

# The POA Bulletin

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The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

Issue 39.06

Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

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

June, 2013

## Cheers To The Developer For His Decision To Expand The Church On The Square On HIS Dime!!

### A little history....

The Developer's initial filing of his plans for Lake Sumter Landing in 2003 (when there were about 40,000 residents) included a 40,000 square foot building and 15 acres of land for a 'Convention/Performing Arts Building' (CPAB). He had the vision to see the need for this type of facility in his community. However, he later amended those plans and eliminated the CPAB.

At the February, 2010 Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) meeting, when they were discussing the inadequacy of the Savannah Center being used for this purpose, Committee members requested District Staff communicate with the Developer to inquire if any plans existed to construct a performing arts center (PAC). At a subsequent AAC meeting, Mr. Moyer, who is the Vice-President for Development of The Villages of Lake-Sumter, Inc., as well as a member of the AAC, reported to the AAC that over a period of years The Villages has researched the possibility of building a PAC by reviewing other PACs in the surrounding area. During that review two items were obvious, the structure itself is costly but more importantly, the on-going operation and maintenance costs of a PAC is beyond the scope of The Villages. Mr. Moyer stated, if a PAC were to be addressed in the area, it would need to be addressed by general purpose government as possibly a tri-county project, because a PAC would require some support from general tax revenues, which is typical. For those reasons The Villages has no plans to proceed with a PAC.

Later that year Mr. Morse, in his October 5, 2010 letter to the AAC/VCCDD, acknowl-

edged that he had observed this increasing interest. In that letter he proposed the conversion of the Church on the Square to a PAC. His proposal was that Abundant Life Ministries and the Developer would donate the Church property and the adjoining vacant land to the VCCDD on behalf of the SLCCDD and the residents south of CR 466, if the residents north of CR 466 would use their amenity funds to pay for the renovation of the Church and construction of the Performing Arts Center (estimated to be approximately \$4.4M, plus the costs that were not estimated that would need to be incurred to bring the Church into compliance with the American Disabilities Act standards).

While it appeared that the AAC's overwhelming consensus was that residents truly appreciated the Developer's generous offer to try and help solve the problem, the Committee's decision was that the Church proposal did not work for a number of reasons, the main ones being:

- the lack of equity of financing in that the residents south of CR 466 would not have to expend any of their amenity fees, while the funding would come solely from the use of amenity fees of residents north of CR 466;
- the recommendation by the Developer's representative on the AAC that the AAC use their lawsuit settlement funds for this purpose even though these funds had been received for the purpose of renewal and replacement reserves and services for the facilities and residents north of CR 466 – not to build new amenities;
- adequacy of seating as the proposal only adds about 200 more seats than were presently provided in the Savannah Center;
- loss of the facility as a church;
- lack of adequate parking facilities; and

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Can Villagers Repaint Their House Bright Purple??

In years past and to some extent today, if you purchased a lot and built a new home in The Villages, you were provided with a choice of colors that could be used on the exterior of your home. Years later when it comes time to repaint, most residents choose the original colors, but that is not always the case. While typical deed restriction language in The Villages includes wording that states all exterior alterations require the approval of the Architectural Review Committee (ARC), no one actually goes to the ARC for repainting approval and there has never been any enforcement of this approval requirement when it comes to repainting. This has worked

*(Continued on page 2)*

**Tuesday, June 18, 2013**

**POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**Third Tuesday of the Month – 7:00 PM**

**Laurel Manor Recreation Center**

**TURF TALK**

**Presented by Eric VanGorder**

**Executive Golf Course**

**VCDD Maintenance Director**

**Audio and Visual in Overflow Room**

**OLLIE'S FROZEN CUSTARD SUNDAES**

**FOR ALL AFTER THE MEETING**

**All Residents Welcome - Come and Join Us!**

## Cheers for Developer

(Continued from page 1)

- the belief that the AAC should not get involved in the entertainment business.

**Two and a Half Years Later – May, 2013** – the Developer announces that, “Another project that is coming up that I want to share with you guys is that we are going to be doing a special project - it’s sort of still in the drawing phases... but we are going to be doing an expansion on the Church in the Square. There is sort of an artist’s rendering of what the outside will look like...”

“Here’s what we know: the Church will be closed in August and it will take about a year to get it completed and we are real excited about expanding the entertainment offerings we have for you in The Villages. Here’s what we don’t know: We don’t know the details of how the inside is going to finish out... Therefore, we don’t know completely how it is going to be programmed yet. We can assure you that you will have some of the same things you have now, but we really don’t know exactly how the programming is going to work going forward.”

The POA applauds the Developer for presenting this new approach to the conversion of the Church, as it addresses several of the concerns which were expressed by the AAC in 2010 leading them to deny the proposal.

Assuming the Church will still include at least some Sunday services, the remaining concerns expressed in 2010 that were not addressed in the Developer’s presentation were how to handle the need for more parking in the area and that for a community of over 100,000 the facility should be a larger venue. Maybe we will get another surprise and find out that he is constructing a two or three story parking garage in the area behind the Church – and that they have figured out a way to increase the seating capacity to 1,200 – 1,500. Wouldn’t that be great? □

The POA Bulletin is published monthly by the Property Owners’ Association of The Villages, Inc. Articles represent the opinion of the POA or the writer, and Letters to the Editor postings represent the opinions of the writers. Care is taken to ensure that facts reported herein are true and accurate to the best knowledge of the POA and are taken from reliable sources.

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## Repaint Bright Purple?

(Continued from page 1)

well for many years, except for a small number of homes that were repainted with exterior colors that neighbors found out of character for the neighborhood. Ask yourself, how you would react if your next door neighbor painted the exterior of their home a bright purple (or pink, or Jamaican blue, or ?), maybe just because it was their favorite color. For example, would you be concerned about its impact on the resale value of **your** home?

The Developer, the CDD Supervisors and many residents have made it very clear they have a strong desire to maintain the “aesthetics” of The Villages. While the use by residents of exterior colors when repainting their homes with colors which do not fit the “aesthetically” chosen colors of the Developer are rare – at least right now – it is likely that the vast majority of residents would not want the home next door painted purple or with stripes or anything else out of the ordinary that that particular homeowner preferred.

There is growing resident interest to interpret the language in our deed restrictions literally so as to require exterior repaint colors to be approved by the ARC, just as you do for any other alterations to the exterior of your home or lot. The result is that resident groups are strongly urging the CDD Boards to take action. In the current environment, once a home has been repainted a color that would not have been permitted originally, it is too late for the Community Standards Department to take action. Residents want the CDD Boards to put in place a process that will assure that any exterior repainting of a home will be done using only colors that would have been approved for initial painting. Such a requirement would include a vast array of approved colors and the resident

(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, unslanted news reporting from local news sources.
10. Be informed beforehand by the Developer on any major change in our community. □



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## Repaint Bright Purple?

(Continued from page 2)

groups feel this should not be a hardship on anyone's artistic taste while assuring that no one will have to live next to a home that has been repainted a color inappropriate for the neighborhood and one that could possibly negatively impact resale values of adjacent homes.

While this issue has come up previously in several CDD Board meetings, it has received much broader interest in recent months. **At the May 8, 2013, Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) meeting, the Committee (which has deed restriction jurisdiction for the Lady Lake and Lake County portions of The Villages) decided to have the ARC control the exterior repainting of homes, by exception.** That is, when a property owner chooses to repaint their home, staff will have a color chart available for review that will provide different hues of various colors that have been identified as being harmonious with the color of homes in the community. If a property owner chooses to repaint their home a color outside the range of the color chart, the request would require the approval of the ARC. If a home is painted a color outside the color range without ARC approval and a complaint is received, it would be subject to the same process as any deed violation complaint. If a color is chosen within the color range on the

(Continued on page 10)

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## Make An Investment In Your Future - JOIN NOW!

Thank you to all who have responded to our invitation to join the POA. We have a record number of members this year. In fact, we have already passed last year's total membership figure. 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 at the bottom of this page.

### From the POA IT Desk

We have added another feature to our website that will enable you to update the membership information we have on file. You will be able to change your e-mail address, telephone number, etc. This new feature is easy to find and use. Go to the POA website [www.poa4us.org](http://www.poa4us.org) and on the left side of the home page you will find a list of dif-

ferent places you can go on the website. Go down to "Membership" with your mouse pointer, click on it, and a side bar will show up. Click on "Profile Update". It will take you to the Profile Update Form. After entering your full name in the data field provided, fill in any of the remaining data fields you want to change and click Submit. That is all there is to it. For those of you who do not have a computer, you can do changes two different ways. The first is to make changes when you send in your membership renewal form. The second way is to mail the changes to the POA at The POA P.O. Box 1657 Lady Lake, FL 32158-1657. On the bottom left end of the envelope please print "Attn: Database". It can then go directly to the database dept. for processing. □

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

### 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

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**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:

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

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# PALMS\* Reaction to Proposed Church Renovation

We asked Bob Rutkowski, President of the PALMS, to provide us with a reaction to this announcement, which is as follows:

"The Developer has recently announced the renovation and expansion of the Church on the Square (COTS) from 770 seats to 1,000 seats. We are pleased to see his recognition of the need for improved performing arts facilities in The Villages. We extend kudos for his generosity in funding the con-

version.

"Having said that, it is difficult to comment much further, as we have little knowledge of either the project's details, design, or the renovated facility's use plan. Judging from the rendering in the local newspaper, it appears that the main floor has been extended relative to the previous plan. This will provide better access and viewing.

"The COTS will thus have a seating capacity in excess of the Savannah Center (830 seats). The additional 170 seats will provide added revenue to attract better talent. However, the limited capacity will certainly prohibit any major offerings, including Broadway road shows. It is doubtful any major offering would play a venue of this size and the ticket prices would certainly be prohibitive.

"We fully expect the quality of construction to be at the very high level that is the standard in The Villages. The New Church on the Square will likely be a facility that we will be proud of. However, it leaves a great need unfulfilled. The PALMS sponsored bus trip to "Memphis" at the Bob Carr Theater in Orlando sold out in less than three weeks.

"Our Vision of a 2,000 seat facility that could proudly present nearly all major road shows is unchanged. PALMS remains open to collaborate with the Developer and others committed to excellence in the performing arts in the tri-county area."

\*For residents relatively new to The Villages, from the PALMS web site: "After beginning as the Villages Performing Arts Alli-

ance (VPAA), (later Volunteers Performing Arts Alliance), the group changed its name, vision and mission, as well as broadening its base, in 2010 in order to represent the tri-county area. In uniting behind the project, we can celebrate the arts, improve our quality of life and build a superb community center that we can all enjoy and take pride in. PALMS is working to build a world-class performing arts center that will bring top national entertainers to the tri-county region. The goal is to establish a state-of-the-art, eco-conscious facility at a conveniently-located site, with adequate access and parking. It will house a large main theater, plus a smaller "black box" theater for innovative works, rehearsal spaces, practice rooms, and meeting facilities.

In addition to attracting big-name national artists and stage shows at reasonable prices, the center would showcase local amateur and professional performers. And it would be available for community functions, such as conferences and graduations.

The center would be financed by donations, grants, ticket sales and concessions. Professional studies have shown that there is widespread public support for such a facility in the tri-county area and that the center would be economically viable.

PALMS, a 501C (3), not-for-profit corporation, is dedicated to working collaboratively with all parties interested in making this vision a reality. □

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# AAC Meeting Summary

## May 8, 2013

### Old Business Topics Included:

- The Lady Lake Town Commission approved the permit for the Paradise Park Area A project. Bid documents will be sent out on or around June 1, 2013. Construction is anticipated to begin in late summer.
- The AAC approved Kimley-Horn & Associates Individual Project Order Number 11 (Tasks 1 through 3 – Bidding Assistance, Construction Phase Administration and Closeout Administrative Services) for the Paradise Park Master Plan Area A.
- Bid documents are out for the Woodshop Parking Lot project. A staff recommendation is expected for the June 12, 2013 AAC meeting. Construction is anticipated to begin July 1st.
- The AAC approved the KP Studio Archi-

tect Project Scope and Architectural & Engineering Professional Design Services Proposal for the improvement projects at the La Hacienda Sports Pool House (\$21,400), the Chula Vista Recreation Center (\$19,000) and the Southside Recreation Center (\$11,500).

- Recommendations for the Saddlebrook Recreation Center will be addressed at the AAC Budget Workshop on May 22, 2013.
- Recommendations for the Silver Lake Recreation Center will be addressed at the regular June 12, 2013 AAC meeting.
- The AAC was advised that the appraisers are in the process of completing their appraisal of the former El Santiago restaurant building and a building inspection is underway. A petition was received from a group of residents requesting the Developer utilize the El Santiago building as a restaurant.

### Consent Agenda:

- Contracts were awarded to ABM Services d/b/a OneSource Landscaping & Golf Services for janitorial services at the Mulberry Recreation Center and to Newburg Irrigation, Inc. for De La Vista Golf Course irrigation renovations.

### New Business:

- The AAC, on behalf of the residents of the Lady Lake and Lake County sections of The Villages, discussed the pros and cons of establishing some sort of ARC

review of exterior house repainting. The Committee directed staff to proceed with establishing a color palette and an exception process to address exterior alterations (repainting) to homes. (See associated article on page 1).

### Informational Items:

- The Committee was informed that the exposed rusty pipe in Lake Paradise had been painted black in lieu of expending funds to replace it, since it is structurally sound.
- Beginning May 13, 2013, staff couriers will assume the job of posting approved bulletin board notices at any/all District postal station bulletin boards. Any notices to be posted must be submitted to the District staff, either in person, via email or placed in the District drop-box located at the postal station, for approval. Please see the [www.districtgov.org](http://www.districtgov.org) website for guidelines and the procedure.

### Reports and Input:

- District 3 has made an additional request to have the AAC fund a portion of the multi-modal path reconstruction being considered at the Glenbrook gate. Staff will include the item on an upcoming agenda for consideration by the AAC and will provide support documentation for construction costs. Staff will also request a status update from Sumter County regarding a potential traffic signal installation at that intersection.

### Audience Comments:

- An audience member requested assistance in renewing their Resident ID which has become a problem now that they are unable to obtain an out-of-state Florida driver’s license showing The Villages address. Per the current District procedure, non-spouse significant others whose legal residence is not in The Villages and cannot provide documentation showing co-habitation at another residence, are unable to obtain Resident IDs. Staff will review the situation and advise of any possible alternatives.

PLEASE GO TO THE [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org) WEBSITE FOR THE OFFICIAL MINUTES, AGENDAS AND MEETING SCHEDULE.

**NEXT AAC MEETING – WEDNESDAY June 12th, 1:30 P.M. AT THE SAVANNAH CENTER.** □

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## Golf Cart Crashes With Injuries

The POA has made an effort to identify golf cart related accidents in The Villages which have resulted in death or serious injuries. Neither the Florida Highway Patrol nor local law enforcement departments keep statistics on golf cart related crashes. Therefore, the POA is trying to make residents aware of the potential dangers that can face both golf cart drivers and passengers, be they on the golf cart trails or the roadways shared with automobiles and trucks. OUR MESSAGE IS THAT WE BELIEVE YOU MIGHT BE SAFER IF YOU USE A SEAT BELT, but the usage of seat belts in golf carts is not required by Florida Statutes so it is your choice.

### In 2012 we had:

- **two** known **fatalities**, both of whom were golf cart passengers who **fell out of or off of** a moving golf cart;
- **seven** golf cart occupants who were **EJECTED FROM** their golf cart that had to be **airlifted** to either Shands or Orlando Regional Hospitals because of the severity of their injuries; (We have no knowledge as to whether any of these life threatening injuries resulted in an eventual fatality.)
- **seven** golf cart occupants who were

**EJECTED FROM** their golf cart who had injuries serious enough that they were transported by **ambulance** to a nearby hospital;

- **fourteen** golf cart occupants who **fell out of** a moving golf cart who had injuries serious enough that they were transported by **ambulance** to a nearby hospital.

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!

**Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup>** – 3:00pm – Golf cart operator was proceeding onto Colony Boulevard. When she turned the golf cart, her **passenger "went flying out"** onto Colony Blvd. The passenger stated that she hit her head on the pavement. She was boarded, collared, strapped and transported by ambulance to the Villages Hospital for evaluation.

**Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup>** – 1:20pm – Golf cart driver lost control of her cart (on the cart path) while rounding the curve at Odell and Morse near Havana Country Club. The responding officer's report stated that the driver said she was driving her cart east-

bound on the cart path off from Odell Circle when she lost control, running across bushes near the path, which caused her Yamaha golf cart to tip, **ejecting her** from the cart..A witness who was in another cart trailing behind added that when the driver lost control the cart swayed back and forth but did not tip completely over. The driver suffered minor cuts and abrasions and was taken to Villages Hospital by ambulance for evaluation.

**Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>** – A golf cart operator was traveling on Paige Place as she passed Hacienda Recreation Center, headed toward Morse Boulevard. One of her golf cart tires hit the curb causing the driver to **fall out of the cart** as it overturned. The operator was taken to The Villages Hospital with minor injuries.

**Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>** – A golf cart operator was traveling in a "red corvette" golf cart on Churchill Downs in the Belvedere area when it flipped and **ejected him**. A witness stated that the driver suddenly swerved and lost control. He suffered significant head injuries and was "**trauma alerted**" and flown to the new trauma center at Ocala Regional Medical Center. □

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- Even though companies may have been in business for a long time, they may be

under new management or ownership; they may be doing business as another name due to past debts or lawsuits.

- If a roof is not installed properly, it may be leak free for 5 or more years before it starts to leak. Something as simple as a nail installed a few inches to one side may cause a future leak. If the installer misplaces one nail on every shingle installed on your roof, in 5 or six years, the roof may have hundreds of leaks seeping into the plywood and attic of your home.
- Caulk and roof cement used to stop a leak are only a temporary fix and the UV from the sun will dry and crack these remedies and the leak will continue.
- It is illegal for a handyman or unlicensed company to do roof repairs in Florida. Even a small repair or a dab of caulk is not allowed. By using an unlicensed person, a homeowner is committing a misdemeanor crime and is responsible for withholding payroll taxes and covering the individual with worker's compensation insurance.

My advice is to find someone who has experienced workmen who will take their time and use the necessary materials to build a long lived, leak free roof for your home. Rome was not built in a day, neither should your roof.

Thank you,  
Pete Tsirnikas  
Bone Dry Roofing LLC □

## Bond Interest Reimbursement

### Thank You Again, Danny Smith

You may recall that last fall residents were notified that they may have been inadvertently overcharged if they had paid off their CDD Infrastructure bond. Staff put a process in place for residents to apply for a review of their payoff and determination of whether or not they were due a refund. As of May 10, 2013, 524 residents had received refunds totaling \$175,879. Staff estimates that there may still be 357 residents or former residents who are due refunds. Discovery of this overcharge was a result of a diligent effort by resident Danny Smith. Without his perseverance, staff might never have known that the payoff calculation had a flaw which caused some residents to be overcharged. The POA would like to thank Mr. Smith on behalf of the 524 residents who have received refunds as a result of his efforts.

If you have paid off your bond and are unsure if you were overcharged on the interest calculation, please either contact the District Finance Department (751-3900, attention Barbara Mercer or Sue Brems), or go to our web site, poa4us.org, click on archived Bulletins, and pull up the February 2013 issue of the Bulletin. You will find a complete listing of property addresses which were due a refund on pages 21-25. If your address is listed, you will find a copy of the submission form for reimbursement on page 26. □

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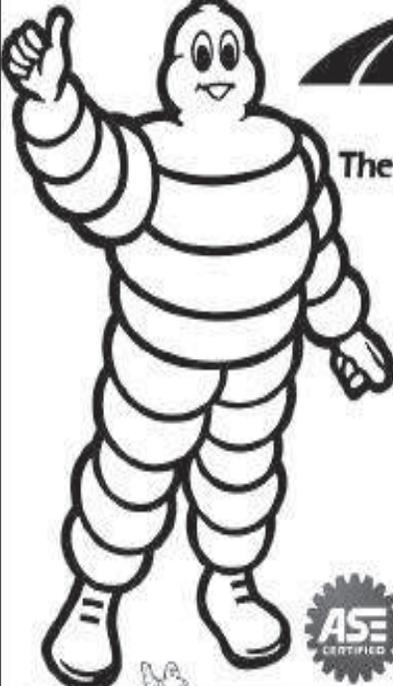
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## Task Force On District Governance As We Approach Build Out

A Task Force, consisting of one representative each from Districts 1 – 9, was recently established to have a brainstorming session in an effort to determine if the Districts are being operated in the most efficient way possible.

This meeting is now being identified as the “Future Governance Brainstorming Session” and is scheduled to take place Friday, June 21st @ 1:30pm @ Sea Breeze Recreation Center. (However, this is subject to change so if you plan to attend, check the [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org) web site calendar (top right corner of home page) and make sure there have been no changes.)

The meeting is open to the public. However, there will likely be no audience participation at this first session. The intent is for each District representative to take their findings back and report out to their own District Board and constituents and it is at that level where there will be audience input. After all, any decision to modify the status quo of a District will have to be the decision of each individual Board of Supervisors.

In other words, some CDDs could decide

to move forward with an alternative governance structure while others elect to remain as is; all could remain as is; or all could join to form an alternative governance structure. Each CDD will decide its own fate.

The Task Force Representatives are as follows:

CDD1– Ellen Cora      CDD2 – John Blum  
CDD3– Bill Ray        CDD4 – Chuck Kazlo  
CDD5– Jerry Knoll    CDD6– John Calandro  
CDD7– Jerry Vicenti   CDD8– Jack Reimer  
CDD9– Diane Spencer      □

## Parking in Unauthorized Areas

Community Watch and local law enforcement officials are teaming up in a new safety initiative to prevent golf carts and other vehicles from driving and parking on our sidewalks and other unauthorized areas. Not only is it in violation of District Rules, but driving and parking on the sidewalks is also extremely dangerous for our residents and guests enjoying a casual stroll through the community.

Have you noticed the traffic cones that have been placed along our sidewalks at handicapped access points on the squares? The cones were placed there originally to discourage vehicles from parking on our sidewalks. In the first phase of our new initiative Community Watch will remove the existing traffic cones. Community Watch will now

place red and black “WARNING” signs on vehicles parked in unauthorized areas. The warnings reference District Rules and are designed to educate vehicle operators of their parking infractions.

Community Watch will partner with law enforcement in the second phase of the initiative to attempt to identify and notify owners of vehicles parked in violation of the District Rules. Owners will be given the opportunity to move their vehicles. As a last resort, drivers of vehicles repeatedly parked in violation of the District Rules may be prohibited access to any District property. District staff states that they hope this action is not required, but the safety of our residents and guests must be assured.

Please assist the District in making our sidewalks safe for residents and guests. □



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## HONOR FLIGHT

April, 2013 POA meeting

Information Presentation by

John Driscoll, Marketing Director

Honor Flight (HF) is a national non-profit organization – Villages HF is a local chapter of the local hub. Its mission is to fly veterans to Washington, D.C, to see their memorials without cost to them. Right now they are concentrating on WWII veterans because they are the ones that we are losing the quickest – we are losing between 800 and 1,000 a day. There are about 1.1M remaining and these veterans are in their 80's and 90's now so HF is working against time to get them to Washington, D.C.

What citizens can do is as follows:

- 1) If you know a veteran, in particular a WWII veteran, we need to get him to complete an application. We've got about 200 on our waiting list this year and we hope to fly 200 this year, but we want to keep adding to that list.

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- 2) We always need volunteers – we have all sorts of jobs that are available for people who want to assist us in completing our mission.
- 3) We have a need for guardians to travel with each veteran. When we fly the veterans, each veteran gets a guardian who acts as their personal valet. The guardian pays their own way and the cost to a guardian is about \$400. Their responsibility is to take care of that veteran to make sure that he gets there safely and get back and do whatever the veteran wants to do.
- 4) Help us at our homecoming events.

When WWII ended in August of 1945, the veterans did not come home immediately. There were 16M of them scattered around the world and they came home on transports. Some of them did not get back until sometime in 1946. We were a war weary country when they returned home. Vets were given a bus ticket and a wave goodbye. They received no homecoming – no welcome or thanks for the job that they did. Honor Flight attempts to change that for them. When they return from DC we try and put on the best homecoming they can possibly have. We depart and return to the American Legion up on Rolling Acres and CR 466. It's a long day as

we go out and back in one day returning between 10 pm and midnight. We arrange to have music for them – we get the twirlers there, the cheerleaders, the clowns – we have lots of residents waving flags jumping up and down to welcome the vets.

By the time they get off the bus they are just about in tears and the comment is – I wish this never ended - I didn't realize people appreciated what I did.

For additional information on volunteering or donating, visit [villageshonorflight.org](http://villageshonorflight.org) □

## Repaint Bright Purple?

(Continued from page 3)

chart, approval by the ARC would not be required. For the AAC and those districts deciding to require prior written approval for house repaintings, staff will present for board approval the appropriate amendments to the External Deed Restriction Standards and Architectural Review Manual to implement said policy.

At press time, there were indications that most, if not all of the numbered CDD Boards would likely approve a similar process for their jurisdictions, once they review the details to be provided by staff. □



William Goellner, MD, Medical Director  
Duke University Medical School (1974)  
Surgical Internship, Dallas, TX (1974-1975)  
Surgical Residency, Miami, FL (1975-1977)  
Board Certified in Emergency Medicine  
American College of ER Physicians, former president  
American Heart Association, Emergency Care Committee  
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## March Forum Questions & Answers

1) We live in the Village of Charlotte in the new area where they are building like crazy. They come in the trucks to take the sand out and the dust from this sand is awful and when it is windy it is really bad. People that have asthma in our community are getting sick. Is there something they can do. In the place that I lived when they did that they had trucks come every day and wet down the sand so that it would eliminate the dust. A) In the past, Janet Tutt has been a contact for us with the Developer and she responded that she would see that the Developer was contacted about the problem.

2) People on my street drive on it like it is a thoroughfare and Community Watch told me to find out who he was – follow him to where he lives and report it to the Sheriff who would then come out and give him a warning and then if it happened again – a ticket. The problem is that if I am walking my dog I will not have a pencil and paper. So, what is the speed limit on residential

streets in Sumter County and if there is one could it please be posted. A) Sumter County has a law in The Villages that unless otherwise posted, the speed limit is 20 miles per hour. Lt. Wolfe, the guest speaker, took down the name of the street and advised that the Department had had some issues in that area on Triggerfish, Buttonwood, St. Charles, Bailey Trail so they have been in that area very heavily and that he would add her street to the list.

3) I live in a patio villa in Santo Domingo where the speed limit is posted at 10 mph and both golf carts and vehicles are going much faster than 20 mph. A) She was asked to provide Lt. Wolfe with the name of the villa following the meeting.

4) Is there any possibility that there could be parking for cars at the Live Oak Park? A) No. That particular property was actually developed because it was being used so much by golf carts and destroying that whole area so it was developed into a park area, with parking for golf carts only. It was never designed for car parking.

5) What is the policy on dog bites in The Villages? A) You need to contact law enforcement and they will respond and regard-

less of which county you live in, they will pull in the appropriate animal control agency. There are strict laws on the books in Marion County while Lady Lake has very stringent dog related ordinances as does Sumter County. □

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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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Should Sumter County Privatize the County Library System?

#### Excerpts from letter from Nancy Myers:

I'm interested in finding out more information about the potential outsourcing of the Sumter County library system by the County Commission:

Have county residents been asked to rate the services provided by the county library system and have they shown displeasure with the current program in place?

What has been the outcome of other county systems throughout the country that are currently being run by Library Systems and Services ?

Do the commissioners feel the very active volunteer program will stay in place if privatization happens?

I have found considerable improvements to the library system during the three years we have been living here.

This library system still has room for improvement, but I fail to see how a private company which will be focused on profit making is going to be more interested in my long term welfare than a county operated service monitored by locally elected officials.

#### Excerpts from letter from Tom Bender:

I fear that the Sumter County board is heading in the wrong direction on the library issue. So far, the Sumter library focus has been on buildings rather than books (with The Villages chipping in for bricks and mortar).

There is a significant disparity in the number of books available per resident versus the ratio in Lake County -- so big a disparity in fact (about six to one, as I recall) that Lake County withdrew from consideration of a three-way agreement to share books for people in Marion, Lake and Sumter.

Further, when Sumter closed the library in Wildwood as it opened one in The Villages, the effect in fact was to limit the opportunity for kids on the lower end of the economic spectrum to get to the library (which requires them to drive). So the board has already put money over service to those in need. In the current proposal under consideration (going private, which would put economics over service) we have more of the

same. Is there anything we can do to abort this looming mistake?

**Editor's Note:** We have no influence with the Sumter County Commission, but the residents of the County do. We would suggest that anyone who wishes to maintain the status quo should attend the County Commission Workshop which is scheduled to be held at 5 p.m. on June 18<sup>th</sup> at The Villages Sumter County Service Center. This issue will then come up for vote at the regular board meeting beginning at 5 p.m. on June 25<sup>th</sup> at Colony Cottage Recreation Center. □

### New Postal Park Bulletin Board Procedure

I am the Lynnhaven webmaster and regularly post notices at the Lynnhaven mailboxes for the Lynnhaven Neighbors, Lynnhaven Ladies, and occasionally other groups in our village. After I update the website, I adapt the information for the Bulletin Board and it gets posted the day I drop it off or the next. A copy of these guidelines has just been passed along to me and I have issue with:

1) Creating another bureaucracy for posting notices on the Bulletin Board and having to go through it to make a neighborhood posting (*instead of my local VHA rep. providing prompt posting - especially important to*

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Bulletin Board Posts

(Continued from page 12)

*those who don't have computers and when there are last minute changes concerning an event that needs to be posted quickly).*

2) Having notices reviewed and approved by one of these bureaucrats (*smacks of excessive control and censorship*).

3) Waiting at least **3 business days** to "process" the request (*then maybe another day to have it posted?*).

4) Having a notice posted for 2 weeks only instead of **4 weeks** (*the cycle of our neighborhood events*).

5) And what is this about "Club recruitment/membership notices" not being posted. That is what club event notices are all about. **What can a club post?**

6) The priority is troublesome, as well. District information is disseminated through the newspaper, sometimes Recreation News, the website, the radio, the TV station, now you want priority over neighborhood/village postings on the neighborhood Bulletin Boards, too?

Who made these up rules without input from residents as to their **practicality** and **compatibility with our resident's Villages lifestyle**? The only thing this is compatible with is the convenience and availability of your staff.

It has taken a long time to get people to look at the Bulletin Board, and a lot of effort goes into keeping relevant to *our* residents, and now you are going to institutionalize this too. I can't believe that other villages find these rules acceptable; that is, those who have been doing their jobs keeping the Bulletin Boards up to date.

I am hopeful that you will reconsider and adjust these "guidelines" to make them more practical and workable (from a resident's point of view). If the VHA president doesn't want to be bothered with Bulletin Boards, let him delegate someone else or a committee to do it. He doesn't have to be bothered himself. Our villages *need* local support and prompt response time for Bulletin Board postings,

and posting periods that are appropriate to club activities and events and...appropriate to...a neighborhood Bulletin Board. B. Kalmin

**Editor's Note:** Thank you for contacting the POA and providing your insight into the posting of notices at District postal facilities. While it sounds like you provide a very extensive and timely service to Lynnhaven residents, that is not the case for many of the Bulletin Boards at our 60 plus postal facilities. Over the years, the posting of Bulletin Board notices has become very irregular and the posting policies have varied widely from one location to another, depending on who felt they were "in charge" and how many sets of keys had been distributed. While the VHA

(Continued on page 14)

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Bulletin Board Posts

(Continued from page 13)

had volunteered to administer the postings, there were many exceptions (such as Lynnhaven, apparently). Also, there was no control over whether volunteers would actually post the requested notices nor if it would be done on a timely basis. Since the postal stations and the Bulletin Boards are owned by the District government (VCCDD north of CR 466 and by the SLCDD and the Developer south of CR 466), it was important that all resident requests for posting be treated in the same manner. To that end, District staff met with representatives of the VHA and came up with the new procedure.

With regard to your specific concerns, it is not another bureaucracy. District staff will be the only submission point and district couriers who stop at every postal station Monday through Friday will assure that all

approved notices will be posted as requested. Further, District staff will be the only review and approval rather than individual VHA volunteers having discretion to approve for posting at each individual Bulletin Board. Staff has committed to completing the review and posting within three days and that does not seem to be much of a hardship compared to the previous situation that often took a week or more, if ever. In order to assure space for all appropriate notices, staff determined two weeks to be a reasonable posting time limit.

We suspect staff will work with you if there is a particular need for a longer posting on an exception basis. (Note: we have seen some notices that have been up for many months and even one that was up for a year advertising a club's cruise). It is our belief from talking with staff, that club recruitment means notices that are meant to simply sign-up members; no event is being announced. While neighborhood social club events are allowed to be posted, the regular general membership meetings of Villages-wide clubs would not (there are over 2000 clubs and their weekly, monthly or quarterly meeting notices would overwhelm the Bulletin Boards).

With regard to the priority scheme, we agree with the staff. District notices are infrequent and provide information that generally

ALL residents need to be aware of (bond interest over payment refunds, town hall meetings, construction detours, etc.). We can't imagine a situation where posting District information will preclude the posting of local neighborhood announcements.

Again, we applaud you for the service you provide to the residents of Lynnhaven. This is not the case generally and we think the new procedure needs to be given a chance to succeed. Perhaps it may need to be adjusted as time goes on. In the meantime, we suggest you contact Carrie Duckett (753-4508) who oversees the process for the District. We are certain she can help satisfy your needs one way or another. □

### 'Popping' Noises From The Attic

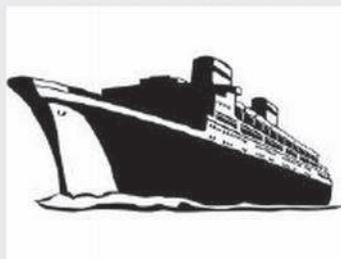
My husband and I own a Lantana in Sunset Pointe. Our block/stucco house was built a little over 9 years ago. Within the past four months the house has exhibited cracking, popping and snapping noises which are primarily on the bedroom side of the house. These noises have been increasing and are quite unsettling. It is quieter in the mornings and in the evenings the noises are the most pronounced. However, the noises are present

(Continued on page 15)

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Popping In Attic

(Continued from page 14)

throughout the day.

I have contacted the Warranty Department on three separate occasions. Each time I have been given a different explanation for the noises. (The house is settling, it's the wind, and it's temperature variations.) During the last contact I was given the name of the framer. I spoke with him and was told these noises are normal. This I find extremely difficult to believe.

I wonder if other property owners have experienced popping, cracking, and/or snapping noises in their attics/walls, and most importantly, has anyone DETERMINED THE CAUSE and "THE FIX".

I look forward to hearing from you and greatly appreciate your assistance. C. Cusack

Editor's Note: If any of our readers have or are having a similar problem we would really appreciate hearing from you especially if you have been able to determine the cause and the "fix" ([poa4us@hotmail.com](mailto:poa4us@hotmail.com)) . □

### Be Aware!!

### Up Selling Contractors

I'm hoping you will spread the word about this story so that other Senior Citizens/people are not taken advantage by this practice.

Over the last few weeks my Dad's (age 91) health has been drastically declining. This past Tuesday, the AC system stopped working. We called an area licensed air conditioning company for an estimate. Obviously, we told them about my Dad and that we needed this fixed ASAP so that my parents and the Certified Nursing Assistants could be in comfort. The technician gave us an estimate of \$5800 saying: There was no Freon in the system, the condenser was burned out, that the fan motor was no longer working and that the air handler bearings were going. Thus, both the air handler and the AC unit needed to be replaced. They were scheduled to perform the installation the next day.

Unfortunately, my Dad had passed away earlier that morning so we postponed the installation for obvious reasons. When I reviewed the invoice the technician had left, I noticed that it also included a charge for a new cement pad and he had made a notation that the homeowner was under Hospice Care. So I called another AC company to get a second opinion.

Turns out my parents AC system only needed a \$110 capacitor + another \$80 for the service charge. Yes, that means they "only" paid \$190 to get their AC system running without issue. The new technician said it did not need any Freon, the cement pad was not cracked nor in need of replacement

and that nothing was wrong with the Air Handlers bearings or condenser. A. Yapaolo

Editor's Note: We contacted Seniors Vs. Crime about this issue and were advised that they, "... hear similar stories fairly often (they are called 'up sells' - selling a lot of 'stuff' that is not needed) which is why we always recommend getting multiple estimates for any major purchase. In the case described above, that looks like it is exactly what happened - the daughter secured a second estimate before the big money was spent saving her family around \$5600. □



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Double Billing Scam

I recently got out of the hospital and shortly thereafter I received a bill for \$34.58 from an Emergency Services company for an emergency room doctor's services. I subsequently called the Service and they said they would check into this and correct as necessary, but I should call back in 30 days. I

tried to call, but didn't reach anyone who could help. I only received the one bill. A month later, I received a statement for \$65.00 from a collection agency. Since I am on Medicare I called on my AARP Supplement to see if I owed this bill. They assured me that this bill had been paid by direct deposit on January 4, 2013. This kind of scam has got to be stopped. They are taking advantage of seniors who want to do the right thing, pride themselves in their credit rating and are good citizens. Dennis & Charlotte Haller

**Editor's Note:** We contacted Seniors Vs. Crime about this issue and they advised us that they have received many complaints about double billings, collection letters, etc. for bills that were not owed as they had been paid by the insurance company. If this happens to you, contact Seniors Vs. Crime and they will provide you with a "canned" form letter to use to contest unwarranted bills and exercise your rights under various debt collection statutes. (You can find their contact information on page 20 at the end of their column. □

### Lightning Matters

By Len Hathaway - Study Group on Lightning

The National Weather Service (NWS) has designated June 23-29, 2013, as **LIGHTNING SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK** to highlight the dangers of lightning in advance of the peak lightning months of June, July, August, and September.

This is particularly important to residents of Central Florida as this state is the Lightning Capital of the US.

This year Lightning Safety Awareness Week coincides with the 261<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's famous kite experiment in Philadelphia. Franklin's work began the study of lightning that continues to this day by academia and most appropriately by the University of Florida, Gainesville, and at their International Center for Lightning Research & Testing at Camp Blanding.

#### Personal Lightning Safety

**OUTDOORS** - NWS's theme is "When Thunder Roars Go Indoors!" Good advice.

*(Continued on page 17)*

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## Lightning Matters

(Continued from page 16)

To reduce your risk you need to recognize that no place is absolutely safe, but some, such as homes and large enclosed substantially constructed buildings, particularly those with lightning protection systems (rods), are better than others.

NWS data places the annual number of US lightning fatalities at 60 (and injuries around 400) and Florida leads all other states in fatalities. Many more people are struck and survive but may suffer long-term injuries such as sleep disorders, memory loss, chronic pain, muscle spasms, depression, and more.

Pro golfer Lee Trevino was struck by lightning while playing in the 1975 Western Open in Oak Brook, IL. His injuries included permanent damage to his flexibility and sensitivity of the vertebrae in his lower back.

Remember, it is up to the golfer to decide when his or her safety may be in jeopardy. The US Golf Association rules state that any player has the right to stop play if that player believes there is a danger from lightning.

Therefore, seek shelter; avoid trees, bleachers, metal fences, dugouts, open picnic shelters, flag poles, street lights, hill tops, softball & polo fields, tennis & pickleball courts, shuffleboard, bocce, basketball, & horseshoe venues, convertibles, bicycles, motorcycles, power lines, fishing, high

ground, bodies of water including swimming pools, and GOLF CARTS.

**INDOORS** - Once you are in a home or substantial building there may still be a lightning threat to your personal safety. Therefore, you need to avoid corded telephones, electrical equipment, windows, metal doors, metal door/window frames and plumbing fixtures. In 2009, a local social networking web site reported that a Villager was injured while taking a shower when his home was struck by lightning. In 2012 we had a near miss when a resident who was using a corded telephone and standing under a solar tube that was struck by lightning.

### For More Information

For information on other lightning related issues such as lightning protection systems

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(commonly called lightning rods) and surge protection see the Lightning Matters columns in the archived issues of the *POA Bulletin* that can be found on the POA4US.Org website.

If your club or organization would benefit from a free non-commercial Power Point presentation, *Lightning Tips for Villagers*, that addresses personal safety, residential considerations, and lightning surges to electronic equipment contact me at LHATHA@AOL.COM or my colleague Bob Freeman at STALIT1@AOL.COM. □

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## Seniors Vs. Crime

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### A Layman's Guide

### To Florida's

### Construction Lien Law

Far too often, Villagers come to Seniors Vs. Crime with questions involving a lien that has been placed on their home. Florida's Lien Law (FS §713) is quite complex.

You **MAY** need qualified legal advice to navigate the morass of this law.

Since many of us know little to nothing about this law, this guide gives you some understanding of a rather complex law. And there are things you can do to protect yourself and your property from a lien. Read on to learn more!

A lien is used because the artisan cannot "take back" their work. For example, if a

Painter painted your home and you refused to pay, the Painter can not "repossess" the paint. Construction liens are designed to protect professionals from the risk of not being paid for services rendered.

If you are not satisfied with the work done by the contractor or professional, simply not paying the bill will not resolve the issue. You should approach the contractor about the quality of service and what can be done to rectify the issue.

Seniors Vs. Crime may be able to assist you with this negotiation.

### What is a Construction Lien?

It is a claim made against a property by a contractor, subcontractor, supplier or other professional who has supplied labor and/or materials for work on that property. While the lien is in effect, the title to the property is not clear, and the owner cannot sell or transfer the property. Construction liens are a mechanism which construction professionals can use to insure payment. If payment is not forthcoming, the property can potentially be seized and sold to satisfy debts.

(Continued on page 19)

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# Seniors Vs. Crime

(Continued from page 18)

## Who can file a Construction Lien against my property?

Also known as a mechanic's lien, a construction lien can be filed by anyone who is involved in making improvements to a property. If a contractor has used subcontractors or other suppliers and has not paid them, they could use a lien to insure payment is made to them by you.

You may receive something titled "Notice To Owner". This is nothing more than a re-

quired notice to protect the subcontractor's rights to file a lien if necessary. It is not a notice that he or she will file a lien.

## Does a Construction Lien Mean I Owe The Debt?

**No! It is only a claim.** If you dispute the claim, you have the right to have that dispute settled in court. Since a lien is not a proven debt, it should not affect your credit rating. However, until the claim is settled, your property may be encumbered.

## How can I protect myself against a Construction Lien?

**BEFORE** you make your final payment on the contract, require your contractor to give you a final payment affidavit stating that all subs and suppliers working for him/her on your job have been paid in full or, if money is still owed, how much and to whom. This is commonly called a Release of Lien form and is officially titled a Contractor's Final Payment Affidavit.

There is no preprinted form for this release (affidavit) but there is a required format in the law. Suggested wording for the affidavit is contained in FL Statute §713.06(3)(d)

(Continued on page 20)

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## Seniors Vs. Crime

(Continued from page 19)

(1). You may need legal assistance to insure that a Release of Lien is legally correct.

### Within what timeframe can a Construction Lien be filed?

In general, it should be filed within two months of the work being finished. However, suppliers or subcontractors may file when their portion of the contract is finished. There is some "wiggle room" in the law around the meaning of "finished" so if this is a significant item in your dispute, you may need competent legal advice to interpret the law.

### How long will a Construction Lien last?

Generally, a Construction Lien is valid for one year from the date it was filed. Within that time, the contractor must take you to court and prove his/her claim. If, within that year, the lien is not cleared by a settlement or a court action, it will expire. You may need a

lawyer to insure that clearance of the lien is recorded properly.

### Can I shorten that one year timeframe?

Yes, but you will need a lawyer. If you dispute the lien (the claim), you have the right to demand a court hearing. Once you serve notice that you contest the lien, the contractor must institute a suit to enforce his or her lien within 60 days after service of such notice or the lien shall be extinguished automatically.

Construction lien law is complicated. Don't be panicked into an unwise payment decision just because someone placed a lien on your property. Check out your options. Try to resolve the dispute without resorting to court action. When in doubt as to what you can do to protect your interests, contact your nearest Seniors Vs. Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance. Keep in mind that there is never a charge for their services. They can be reached at 352-753-7775 in Marion County Sheriff's Office or 352-689-4600, Ext. 4606 in Sumter County Sheriff's Office. Volunteers at both offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. □

### Our Gardening Column:

## Spanish Moss

by Anne Lambrecht, Master Gardener  
annegarden@embarqmail.com

Neither Spanish nor a true moss, Spanish Moss (*Tillandsia usneoides*) is an air plant or what is called an epiphyte, in the Bromeliad family, a cousin of the pineapple. It's that gray "fuzzy" stuff, a familiar part of Florida's environment, hanging off trees and landscape plants. Air plants are not parasites; they grow on other plants but do not rely on them for nutrients. They take nutrients from the air and debris that collects on the plant. Spanish moss grows well in areas with low light, little airflow, and high humidity, which is commonly provided by southern shade trees, often the Southern Live Oak and the Bald Cypress.

Although Spanish moss prefers moist environments, its ability to trap water lets it survive dry periods. The plant can also go dormant until moisture conditions improve. The plant consists of a slender stem bearing alternate thin, curved or curly "leaves" (.8-2") long that grow in chain-like fashion to form hanging structures up to 18 feet in length. Its

(Continued on page 21)

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## Spanish Moss

(Continued from page 20)

flowers are inconspicuous (I've never seen a flower). You can actually eat the newest "branch", the one in the middle of the chain. I've tried it and it's good but you'd have to do an awful lot of hunting and gathering to make a meal of it.

Spanish moss does not have any roots. It attaches by wrapping its stems around a surface. Many homeowners think that Spanish moss kills their trees. University of Florida professors tell us that this is not the case because the moss is not parasitic. The only thing Spanish moss uses the trees for is support. If you observe tree decline after heavy infestations of Spanish moss, the trees are usually declining because of a different factor. Heavy moss on a tree can shade leaves and slow growth, even preventing photosynthesis from occurring. Spanish moss can also increase wind resistance which can prove fatal to the host tree in a hurricane.

Healthy trees will grow faster than the moss. If you want to remove Spanish moss, have an arborist remove it by hand (cha-ching). However, it will grow back after a while. Another way to remove Spanish moss is by spraying copper sulfide which is very costly and also temporary.

Spanish moss shelters a number of creatures, including rat snakes and three species of bats (oh goody). One species of jumping spider, *Pelegrina tillandsiae* has been found only on Spanish moss.

When the Husband and I first moved to our Villages home, the huge 200 year old Southern Live Oak out back hardly had any Spanish moss on it. Our yard was formerly a pasture or melon patch. As the turf and landscaping went in beneath the tree, more and more Spanish moss made a home on the tree's branches. This means that the tree is stressed out. This stress is caused because the tree's root system is competing with the turf for water and nutrients. The solution is very easy for me. The TURF MUST BE RE-

MOVED. That's the plan right now. And if I never tell him, the Husband won't know unless he decides to go outside.

A cousin to Spanish moss, Ball Moss (*Tillandsia recurvata*) is a flowering plant that grows in a spheroid shape ranging from a golf ball to a soccer ball. The little blue-brown flowers spew their lighter-than-air dandelion like seeds that fly through the air and stick to anything in their path. I think they are quite pretty. A friend of mine carried a large Ball moss home to Connecticut. If she keeps it outside during the winter, it will die since Ball moss is sensitive to freezing, particularly when moist.

Spanish moss has been used for various purposes, including building insulation, mulch, packing material, and mattress stuff-

(Continued on page 22)

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# Spanish Moss

(Continued from page 21)

ing. The expression “don’t let the bedbugs bite” comes from the bites of nearly invisible red bugs, or chiggers that are found in Spanish moss.

In the early 1900s Spanish moss was used commercially in the padding of car seats. In 1939 over 10,000 tons of processed Spanish moss was produced. It is still collected today in smaller quantities for use in arts and crafts projects. It is also used by some as the filling for traditional voodoo dolls (yikes!). My neighbor wanted to get some for a craft project and in order to remove any bugs, put it in the microwave and started a fire. An easier (and less flammable) way is to put the Spanish moss in a tub of water with a little bleach then dry it out.

Recently there has been significant drama going on at the house. The Husband saw a commercial for a back-pack sprayer of Round Up with bonus flame thrower for killing plants and is keen to order. I stole the address from his desk and will blame it on visiting grandchildren. □

# Fitness Challenge Take The Walk!!

By Judi Da Costa, Personal Trainer  
exercise2gether@aol.com

While you are walking, have you ever caught yourself constantly looking down toward the ground?

Sometimes we do this in case there is something we could trip over, but sometimes you might find that you forget to look up again, or maybe you don't even realize that's what you are doing. This is a common issue, but one you want to try and correct as constantly looking down is putting undue pressure on your neck, allowing your upper back and shoulders to round, and ultimately putting pressure on your lower back.

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