us. This contains a list of every District Department as well as a contact person for each Department, in-

cluding their mailing address, e-mail address and telephone number. CLICK ON HOME AND GO TO THE NEXT LINK The link called Useful Links contains information on such things as County Government offices and email addresses. CLICK ON HOME...

The last link on the top bar is FAQ and covers many common questions about Community Development Districts (CDDs).

The Home Page itself, in addition to the links described above that are found on the horizontal bar at the top of the page, has in the left hand column - “Quick Links” - which are also very helpful. (What’s Happening, Amenity Authority Committee, Pay Utility Bills, Pay CSU Utility Bill Only, Sanitation Information, New Utility Bill, Our Place, IRS Updates, CDD Orientations, Maps, Guest ID Card Services, Facility Rental, Resident ID Card Information, Or-

*(Continued on page 13)*



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## A “Walk Thru” The District Website You Will Be Amazed At What You Can Find

(Continued from page 12)

ganizational Chart, Employment Opportunities, Resident Academy, Acronyms, Site Map, Street Listing, Village Neighborhoods, Our Mission, Americans with Disabilities Act, Golf carts vs. gate arms, and Bond interest refund procedures. They contain very useful information. For example under What’s Happening, you will find information on the Paradise Park Project and the proposed Recreation Centers Improvement Project. There is even an update on each of the Districts and in Lady Lake/Lake County, so you can find out information that is directly related to your Village. You can also use the links to find out what district you live in. You can click on ‘Village Neighborhoods’, which is broken out first by County and then by Village, so scroll down until you find the name of the Village where your home is located, or you can click on ‘Street Listing’. The streets are listed in alphabetical order and will identify the District in which it is located.

The center of the Home Page contains “News and Information” which is updated every day. It is information on events happening ‘right now’. For example, recently there were e-mail ‘rumors’ circulating that there had been attempted ATM thefts. The District contacted the Sumter County Sher-

iff’s Office and were advised that there had been no reports of any such activities. So, to get that word out the District put that information up on the web site so that residents could find the accurate information rather than just have info from the e-mails that float around. Another recent example was the posting of information from the Sumter County Health Department regarding the flu season.

Near the bottom of the left hand column – the “Quick Links” - there is a link entitled Questions, Comments, Contact Us. A lot of questions and suggestions that you have, such as the hedges on my street need to be trimmed, can be addressed here. While you are always welcome to attend your District meeting and address the issue, a quicker way to have this problem addressed is to click on this link and then the category, for example,

landscaping, maintenance, general, etc., and put your information in. You do not need to include your name. However, if you provide your e-mail address or telephone number, the District will respond to you within 48 hours.

Below that link there is one entitled “Sign Up For E-Mail Notification”. This is the way to have the District contact you via your e-mail, based on the information that you select. You provide your name and e-mail address and then choose the specific Newsletter Notification that you want to know about. Examples include, your monthly district meeting notice and agenda link, precautionary water boiling notices, public safety training opportunities, recreation leagues, maintenance closures, golf course and street closures, and recreation center or

(Continued on page 14)

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(Continued from page 13)

pool closings. Last, but not least you will see the ‘monthly meeting calendar’ at the top of the right hand calendar. It identifies the time and location of all of the scheduled District government meetings.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION:

1) Is there any place on the web site on how you get from one place to another such as new golf courses for new residents? A) Go to the home page and click on “Maps”. Probably the recreation map is the one that you will find most useful. It has the main roads as well as every recreation center, and every pool.

2) Is there a map for the cart paths on the web site? A) No, not at this time. There is a

map that was made by the Developer. Once the Developer puts it on their web site we will have a link to it. It has not happened yet, but it is in the works.

Audience Suggestion – Try the web site [cartthevillages.com](http://cartthevillages.com).

3) You keep mentioning the Recreation News. Is there any reason why the recreation centers and their activities are not listed in alphabetical order? A) It is actually done by region and they have tried it different ways, but are hoping that residents would go to their region and then go from there. (An afterthought which the POA has passed on to Pam Henry in the Recreation Department and asked that she share with staff – residents usually know where things are in ‘their region’, but when they want to go to an activity at a recreation center or are assigned to an executive course that is not in their region they have to go page by page through the recreation news to find it. Hopefully, out of 60 pages to work with, an index could be put on page 2 listing the page number for each recreation center and executive golf course.) □

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- Judy, Village of Virginia Trace

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## Tax Refund Identity Theft

Last year, Seniors Vs Crime saw an alarming rise in reported tax refund scams in our area. The U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration reported that Florida has the highest rate of stolen identity tax refund fraud in the nation.

In spite of that bit of ‘gloom and doom’, the ID thefts weren’t connected to electronic filing (e-filing) of tax returns per se. Security-wise, the system whereby taxpayers send the IRS their returns seems to work quite well. The real problem is what someone **pretending to be YOU** sends to the IRS!

Here's how this scam works. A crook somehow gets your personal information. They then file a fake tax return in your name. The scammers either use your income data to claim your refund OR (more common) they enter fictitious data that produces a sizeable refund for them. Either way, the IRS thinks it's you! When you file your real return, the

IRS says, "Whoa! We've already processed your return and sent you your refund." Lucky You! - Now you get to spend all your upcoming free time convincing Uncle Sam that the both of you are tax fraud victims. With a lot of luck and hard work, you may even (eventually) get your refund.

### Can you stop this from happening to you?

Unfortunately, NO! If they have your identity data, they can file a tax return in your name. One thing you can do to beat them at their nefarious ID theft game is to file your real tax return early, before a crook files a fake one in your name. If you suspect that your personal data has been compromised, now or any time, it's a good idea to let the IRS know.

You should call the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit at 1-800-908-4490 or send in the IRS Identity Theft Affidavit, Form 14039. With this information, the IRS can mark you as a potential identity theft victim and flag your tax account for any questionable activity. That way the IRS can cor-

respond with you before further processing the tax return to make sure the agency will be sending your refund to you and only you.

### What can you do if it does happens to you?

Think about this - if the scammers have enough information to file a tax return in your name, they have enough info to do all sorts of “bad” things to your credit and finances. You need to be proactive in cutting them off at the pass. As far as your tax return goes, if you receive a notice from the IRS concerning multiple filings of your return, **respond immediately**. The same applies if the electronic filing of your tax return is rejected because “the system” says your SSAN has already filed a tax return. If you believe someone may have used your SSAN fraudulently, notify the IRS immediately by responding to the

*(Continued on page 16)*

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# Refund Identity Theft

(Continued from page 15)

name and number printed on the notice or letter you receive. Then, fill out the IRS Identity Theft Affidavit, Form 14039, found online at [irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f14039.pdf](http://irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f14039.pdf).

Remember, no one will watch out for your interests better than **YOU**. When in doubt as to what you can do to protect your interests, contact your nearest Seniors vs Crime office in The Villages for assistance (no charge). They can be reached in Marion county at 352-753-7775 or in Lake-Sumter counties at 352-689-4600, Extension 4606. □



# Parking in the Downtown Squares

We have been advised by the District that, “Both the Village Center and Sumter Landing Community Development District have adopted rules regarding parking within each respective downtown area. The rules state that, ‘No person may leave, stand or park any motor vehicle or golf cart on any District property other than in designated parking areas without the approval of the District Manager.’ The sidewalks and landscaped areas in the downtown areas do not serve as designated parking areas and **enforcement of parking restrictions in these undesignated areas will begin to take place.** District staff works hard to be good stewards of the infrastructure in the community and build upon the high level of standards and quality that have been set forth and we hope you will continue to do the same.” □

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Use of Settlement Funds



We have read the settlement details and understand that certain people in the POA achieved this - it seems against all odds. Are we right in thinking that this settlement was made to quiet all the failings of the Developer in matters of maintenance for the previous years he had that responsibility, and did not carry them out or put money aside for it?

The more we read and consider the current situation, it seems that the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) is not meeting the requirements of the Judgment. The section to "Provide Appropriate Levels of Amenities" is not being addressed in our area South of the Mail Station and 466. I believe we are now in the 4th year of receiving settlement funds and I calculate the money is depreciating at a rate of at least 3% per year, the difference between the interest rate they get and the cost of building costs increasing every

year.

Pauline Houghton

**Editor's Note:** Please review the article summarizing the discussions at the recent AAC workshop on pages 7 and 8. You are correct that monies were secured in the hopes of providing funds to update and renovate the older facilities – the AAC has been working diligently for the last four years evaluating every aspect of the amenity system as well as developing a short range capital improvement program which is already in progress. They are now in a position to identify major refurbishments and expansions and have just completed the future financial forecast which indicates that monies are available to do these improvements and hence they are moving forward. □

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Dangerous Intersection

Per our phone conversation, please enter the following notice in the next POA bulletin:

There will be a discussion on installing a Traffic Light at the Glenbrook Gate, intersection of Tally Ridge & Buena Vista Blvd. (south) at the Sumter County Board of Commissioners Meeting - **March 26, 2013, 5:00 PM** at the **Colony Cottage Rec. Ct. 510 Colony Blvd.**, (near Morse Blvd & 466A).

**All residents in Polo Ridge, Glenbrook, Summerhill and all other residents who travel this area are urged to attend this important meeting for a show of strength and concern for the safety of our residents.**

There have been many near misses on a daily basis and several accidents at this intersection, the most recent on January 25th, in which two people were transported to the hospital.

**WE NEED AS MANY RESIDENTS AS POSSIBLE TO ATTEND THIS MEETING.**

Louis D. Verrecchia □

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### Executive Golf Trail Fees

When renewing my trail fee recently, I was asked, "For you and your wife?" I answered, "Yes." Then I asked, "Does this mean that, if my son were to visit, he would not be allowed to ride in my golf cart with me without paying?" The answer: "Yes, it does - this is only for you and your wife."

What an unpleasant surprise THIS is!! Does such a ruling mean that the course/trail is getting more use if my son is riding with me, rather than my wife? If not, what is the justification for such a rule? I play regularly with a partner; we use my golf cart one day, and his the next. If this ruling is enforced, I'd have to pay when riding in his cart, and vice versa!! I can only wonder how many residents are aware of such a regulation. Can you check this out, and give me some justification for such a ridiculous ruling? C. Buck

Editor's Note: The trail fees collected by the VCCDD and SLCCDD are for the individual (the resident). They are not for a specific cart. If the individual has paid their annual trail fee, they can ride on the course in any cart, either as the driver or the passenger. If they have not paid the annual fee, they must walk or pay a daily trail fee each time they play. Guests/visitors must also pay a daily trail fee if they prefer to ride in a cart rather than walk. □

### Vandalism in The Villages

I am a concerned citizen of The Villages. I was informed by a friend that while they were on a trip with AAA & their vehicle was parked behind the AAA Office in Sumter Landing overnight, they came home to SMASHED WINDSHIELDS on their vehicles. I have seen nothing in the local newspaper and was wondering why not, as it is a concern to have safe parking while we venture out of The Villages on day or overnight excursions. I would appreciate knowing if you have any information on that as this matter is a concern of The Community Watch and also of the Sumter County Sheriff's Department. I would appreciate seeing some information in THE POA BULLETIN regarding this matter as there seems to be a lot of talk but no action. Thank you. P. McDonough

(Continued on page 19)

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## Letter to the Editor:

**Vandalism***(Continued from page 18)*

**Editor's Note:** We contacted Lt. Wolfe, Sumter County Sheriff's Department and copied Scott Wilder, Head of Community Watch on Feb 16<sup>th</sup> and received the following response on Feb 18<sup>th</sup> from Lt. Wolfe: "There was a criminal mischief case on the Landing behind the AAA office. Five vehicles were damaged, four vehicles had the rear window damaged and one had a broken windshield. The victims were on a cruise and upon their return a deputy met them at their damaged vehicles to further assist them."

So, it is not a rumor and yes, we believe it would be beneficial for residents to be aware of such incidents so they would be less likely to leave their automobiles overnight in an unsecured parking lot. An aside, the Feb 19<sup>th</sup> edition of the Daily Sun (the incident occurred on Jan 29<sup>th</sup>) reported this incident. The Villages is many things, but it is not immune to occasional criminal mischief and, while Community Watch reported this incident to the Sheriff's Department at 1:23 a.m., they cannot be everywhere to prevent these kinds of events from occurring. □



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## Letter to the Editor:

**Air Moss in Oak Trees**

I am concerned that the live oak trees on Buena Vista between Old Mill Run and Stillwater Trail are being damaged by excess Spanish moss. Although moss is a live plant, the trees are definitely distressed and in some cases – dying. This area was one of the most attractive, peaceful of The Villages just a year ago. If the trees are allowed to die it'll be just another space on the boulevard. J. Fleming

**Editor's Note:** We contacted Janet Tutt, District Manager. She advised that Property Management is aware and is taking action to address the situation. We also received an email from Sam Wartinbee, District Property Manager, who states that they will be testing a copper based solution on a few trees to see how effective it will be on the Air Moss and then budget for the remainder over the next two or three years depending on the cost. □



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**Fitness Challenge****Back is Best**

By Judi Da Costa, Personal Trainer  
[exercise2gether@aol.com](mailto:exercise2gether@aol.com)

I don't think there are many people who have escaped some kind of back pain over time and the importance of keeping your back healthy is so vital to your well-being. Walking is great but also strength training compliments that. This month's exercise is a Reverse Fly. Sit on a straight backed chair. Take weights or soup cans (whatever you have) one weight in each hand. Lean forward and be looking down. You begin with the weights at your side. Take your arms out wide to the side no higher than shoulder height, kind of like an airplane with wings and then bring the arms slowly down. If doing both arms together is too hard, alternate. Start with one or two reps and build up until you can do 10. □

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## Our Gardening Column:

# March Madness

by Anne Lambrecht, Master Gardener  
annegarden@embarqmail.com

Now is the time for all good men (and women) to come to the aid of their gardens. It's March Plant Festival time. Here is a listing of places where you can purchase all kinds of plants for your garden:

March 6 – May 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival. Lake Buena Vista – disneyworld.disney.go.com

March 9 – 9:00 to 4:00 – Spring Obsession. Natives, fruit and vegetable plants, art for the garden, and Free lectures. Munn Park, corner of Main and Kentucky Ave, Lakeland <http://springobsession.org>

March 9/10 – 9:00 to 4:00 – Marion County Master Gardener Spring Festival. Great selection, prices. Admission \$1. No pets. Ag Center, 2232 NE Jacksonville Rd, Ocala. 352-671-8400

March 16/17 – 9:00 to 5:00 – Spring Plant Sale. Over 50 growers, experts. Free Admission. Bring a wagon. Leu Gardens, 1920 N Forest Ave, Orlando. 407-246-2620,

[www.leugardens.org](http://www.leugardens.org)

March 23 – 9:00 to 1:00 – Lake County Master Gardener's Spring Plant Sale. Bargain prices, big selection. Bring a wagon or cart. Tour Discovery Gardens. Free. Ag Center, 1951 Woodlea Rd, Tavares 352-343-4101.

March 23 – 9:00 to 3:00 – Florida Wildflower & Garden Festival. Speakers, demos, plants, gardening supplies, kids' art zone, music, more. Free admission, parking. W. Indiana Ave, Deland. [floridawildflowerfestival.com](http://floridawildflowerfestival.com)

March 23/24 – 9:00 to 5:00 – Spring Garden Festival. Huge selection of plants, landscape displays, garden accessories, arts & crafts, educational exhibits, and food. Butterfly conservatory, children's activities, live entertainment, auctions. Free parking. Admission \$8. Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, 4700 SW 58<sup>th</sup> Dr, Gainesville. 352-372-4981 [www.kanapaha.org](http://www.kanapaha.org)

April 5/7 – Tropiflora's Spring Festival. Bamboo, bougainvillea, crotons, aroids, ferns, orchids, succulents, shrubs, annuals, fruit trees, and palms. Great variety, prices. Food and music. Free parking and admission. 3530 Tallevast Rd, Sarasota. 941-351-2267 [tropiflora.com](http://tropiflora.com).

These festivals are all within a couple of hours driving time and well worth it.

And now that you have all these plants, what should you do?

Amend your soil. Our sandy-clay soil is pretty bad and needs some amending in order for it to retain moisture and add nutrition to your plant's root system. The easiest way to do this is to throw some oak leaves into the mix and add some Black Kow manure either into the mix or top dress after planting. If you use containers, refresh the soil in them using a good basic potting mix like Jungle Growth or Miracle Grow. Healthy soil makes for healthy plants which are disease and insect free.

Trim back dead or leggy growth from winter freezes or after flowering has occurred and cut 1/4" above a node (where the leaves would come out) at a 45 degree angle on the green part. Now is the time to trim crape myrtles: remove seed pods and do not cut more stem than a pencil thick. Remember--do not commit crape "murder" by hacking off evenly at the top or cutting down too far. This causes the plant to become weak and require much more water than usual. Use a good basic all-purpose, slow release fertilizer, preferably with minor elements including manganese, copper, zinc, iron. Try to get a low middle number, phosphorus, of which our soil has plenty. Fertilize palms now using a palm specific fertilizer. How-

(Continued on page 21)



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## March Madness

(Continued from page 20)

ever, if palms are near turf, the turf fertilizer should be enough. Fertilize citrus now with citrus fertilizer. Fertilize acid lovers like azaleas and camellias with acidic fertilizer.

Refresh your mulch with pine needles, pine bark. The pine adds acid back into the soil. Rocks are not mulch but many people prefer rocks.

Attract wildlife: if you want birds and butterflies to visit, do not use insecticides and other chemicals in your garden. Try a bird bath this year.

Aphids will show up on new growth. Use insecticidal soap. Horticultural spray under the "Safer" brand can be found in the big store. Or you can make your own: in a water-filled spray bottle put 1 Tablespoon non-antibacterial, non-grease soap and 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil. Mix and spray both tops and bottoms and into the ground. Repeat every week (to check the lifecycle).

Keep Calm and Plant On.

We recently had our pond cleaned so now the Husband is fussing at me about not planting anything around or in the pond. He wants to be able to see it and threatens to throw Round Up on any plant blocking his vision. I still plan to plant all around and in the pond so I put a pathetic little chair for him right up next the edge so that he can see. □

## The Blue Fire Hydrant Markers

### A Message from Chief Tucker

"Put the wet stuff on the red stuff!" It was something I continually heard my first fire instructor yelling at me when I entered the burn building during my basic firefighter training in 1985. At that point Chief James was one of the most intimidating men I had ever experienced. He was larger than life and tough as nails. On the other hand I was an 18 year old kid who had just figured out that I was not as invincible as I believed I was on the first day at the academy. Putting the wet stuff on the red stuff has been at the heart of the American fire service since Benjamin Franklin formed the first fire brigade. While it sounds like a simple thing to do, the reality is that the times have changed and there are new and ever-evolving variables that make responding to fire different than in Father Ben's day.

When you talk to almost anyone in society they will quickly acknowledge that the world around is different than it used to be. We are now impacted by things that are the result of evolving and changing technologies. Some of these have made our lives easier, but others have made things much more complex. Trips that used to take months can now be accomplished in hours. The advancement of email

has made it highly undesirable to take three or four days to actually mail something to someone. I regularly hear people refer to sending a package to a friend as using "snail mail."

The American fire service is known for being highly resistant to change. We work in an environment that likes the tried and true procedures, practices, and tools that have been proven to work. Whenever a new piece of equipment comes out it is met with a high degree of skepticism. After all, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." Well, times are changing again in the fire service and technology is at the heart of it. This new technology is proving itself to be valuable and solid. We are beginning to see technologies that will help us respond to and manage emergencies quicker and more effectively.

(Continued on page 22)

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## Blue Fire Hydrant

(Continued from page 21)

One of these new technologies is the mobile data terminal (aka MDT.) The MDT has been used by law enforcement officers for years and has proven valuable time and again. Very recently the Villages Public Safety Department installed MDT units in all of the emergency response apparatus. The MDT allows firefighters responding to emergencies to gain access to fire hydrant locations, hazardous conditions inside of buildings, and building schematics just to name a few functions.

Traditionally, firefighters have relied upon memory, paper maps, and **blue hydrant markers** to locate fire hydrants as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, each of these tools has proven to be limited in their effectiveness. Villages Public Safety has spent many years and a lot of personnel hours in placing hydrant markers throughout the community to help locate fire hydrants. Unfortunately, a variety of factors negatively impact the markers. On many occasions we are required to replace the markers repeatedly because the markers get run over by cars and become dislodged. Others times it can be because the pavement simply broke loose where the

marker was placed. We have even had instances where the marker became dislodged because of vehicular traffic only to be bounced down the road and re-adhered in a location where no hydrant exists.

The MDT units can provide the emergency responders and dispatchers with a visual map and physical address of the home and where fire hydrants are located as the crews begin to respond to the emergency. This tool also insures that the most up to date working status of the fire hydrant can be communicated to the responders quickly. In the event a fire hydrant is out of service for some reason, the utilities department can change the status of the hydrant to "out of service" and crews will immediately know to locate the next closest fire hydrant without extensive delay. When that same hydrant is placed back "in service" its status is made known to responders immediately as well.

The MDT units also allow firefighters to quickly see floor plans of buildings. These

floor plans are updated as the fire inspectors complete the annual fire inspection, and emergency responders can visualize the most current information about the building faster than ever. This also allows emergency crews to access a variety of visual maps that can be used to mitigate other types of emergencies.

Technology has made the world around us much smaller. It has also allowed us to respond to emergencies quicker and with increased effectiveness. There are still some things that will never change though. We still put the wet stuff on the red stuff. I think that's an axiom that will never change, but we now do it better than we did before. I'm also not nearly as terrified of Chief James, but he definitely made an impact on me. Until next time, BE SAFE! □



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