

THE



BULLETIN



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Free Copy

Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

The POA Website - www.poa4us.org

Resale Home Prices In The Villages Market Trends and Forecast

The January POA meeting featured Glenn Stein, Broker/Owner of Realty Executives (RE) in The Villages. RE is a full service brokerage. They not only sell homes, but also provide property management, and many other things involving real estate. Below are highlights of his presentation.

They have been in business since 2005, and have sixty plus active realtors. RE is part of the National Association of Realtors, and the local board. It is important to know the history of the company and it's important to know that they are Realtors. (The Villages Sales Agents are not realtors.) When RE first started out, they just had a handful of agents. They did \$9.4 million dollars in 2005. Last year, ten years later, was the biggest year they have ever had and did \$139 million dollars of volume.

Realty Executives has the largest market share of any MLS company operating in The Villages with 37% of listings sold. You can use whomever you want to use when you are selling your home, but it is important to look for the Realtor Logo because it means that we have to abide by ethical rules and regulations.

Realtors are obligated to preserve confidential information. They are not permitted to knowingly mislead their clients. They are obligated to treat all parties fairly and cannot accept commissions without their client's

knowledge. They have to deal honestly, truthfully, and are obligated to depict the true picture of what is happening in real estate at the moment.

In 2013-2014, there was an 8.9% price appreciation in The Villages. In 2014-2015, there was a 4.5% price appreciation. Across Florida, there were a lot of different things happening which were not happening in The Villages because, as many residents say, we are in a bubble here and somewhat protected.

Although we did see a fall during that 2007-08 time period, which resulted in some foreclosures in the market place and some short sales over the last couple of years, but for the most part, The Villages real estate market has

been protected. Home sales in The Villages woke up from the slumber in 2013.

At the current time, what the numbers are telling us is that obviously luxury properties are going to sell for the highest price per square foot. But, courtyard villas also sell and appreciate at a high rate of price per square foot. The number of sales are better out of season than they are during season likely because everyone is here and everything is busy.

(Continued on page 2)

Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) Meeting Highlights March 9, 2016

Audience Comments:

- Several hundred residents came to the meeting to provide input and ask questions regarding the impact on amenity facilities that would occur due to the recently approved expansion of CDD4 - the additional 300 villa units and 300 amenity contracts for independent and assisted living facilities. They expressed the opinion that there is already a lack of recreation centers in the CDD4 area and requested statistical information on how CDD4 stacks up in recreation facilities with other Districts.
- District Manager Janet Tutt advised that she would provide utilization information regarding the facilities.
- POA Past President Elaine Dredidame commented that accessibility is as important as utilization. She provided the AAC Committee members with statistical information on the ratio of homes to recreation

(Continued on page 5)

Tuesday, April 19, 2016
POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Third Tuesday of the Month - 7PM
Laurel Manor Recreation Center

ELDER FINANCIAL FRAUD

Dr. Thomas Blomberg,
Dean and Professor of Criminology
at Florida State University

Followed by Questions & Answers
Audio and Visual in Overflow Room

Donuts and Coffee For All After The Meeting

All Residents Welcome - Come and Join Us!

Resales In The Villages

(Continued from page 1)

While the traffic during the season is highest, the number of sales per model are greater in non-seasonal months. This is surprising. However, the statistics bear out this scenario...summer is hot too! Specifically, courtyard villas sell very well.

Cottage and Ranch homes price per square foot, in January of 2015, showed an average of \$144 per square foot, considering that there are variances depending on quality of flooring, location, etc. In July, the peak, they were \$149 per square foot, a \$5 difference. Courtyard villas numbers showed a price of \$161 in January, \$168 in August, \$176 in September, and then went down to \$169 in November, with \$169 the average over the year. If you are motivated to buy or sell, this doesn't come into play, but we really are no longer a true seasonal business. It used to be, in our company, that the season was "the season", the "make or break", it was like our Christmas.

For many retailers, it's that way and for people who have been in the retail business, you know that you have to make your business in the first and fourth quarters. Of the top five selling months for 2015 for our company, July was our #1 volume wise, followed by March, April, November and December. The January and February traffic, flowing in, led to the March and April numbers (30-60 day timeframe, from looking, to time of purchase).

What these numbers show is that we are becoming more of a real typical market as time goes on, more like the rest of the national market. No one really knows if the Developer is going to build more or not. Thirteen years ago, we weren't sure if they were going south of CR466, it's been going on like this for years.

For residents who have been here for 10-15

years, The Villages has been growing for a while. According to US News and World report, right now there are 40 million Americans aged 65 or older, making up 13% of the population.

However, if we take a look at the baby boomers, by 2030, all the baby boomers will be over 65 and will make up 20% of the population. We have an aging population, as does the rest of the world. We are seeing a lot of our clientele coming from the UK and Canada. Not only are people aging, but people are also living longer. Life expectancy, after hitting 65 years old, is 17.75 years for men and 20.3 years for women. While living longer, we are probably not going to be relocating as much, so we are probably going to be staying here in The Villages longer.

Also, this means as more people move in and stay longer, that if the Developer builds or doesn't build, it's almost to the point where it is irrelevant, prices will go up. Prices will go up even more if they stop building. We've even seen price increases, where other parts of the country were doing the opposite. So long term, we should see price increases. We could see short term pull backs depending on inventory numbers.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1) Is it advantageous to sell your house fully furnished or unfurnished? And if you do sell your house with your furniture in it, does it increase the value to some degree? **A)** It depends on the condition of the furniture, obviously. A home that is furnished will always look better than a home that is vacant. There are always exceptions to every rule. However, it will improve the value, for sure. And, it also depends on the model. There are certain models that furnishings will be advantageous to people who are just looking, a patio villa, for instance, is a perfect example. It's more of a seasonal type home. If it's a non-seasonal type

(Continued on page 4)

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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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. □



Seasonal Residents, Please HELP!

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Shelley Pfaff 352-325-1540
delivery@poa4us.org

If you are a seasonal resident, **please let us know the DATES you will be away, at least 2 WEEKS before departing**, and we will stop delivery of the POA Bulletin during that time. □

Please Pick Up Unclaimed Bulletins in Driveways

If you see that the Bulletin is delivered, but remains on the driveway or lawn of an unoccupied house, or where residents are away for a few days, please be a good neighbor and remove these from the driveway or lawn. Either dispose of these papers or hold them for your neighbor's return. Our delivery service tries to avoid tossing the papers on these driveways, but it is not always evident which houses are unoccupied. So, please help us avoid these situations, or email us, delivery@poa4us.org or contact us by phone, 352-325-1540, to stop distribution to unoccupied properties.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. □

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The Board of Directors of The Property Owners' Association of The Villages would like to thank you for your support throughout the year.

The POA will continue to speak out for residents' rights. The POA has no special interest or hidden agendas. The only interest the POA has is to protect, preserve and improve the rights of all residents. We believe the POA is a needed check and balance to ensure that the Developer, and governments, decisions are in the best interest of the residents. The POA will continue informing and educating all residents (POA member or not), on issues that have an impact on their quality of life and their public safety, in our free monthly Bulletin.

The third Tuesday of the month, the POA

has a general meeting at 7PM at Laurel Manor, where you can participate in a question and answer session that allows you to ask questions and voice any concerns that you might have, as well as hear a speaker on a selected topic.

Active membership in the POA entitles you to participate in our Discount Partners Program. (See page 23.) By being an active member, you will also qualify to receive our monthly email alert which keeps you instantly updated on issues which concern The Villages.

Your membership and contributions are vital to our existence. There is strength in numbers; the larger our membership, the more credibility and strength the POA has. If you want to know more about us, please visit our website at poa4us.org. □

POA 2016 AND BEYOND MEMBERSHIP & CONTRIBUTION FORM

Please complete each section and return to: The POA, P.O. Box 386, Oxford, FL 34484

New Member Renewal Number of People in Household: _____

PLEASE PRINT! or Use the **ONLINE FORM** found on our website **POA4US.ORG**

NAME(S)(1) _____ (SAME LAST NAME)

NAME(S)(2) _____ (DIFFERENT LAST NAME)

ADDRESS _____

VILLAGE _____ VILLAGES ID# _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP CODE _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

(We respect your privacy. Your email address is for POA Official use ONLY)

MEMBERSHIP DUES (Please Select One):
 One year - 2016 - \$10 per/household
 Two years - 2016/2017 - \$20 per/household
 Three years - 2016/2017/2018 - \$30 per/household

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION IF DESIRED: Please accept my additional contribution to the POA in the following amount: \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT FOR DUES AND ANY CONTRIBUTIONS: \$ _____

Enclosed is a Stamped, Self-Addressed Envelope, along with this form and my check. Please mail my Membership Card to me.
 Please hold my POA Membership Card for me to pick up at one of the monthly POA Meetings.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE POA

Resales in The Villages

(Continued from page 2)

home, sometimes furniture can be a hindrance because people are looking to live in a home full-time and they don't need somebody else's furniture.

2) Would you address the rumor/story, that the Developer, south of CR466A, particularly as you get deeper into the new area, has priced those units to be more than competitive with resales north of CR466. **A)** The Villages is a very different community in many ways, except in this case. There are many communities where the residents are competing against the developer, but not to this scale. Almost always this can be a challenge. The saving grace, and this is what truly makes The Villages very different, is that there is still more of a demand than there is a supply. It's much worse, and almost impossible when the demand is not there, unless you are willing to take a great loss. The good news here is that there is enough traffic, through online sources too, so that there is competition with the Developer.

3) Would you also address, that as Realty Executives, you can't or don't show Villages listings? **A)** We can show Villages listings, we just won't get paid for it. This is what it is. Our realtors are in favor of preserving the relationship, so in essence, if we start off with a client who wants to look at MLS listings and they

want to work with us, we will offer to work with them and show Villages listings. For those who have been in The Villages for a long time, we have often lost clients, didn't make any money, but many times, that comes back. Because, often times we've done a great job in working with a client and so they refer other people. Obviously we want to get paid but it's a matter of finding the right home for our clients.

4) My daughter has an empty home that she is trying to sell through The Villages Realty. Could she possibly rent that home as a long-term rental? **A)** 100% yes, and we'd be happy to help, for sure. I don't know what the ins/outs are of her particular contract, but if the contract allows, yes she can.

5) I'm a Canadian who is thinking of selling his home here in The Villages. Are you aware, or do you know if, on closing, is there withholding tax if you are from outside of the country? I heard that if the value is over \$300,000, there is a law that applies, if under \$300,000, it doesn't. **A)** Yes, in fact, I'm glad you brought that up, it's called FIRPTA. The rules and laws have changed (going from 10% to 15%) and will be effective in two to three weeks. So, depending on the value of your home, that may or may not affect you.

6) I bought a home here 5 years ago. I was under the assumption that everyone who works for The Villages was, in fact, a realtor. They are not realtors. They are strictly working for The Villages. Do they have to have a real estate license to do that? **A)** Yes, they have to have a license, but they do not belong to the National Association of Realtors.

7) I would like to sell my house completely furnished (I am a home decorator). If the bond is paid, how much more appreciation do I have for that house if it is picture perfect, staged, move in condition? **A)** Great question. The first thing is, many times when buyers are looking at homes, they will look at the bond balance and sometimes in their minds, do "buyers math". For example, if there is a bond balance and if there are no upgrades (Formica counter tops vs. granite, etc.), what happens is they figure in the cost of repairs/updates along with the bond balance, come up with a figure that they feel is too high, and they go look at another property. As far as upgrades, if it looks great, in move in condition, it is hard to put a percentage on it, but you are definitely going to get more than you might think, perhaps not everything that you put into it. It depends on where you put any upgrades (bathroom, kitchen). Absolutely, an upgraded home will sell a lot better than a home without the upgrades.

8) When you are advising someone about selling their home, what types of improvements do you generally recommend and which give you the biggest bang for the buck? **A)** What we typically suggest are kitchens and bathrooms as a ++, and we know that you want flooring to look sharp. If you have run down carpet, it is probably a good idea to change it. As a seller you are thinking why change it, there's a chance the buyer will want to change it anyway. We don't want the buyers that are looking at the home to do what we talked about earlier (buyer's math), it's always

(Continued on page 5)

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Resales in The Villages

(Continued from page 4)

a good idea to do those things that will bring the price you want. Look at your home like you are a buyer. The larger items, for example, if your roof has less than 5 years of life left in it, probably won't be able to get insurance. I'm sure many of you have gotten that notice in the mail. You are going to need to get a roof certification, or replace the roof.

9) Can you say anything as it relates to the difference in price between new construction vs. an existing resale? I've been told it is 10%-15% difference between a model that is brand new and a resale house. A) A lot of it depends on the location. There's so many different factors, that it's hard to answer, but when you are looking at pricing, I think you've got to really look at the comparables. Look at as many public records, MLS, VLS, etc., look at everything out there that has sold. That's what we try to do. If your home is a couple of years old, you are going to be competing with new construction, for sure.

10) What is the average listing/sale by number of days? A) It depends on where you are. What we've noticed is that if you are south of CR466, somewhere around 30-35 days is about what we are looking at. If you are north, it's about 60 days. That's the average, obviously, when you are looking at averages you can see something a bit less or a bit more. □

AAC Meeting Highlights

(Continued from page 1)

facilities that had been espoused by Developer Gary Morse. (See related article on page 6, titled "The Case for Another Executive Golf Course and More Recreation Centers North of CR466".)

- The AAC members responded to the residents by directing Ms. Tutt to: 1) go back to the church officials (who recently announced they would not sell the old church to the AAC because the appraisals were too low) to ascertain if they would be willing to discuss a higher price; (Note: Ken Howard, pastor for ministries and administration at the First Baptist Church, responded to Ms. Tutt's inquiry advising her that the church has decided not to sell the hall.); 2) investigate further, the 40 acres for sale on CR42, including getting an appraisal; and 3) look for any other viable properties north of CR466 owned by the Developer, and any available land on the perimeter of The Villages, that would be suitable for the addition of recreation facilities.
- There was a request for locations north of CR466 for platform tennis. This will be placed on the AAC Budget Workshop Agenda. (That workshop will be held on Wednesday, April 13th at 1:30 P.M. at the District office.)

New Business:

- The AAC approved a motion to move forward with a \$2.1M project to improve the following multi-modal trails: Morse Boulevard, Villa De Laguna, De La Mesa Villas, Hacienda and Chula Vista Villas, the Morse round-about, and Paradise Recreation Center trails. Settlement funds will be used for these improvements.

Old Business:

- Schwartz Park - Project scheduled to be completed in April.
- Saddlebrook Recreation Center - The AAC approved proceeding with renovations, including modifications to the lobby and billiard room.

Please go to the www.DistrictGov.org website for the official minutes, agendas, and meeting schedules. Next AAC Meetings:

- General Meeting - Wednesday, April 6th, 9:00 AM, at the Savannah Center
- 2016-17 Budget Workshop - Wednesday, April 13th, 1:30 PM, at the District Office in Sumter Landing □

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THE CASE FOR ANOTHER EXECUTIVE GOLF COURSE AND MORE RECREATION CENTERS NORTH OF CR466

RATIO OF HOMES TO FACILITIES IN THE VILLAGES

The Villages Daily Sun - December 14, 2007

"The Villages - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow!"

By H. Gary Morse

(Four page insert in which Developer Gary Morse addressed the residents to explain what the class action lawsuit was all about. The full four page article can be found on the poa4us.org website - just click on lawsuit settlement link in the left side column.)

"...The Secret is in the Planning

"I guess the new generation refers to problems as opportunities. Well the planning process is fraught with opportunities. We learned from these opportunities as we set out to acquire the 25,000 acres and mas-

ter plan the entire Villages from Hwy. 42 in Marion County to Hwy. 44 in Sumter County and Hwy 301 in Sumter County to Hwy 441 in Lake County.

"As you grow. The most important thing you learn is ratios. The ratios of homes to facilities. How many homes does it take to support a town or shopping center? Neither should be too crowded, but must have enough people to support its merchants...

"How many homes will a recreation center, country club or executive golf course support? If you are interested in these ratios, this is what we will have at build-out with 56,000 homes.

47 - Golf courses - 621 Holes

35 - Executive Courses - 315 Holes (one executive course for every 1,600 homes

{56,000 divided by 35 = 1,600}

- 12 - Championship - 306 Holes
- 91 - Recreation Centers
- 59 - Neighborhood (one Neighborhood recreation center for every 950 homes)
- 23 - Villages (one Villages recreation center for every 2,435 homes)
- 9 - Regional (one Regional recreation center for every 6,222 homes)
- 61 - Postal Facilities
- 69 - Pools
- 84 - Miles of Transportation Trails

"And yes, these facilities will be more crowded in the winter than in the summer. In March you may not be able to get your favorite tee time on your favorite golf course as often as you can in July, but there will be tee times available."

Based on Developer Gary Morse's Ratios Additional Amenities Still Needed for Homes North of CR466

TOTAL HOMES ¹	RECREATION AMENITIES	DEVELOPER'S RATIOS	BASED ON RATIOS ²	PROVIDED NORTH OF 466 ²	STILL NEEDED NORTH OF 466 ²
22,639	Executive Golf	1 per 1,600 Homes	14 Courses	13 Courses	1 Course
22,639	Neighbor RC	1 per 950 Homes	24 NRC	5 NRC	19 NRC
22,639	Villages RC	1 per 2,435 Homes	9 VRC	7 VRC	2 VRC
22,639	Regional RC	1 per 6,222 Homes	4 RRC	4 RRC	0 RRC ³

- 1) 22,639 - Total AMENITY CONTRACTS north of CR466, including
 - 21,675 - Home Units (Lady Lake/Lake County and Districts 1, 2, 3, & 4)
 - 349 - Freedom Pointe Units
 - 15 - Buffalo Crossings Assisted Living Units
 - 300 - New Villas Units on CR42
 - 300 - Independent Senior Living and Assisted Living Units approved for future use
- 2) Numbers rounded up for 5 or more; or down for less than 5
- 3) Savannah provides limited indoor access for lifestyle programs

SUMMARY

Recreation facility additions needed for residents north of CR466 to meet the ratios set by Developer Gary Morse:

- 1 - Executive Golf Course
- 19 - Neighborhood Recreation Centers
- 2 - Villages Recreation Centers

(Prepared by Elaine Dredame, POA Past-President and Village of Chatham Resident) □

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POA Seeks Next Bulletin Editor

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It was announced in the November POA Bulletin, that Elaine Dreidame, after serving for five years as both the POA President and Editor of the monthly POA Bulletin, would not seek re-election for the President's position. She agreed to continue to extend her service on the POA Board of Directors in the role of Past President, and that she would continue to serve as Editor of the POA Bulletin until a replacement could be identified. The time has come to commence that process.

We are looking for an editor/writer, with a good sense of what makes an interesting angle to a story, and who has the ability to juggle all

of the moving parts of our publication. You will plan, write, coordinate, review and edit content for the monthly POA Bulletin.

The successful candidate will be able to decide which ideas should be pursued and which should get dropped in order to meet quality and accuracy standards. The goal is to provide exceptional, informative and engaging content which supports the mission of the POA.

Responsibilities:

- Coordinate print publishing cycle and manage content areas;
- Set publication standards and establish goals and expectations regarding emphasis of developing stories;
- Monitor news gathering operations to ensure utilization of all news sources;
- Develop story or content ideas, considering reader or audience appeal;
- Confer with POA management regarding placement and emphasis of developing stories;
- Responsible for 280 column inches of editorial content each month;
- Verify facts, dates, and statistics;
- Oversee layout and check content for accuracy and errors;
- Proofread, edit and improve stories or pieces;
- Recruit and manage writers and reporters

(if needed);

- Comply with media law and ethical guidelines;
- Meet deadlines and budget requirements.

Requirements:

- Full time Villages Resident;
- Belief in the POA Mission Statement (found on page two of this Bulletin);
- Familiarity with The Villages government structure and current issues;
- Proven working experience as an editor/writer preferred but not required;
- Strong writing/editing/proofreading skills;
- Hands on experience with MS Office or other publishing tools;
- An eye for detail along with critical thinking;
- Prioritizing and multitasking.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please send a copy of your resume, and a short statement on why you would like this position, to POA President Cliff Wiener at poa4us@hotmail.com at your earliest convenience. If you have questions, Cliff can be reached at 352-430-8497, or Elaine can be reached at 352-753-5069. □

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When Doing Everything 'Right' Still Can Go Wrong

WHAT DO BICYCLISTS AND GOLF CART USERS HAVE IN COMMON?

- They are transported on wheels at speeds which, when contacted/halted, can cause loss of control;
- They travel on the paved multi-modal trails along with pedestrians and skaters;
- They travel on the concrete roadways shared with automobiles, trucks and trucks with trailers;
- They travel in bike/cart lanes right alongside automobiles, trucks, and trucks with trailers;
- They have confidence in their ability to safely handle their bicycle or golf cart;
- They are subject to distraction, be it a noise, a darting animal, etc.;
- They have no control over the actions of the others;
- Neither golf cart users or bicyclists are protected by a metal enclosure.



As you drive around The Villages, note that almost all of bicyclists are wearing a helmet, even though it is not required if over 16 years old.

WHY? Because they are well aware that, should an accident occur while they are riding on pavement, their head will likely hit that solid surface at some point in the fall, which can result in serious brain trauma. They can rather easily recover from a bruise, skinned up



knees and hands and even broken bones, but head injuries are a serious matter. (Also, note the amount of interest there is in the safety design of football helmets for this same reason.) They enjoy the experience of traveling on a bicycle, but the vast majority of bicyclists also acknowledge the dangers that they face and TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT THEMSELVES.

(Continued on page 11)

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'Right', Still Wrong

(Continued from page 10)

BICYCLISTS WEAR HELMETS TO HELP PROTECT THEIR BRAIN IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT, be they riding on the multi-modal paths or on the roadways.



Many residents enjoy using their golf cart for transportation and the vast majority do not take into consideration the dangers that they face. THEY DO NOT TAKE ACTION TO HELP PREVENT AN EJECTION AND LIKELY HEAD INJURY. THEY DO NOT INSTALL AND USE SEATBELTS.

As you walk through parking lots, or at the golf courses, where users leave a cart in the parking lot, note how few have installed seat belts. Also, note how open a golf cart is - there is nothing to keep you in the cart when it strikes an object, be it cart, tree, curb, etc., or when it is struck by an automobile or truck. The POA has been urging residents to install and use seat belts, since 2012, after studying the number of serious injuries and fatalities caused by ejections which resulted in head trauma that have occurred as a result of a golf cart accident/incident. (18 fatalities in the last nine years and more than a dozen trauma alerts with head injuries every year.)

You can be the best driver in the world, but you cannot control what others do. The following are some examples during which serious or fatal injuries occurred to occupants of golf carts, here in The Villages, who WERE NOT WEARING SEAT BELTS, and were **ejected even though the operator was doing everything right:**

-->Golf cart driver preparing to make a left hand turn, using both a hand signal and turn signals, on a shared use roadway was rear ended by a car and both occupants were ejected and received serious head injuries;

-->Golf cart driver was traveling on a multi-modal path when struck by an out of control SUV, whose driver had a medical emergency, and both occupants of the golf cart were ejected and died from their injuries.

-->Golf cart driver in the bike/cart lane, on a roadway shared with motor vehicles, was hit by a car turning right from the vehicle lane who cut off the driver of the golf cart, causing an ejection and serious injury.

-->Golf cart in the bike/cart lane, on a roadway shared with motor vehicles, was hit by a truck turning left into a side street. The driver of the truck did not see the golf cart because the car lane was stopped for a left turning vehicle. Golf cart driver was ejected, receiving serious injuries.

-->Golf cart passenger was not paying attention and, when the driver made a quick left turn, the passenger was ejected from the cart, landing on the pavement and died from head injuries.

There have been engineering studies which explain why "unrestrained" golf cart occupants are ejected from a golf cart upon impact with a curb or object and why passengers fall out of a golf cart when the driver makes a left turn if they are not paying attention, even though the golf cart industry tried to prevent this by adding "sidebar restraints".

Engineering studies show that the sidebar restraints and 'add-on arm rests' are an insufficient safety mechanism. Instead of actually correcting the problem, they can make it worse. (Golf carts were originally designed without seat belts because the nature of golf cart use on a golf course required a number of stops and manufacturers felt seat belts would be inconvenient. Instead manufacturers simply installed sidebars.) Centrifugal forces, which redirect the position of the body when making a left turn, coupled with the sidebar design on golf carts, increase the likelihood of injury because passengers are rotated around the sidebar and subsequently ejected head first.

To further reinforce the ejection accident mode, just consider the data compiled by local law enforcement and the POA. Serious injury or death, in many cases, is due to a passenger's

head striking the pavement when they are ejected from a moving vehicle, which is also the leading cause of golf cart accidents resulting in an emergency room visit nationwide. If you're the type that enjoys technical reading, you might want to put this title in your computer search engine:

"ANALYSIS AND PREVENTION OF CHILD EJECTIONS FROM GOLF CARS AND PERSONAL TRANSPORT VEHICLES".

The computer simulation graphic from that study helps make the ejection risk point. Note the pivoting of the body over the side hip re-

(Continued on page 12)

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'Right', Still Wrong

(Continued from page 11)

straint in such a way that the passenger (a child, in this case) strikes the pavement head first! As the study explains, even holding on to the outboard handle doesn't guarantee your passenger will stay in the cart.

In a 1998 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration report, it stated that, discussions with various golf cart manufacturers and vendors produced an essentially unanimous viewpoint on the subject of safety restraints on a golf cart. They viewed them as a potentially dangerous accessory and a definite legal/litigation liability for the low speeds and uneven terrain that is a golf cart's typical OPERATING ENVIRONMENT. Their perception was that it is generally preferable to step from, or be thrown from, a golf cart that is starting to roll over down a hill than to be strapped to the vehicle. The sculpted or hilly terrain of many golf courses, results in a fairly high propensity for tipping and rolling, which can occur at very low speeds. This hazard is aggravated at golf courses that incorporate hilly terrain with steep, narrow golf cart paths and sharp turns. (See picture below.)



However, a review of golf cart crashes in The Villages confirms safety experts recent statements which indicate rollovers are most common on hilly golf courses, not on streets, and most of those involve a cart turning on its side, not upside down. See picture in the next column.

Note, we have NOT been able to identify any reported crashes in The Villages which have involved a rollover in which the use of a seatbelt would most likely have been a liability.



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Common scenarios for golf cart ejections of both the operator and any passenger occur when an occupied golf cart collides with a stationary object; collides with another golf cart, automobile or truck; or, when an inattentive driver hits the curb and flips the cart.

One common scenario specific to a passenger ejection accident occurs when a cart, traveling faster than 11 mph, is turned sharply to the left. During a sharp left turn, centrifugal acceleration forces tend to force the passenger to his/her right, which can lead to ejection. (Many of these occur in The Villages.) Sharp turns are less likely to lead to a driver ejection

because the driver has the steering wheel to hold onto and can always anticipate when he/she is about to initiate a turn.

A couple of common questions and answers follow:

If seat belts were really important, wouldn't the manufacturers install them? Golf carts, as we know them today, came into wider use starting back in the '50s. The major manufacturers did, and continue to, focus on fleet golf cart sales to golf courses. The quantities produced and the affordability of these fleet carts simply found their way into general use on city streets in golf course communities, small towns, and urban areas over the years. They do not want the expense of all of the testing for safety that would be necessary if the carts came with seat belts installed.

If golf cart seat belts save lives, wouldn't the federal government mandate seat belts? The serious injury/death situation did become evident to the federal government's NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) back in the 90's. At that time some states and local governments already had in place restricted use requirements, including mirrors, lights, horn, etc. However, due to intense lobbying by the golf cart manufacturer's trade organization, and the major manufacturer's dealer organizations, the 0-20 mph speed

(Continued on page 15)



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'Right', Still Wrong

(Continued from page 12)

range was left out of NHTSA's federal regulations, leaving golf carts completely unregulated. Instead a new category of vehicle, called a Low Speed Vehicle (LSV), was created covering only the 20-25 mph top speed range --- which, by the way, included a seat belt re-

quirement in the standard.

My cart didn't come with seat belts and aren't they too expensive to install? Given what we spend for our customized golf carts, the dollars needed to install seat belts is pretty insignificant. Especially since your life, or that of a loved one, may depend on them. We suggest you contact your service provider for cost information before you make a decision **not** to

install them.

In summary, our 20 mph golf carts are not designed or manufactured for use on the roadways, they're designed for golf courses and are generally set for a maximum of 12 mph. They can be modified to go 20 mph by changing out gears, installing larger tires, adjusting the gas

(Continued on page 16)

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'Right', Still Wrong

(Continued from page 15)

engine governor, installing higher speed electric cart motors/controls, etc. There are no roadway crashworthiness requirements incorporated into their design.

Granted, to meet state and local community vehicle standards they have mirrors, lights, horns, and a few other safety features. But, we are pretty much left with trying to use common sense (and complying with the law) to improve our safety while traveling in these carts.

The limited structural integrity of the cart is still better than your body if something crashes into you, or if you crash into a tree, another cart, etc. Staying in the cart is better than the thrown-free/jump-free alternative.

And, lots of good data and prior studies

have shown that ejection risks could all but be eliminated with firmly secured seat belts (and shoulder belts, if possible). Please, install and wear seat belts at all times, with the exception of traveling on the golf course.

DON'T RUE THE DAY YOU LOSE A LOVED ONE OR HAVE THEM SERIOUSLY INJURED IN A GOLF CART ACCIDENT WHERE A SEAT BELT COULD HAVE PREVENTED THEIR EJECTION.

(Contributions to this article were made from Parker Sykes' article, titled "Golf Cart Seat Belts and The Villages".) □

ATTENTION CDD AND AAC BOARD MEMBER APPLICANTS

DEADLINE FOR FILING IS NOON, MAY 23rd

General elections are held on November 8th, which is only 6 months away. Local, county, state and federal elected positions will be up for grabs, where qualified electors will decide the fate of elected officials. It is a privilege, in reality a right, implied by the Constitution, and is an awesome responsibility that few people throughout the world can exercise in the way it is accomplished here in the United States.

Political participation and involvement in the local community is the hallmark element in the democratic process. It is a cornerstone at the grassroots level where local voices are heard to directly impact daily governance. The process chooses leaders that take the wishes of the residents into account when making decisions affecting their community.

In The Villages, there will be **23 seats** opened on the various local boards, Districts

(Continued on page 17)

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CDD & AAC Elections

(Continued from page 16)

1-10 and the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC). On average, half of the Board elected seats are open for challenge every two years.

Normally, these boards convene once a month, and perhaps some supervisors will have possible additional commitments on committees relative to Board responsibilities.

Local candidates seeking one of these elected positions must contact and file with the appropriate County Supervisor of Elections. All candidates for elected positions on all boards, in the filing process, must pay either a filing fee or gather a prescribed number of petition signatures from their corresponding voting area. (Party affiliation to be elected or retain office is inconsequential.)

Candidates for Special District Offices are no longer required to name a Campaign Treasurer and Depository or the campaign reports, as long as they make no expenditures or accept any cash or in-kind donations. This is entitled Method "A" and an affidavit of intent is filed with the Supervisor of Elections agreeing that no contributions or expenditures will be made other than a filing fee, and the only campaigning will be conducted by word of mouth. Method "B" for Special District Offices allows candidates traditional campaigning, and they must file with the Supervisor of Elections a DS-DE 9 form (appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Depository) and DS-DE 84 (Statement of Candidate).

Both Special District qualifying requirements Method "A" and "B" must be submitted by noon, May 23, 2016, to the Supervisor of Elections followed by a qualifying period noon, June 20 - noon, June 24, 2016, set up by appointment, that will consummate the filing process. □

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FIRST AID: In the event of a cut, a sting, or a bruise, there are first-aid kits close at hand throughout The Villages. Each of our thirty-two neighborhood or regional Recreation Centers has a mobile, well stocked first-aid kit with band aids, gauze bandages, tape, and ice-packs ready for you when you need them.

In a more serious situation -- or when the seriousness of the injury is at all uncertain, officials recommend that you call 911 and let the call taker determine whether you need emergency help. Don't hesitate! No one will criticize if you err on the side of safety first.

DISPOSING OF BIG TRASH: Things like an old sofa or mattress, or stuff too big or heavy for a trash bag, are classified as a bulk item and are included in your garbage removal service (call first, see below). These bulk items include (but are not limited to) furniture, large household items (not contractor items!) generated remodeling debris, bicycles, lawn mowers, loose items in open boxes, toilets, carpeting, fencing, computers, other electronic equipment and lumber - just about everything, except bricks, concrete and hazardous materials.

Do not mix bulk items (appliances and yard waste) or collection cannot take place. They should be placed curbside and at least three feet (3') away from your normal household garbage, trees, fire hydrants, cars, sprinkler heads or anything else that collection equipment could damage.

There is no additional fee for this service, **BUT pick-up should be scheduled in advance** and will usually be set for the next day. Keep in mind: Trash will go into a standard size pick-up truck (not a big garbage truck), so there is a limit on how much they'll take at one time. Call Monday - Friday, 8AM to 5PM: Sumter/Marion 748-0109; Lake 323-0824. □

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Tips from Bill Farmer, Sumter County Sheriff, to help secure your home:

1. Look around when leaving home. A burglar may be watching your neighborhood waiting for you to leave.
2. If you see a suspicious person or vehicle call the Sheriff's Office, and make note of the tag on the vehicle, if possible. A description of the people and vehicles will be helpful when investigating.
3. If only one person leaves the home and shortly afterwards someone you do not know knocks on your door, call the Sheriff's office and report a suspicious person right away. The reason to make this call is that it could be the burglar checking to see if anyone is home prior to breaking in.

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- If your home has been burglarized:**
1. As soon as you determine that your home has been broken into, exit the residence the same way you entered, and call the Sheriff's Office. Wait outside for a deputy to arrive.
 2. Someone may still be inside, so exiting the home is safer for you and better for the deputy that will be looking for evidence.
 3. Do not touch anything, or walk around the residence, leave everything as you found it. There could be potential evidence that could lead to the capture of the suspect. When you walk around the residence, you are covering up their possible shoe prints on your floors. When you touch the items in your house, you are covering, smudging and ruining, possible fingerprints that could be discovered by the deputy.
 4. During the investigation, remain outside so as not to contaminate the residence and lose any evidence that might be found by the responding crime scene deputy.
 5. Be patient during the investigation. It takes time for the crime scene deputy to respond. It takes time for the responding deputy to complete his paperwork and a thorough investigation. We know that it can be hot during the summer, and cold during the winter, and once a crime scene deputy responds and begins processing the residence. They make sure that an inside room is completed, so you can return inside to one room, while they complete their investigation. □



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LETTERS

Letter to the POA:

Ugly Curbs/Sidewalks

The residential streets in the Villages of Mallory Square and Caroline are rapidly deteriorating. They are turning black from mildew and irrigation staining. Many people will power wash in front of their houses, but common areas and sidewalks continue to blacken. With as many tax dollars that are generated for Sumter County from The Villages, you would think periodic street cleaning of these areas would be a provided service. It is just a shame when flowers can be replaced three times a year and landscaping is kept in check, that this ugly mess goes untreated. Jack Gaza

POA Response: We would suggest that you email your District 6 Board of Supervisors (dist6board@districtgov.org) a copy of this letter and follow that up by attending their next Board meeting and ask for help with this issue. They meet on the third Friday of the month, at 9:30AM, at the District office. It would be especially beneficial if you could provide pic-

tures of CDD6 common areas and sidewalks, demonstrating the problem, on District owned property. Alternatively, you could telephone them with your issue at 352-751-3939. □

Letter to the POA:

Parking Lot Aisle Signs

Could you ask the shopping lot owners [apparently not the store owners] to some way mark the parking lanes, so that shoppers can find their cars more easily? It feels so "geezerish" to walk and peer from lane to lane while trying not to look lost. Thanks, B. McKee

POA Response: The shopping areas, in and around The Villages, that do not mark the parking lot aisles, with a sign containing an identifying number or letter, are owned by Villages related companies and leased to various companies, such as Walmart. Unfortunately, even though The Villages Developers are making their money off of an older population, who, as they age, frequently have trouble identifying the correct aisle if there is no signage, they refuse to put up the signage because they believe it negatively impacts the aesthetics. It sure would be nice if they would

reconsider this position --- after all, we are talking about a parking lot, and maybe age related needs should trump aesthetics. □



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LETTERS

Letter to the POA:

Golf Cart Operations

Good morning. The POA Bulletin was delivered yesterday and has continued to have very informative information pertinent to The Villages Lifestyle. Concerning the article(s) on golf carts/operations, there were a few important particular items that were not included:

The front signal lights in most golf cars, triangular in some, are much too small to be clearly visible for oncoming vehicles and pedestrians. Many of the newer carts have added mini light bands. They certainly help. The new carts should have self-cancelling signals similar to automobiles. That would also provide help.

Nothing was mentioned about golf cart drivers who have their pet, in some cases, pets, on their laps or in their arms, when driving their vehicle. I constantly see golf cart drivers, with their pet loose, sitting next to them.

Toys? No, golf carts are not toys and should be treated with respect and cautious driving habits.

These drivers should be ticketed!

Richard F. Lally

POA Response: The referenced article was a summary of Lt. Siemer's presentation at a recent POA meeting, so it only included things that he spoke about. Thank you for your suggestions. □

Letter to the POA:

Kudos to the POA

I am a new owner and only here part-time, but I have read the last three issues of the POA Bulletin and believe you are providing a great service for all of us.

Keep up the good work!

John & Becky Schable

POA RESPONSE: Thank you for your expressed appreciation of our volunteer efforts to keep residents fully informed of the issues. We hope that you, as well as many like you who read the Bulletin faithfully, will show your support by joining the POA each year. The more resident voices we represent, as evidenced by our membership numbers, the more influence we will have when issues are being discussed and negotiated. □

Letter to the POA:

Multi-Modal Paths

I always enjoy reading The Bulletin when it comes out. Please keep up the good work.

There is, in my opinion, a contradiction in the March, 2016, in the article, "Villages Multi-Modal Paths and Roadways". On page 1, column 1, paragraph 2, Ms. Fuchs, in 2010, stated: "...that Segways, street legal golf carts and low speed vehicles (LSVs) were legal users of the MMPs". On page 5, column 3, paragraph 1, Lt. Wolfe said that: "...since a street legal cart is a registered vehicle, it is not supposed to be in those bicycle/golf cart lanes."

Unless, since 2010, there has been a change in the law, these two opinions/statements are in conflict. It would be nice to clarify whether registered vehicles are allowed on the MMPs and if so are they, or would they be subject to the 20 mph limit? Thank you, Frank Wenzel

POA RESPONSE: Thank you. Actually, there was no contradiction - Ms. Fuchs reference was regarding use on MMPs (the multi-modal paths) and Lt. Wolfe's reference was regarding bicycle/golf cart lanes - not MMP's, referring to the streets, where bikes and golf carts have a lane on the roadway next to the vehicular lane, like the lane on Morse Boulevard north of CR466.

In response to your second question, the speed limit on the MMPs is 20 mph for everyone, regardless of mode of transportation. However, law enforcement has no authority on the MMPs, at this time, so there is no one who can enforce the 20 mph limit. □

Our Gardening Column:

Minimal Maintenance Landscapes

by Anne Lambrecht, Master Gardener
annegarden@embarqmail.com

I recently met with a friend who had just moved to a villa in Antrim Dells, way-the-heck-down south, near Brownwood. She asked for some advice on a maintenance-free garden WITH ROCKS.

Yikes! Maintenance free? Gulp: Rocks?

Then I started to think about it. And because she's my friend, I decided I would try to bend my own stiff-necked rules and try to work outside my organic rock-free box.

It's true: most people want maintenance free. After all, only crazy people like me look for opportunities to slave in the jungle all day. And, by now, you all know that nothing is "maintenance free", except for Astro Turf and plastic, right? But, we want our yards to look nice, even when we are often away from home, like my friend.

There are key plants that should be in every low maintenance landscape and there are so many to choose from! You want color, texture, shape, natives. You need to know the sun exposure in your garden, the plant's bloom time, growth habit and sun and water requirements. Do they go to sleep in the winter, changing the landscape? How do they fare in our slightly alkaline soil, as long as they have moderate water and the soil drains well? Planted properly, they should also be relatively pest free.

Every landscape should have a tree, a holly, a grass, a palm, shrubs, flowering bulbs, something that looks "tropical", a ground cover, succulent and/or cactus and annuals for fillers. You'll want to use natives. You want texture, year round, with a combination of contrasting form and foliage. You want your yard to provide perching, nesting and feeding sites for birds (they cut down on the insects).

Remember the rules: RIGHT PLANT IN THE RIGHT PLACE and remember that not all plants listed are for full sun! Some enjoy the shade. No shade, you say? The eastern side of house is a good substitute for shade.

Trees - a big item in the garden, so choose and plant them carefully. Good trees for the landscape: bald cypress, bottlebrush, citrus, crape myrtle, fig, Italian cypress, podocarpus

(Continued on page 21)

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Minimal Maintenance

(Continued from page 20)

(yew), chaste tree, loquat, magnolia, oak, pine, red maple, persimmon, fringe tree, redbud, buckeye, river birch.

Ornamental Grasses - bring the Florida landscape to life. Clump-forming bamboo (Bambusa species), dwarf Fakahatchee Grass, pampas grass, purple fountain grass, Muhly grass, river oats, ribbon grass.

Palms - Sabal or cabbage palm is the state tree of Florida (and of South Carolina). Actually, palms are not trees at all but ancient grasses. Palms are usually the first thing people plant when they come to Florida. But do your homework: not all palms were created equal! Best for beginners: fan palms, jelly palm, needle palm, saw palmetto and of course the Sabal. Also, Coonie and Sago Palms are cycads and not palms but they do well here, too. And remember that palms need special food.

Shrubs - angel's trumpet, abutilon or flowering maple, cigar plant, clerodendrum (pagoda plant, blue glory bower), hibiscus, tibouchina or princess flower, heavenly bamboo (nandina), bird of paradise, hollies, ligustrums, yucca, fire bush, camellia, azalea, abelia, beautyberry, Indian hawthorn, oleander, pittosporum, plumbago, red-tip photinia, roses, Simpson's stopper, Turk's cap, tea olive, Yesterday-Today-and Tomorrow, golden dewdrop, thryallis, pineapple guava.

Flowering Bulbs - and bulb-like perennials that "come and go" with the seasons are sometimes overlooked by new gardeners or planted as afterthoughts. But they can be easily worked into your landscapes to add or prolong color and provide foliage in off seasons. Good examples of bulbs for beginners: agapanthus (lily of the Nile), amaryllis, blue flag iris, calladium, canna, crinum lily, day lily, elephant's ear, ginger, rain lilies.

Tropicals for north central Florida (remember that many are not cold hearty and need protection in winter so containers might be the way to go with these) - banana, bromeliads, croton, orchids, some ferns, dracaena, schefflera, cordylines, peace lily, philodendrons, rubber tree, shrimp plant, cacti and succulents including aloe and century plants, crown of thorns, jade plant, kalanchoe, ponytail palm, snake plant, night-blooming cereus.

Groundcovers - useful in densely shaded areas, to cover dry/sandy spots, to hide surface tree roots, to fill in difficult to mow areas between shrubs, trees and paved areas, as a cascading element in large container plantings, to absorb rainfall runoff from buildings and paved areas. Some good examples: Asiatic jasmine, liriope, junipers, ferns, mondo grass, perennial peanut, peacock ginger, oyster plant, sedum, sunshine mimosa.

Flowering perennials - coreopsis (the state wildflower), gaura (whirling butterflies), blanket flower, Mexican heather, salvias, purple coneflow-

er, Rudbeckia (or black-eyed Susan), Stokes' Aster.

Annuals - Used for fast color or screening as container plants and hanging baskets, for vegetables or herbs, and in long-blooming masses or specimen plants. They provide all-season color bridges. Good examples of easy annuals: angelonia, celosia, coleus, dusty Miller, globe amaranth, marigold, moss rose, ornamental sweet potato, pentas, pansy, periwinkle and zinnia.

Excerpts in this article are from a great book which is worth having: Tough Plants for Florida Gardens by Felder Rushing. Check out the twelve step Gardeners Anonymous Program to find out if you truly are a garden nerd. Check out the Florida Plant of the Year program, sponsored by the Florida Nurserymen, Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA) www.fn gla.org/. □

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Seniors vs. Crime

Leading the Fight Against Scams New Social Security Scam

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recently became aware of this scam and is asking for help in tracking down the fraudsters.

Here's how the FTC says it works: The scam email offers new features to help consumers monitor their credit and learn whether someone is engaging in unauthorized use of their Social Security number. It sounds very official and may even mention the "SAFE Act of 2015". There IS such a thing as the SAFE Act - it just has nothing to do with Social Security.

The **SAFE Act** (Safety Against Foreign Enemies) is an American legislative proposal for Syrian and Iraqi refugees that would require extra background investigation before entry into the United States. It was first introduced in the House on November 17, 2015, (H.R. 4038) and has since been passed by the House. It has nothing to do with Social Security.

You should be aware that the SSA is not offering such a program. The email is actually a "phishing" email designed to get you to click on the link. Doing so could allow "malware" to be installed on your computer, like viruses and spyware.

The link might also take you to a "spoof" website designed to look like the Social Security Administration (SSA) website. Then you will be asked to provide personal information, like your Social Security number and bank or credit account numbers. This is just a prelude to your identity theft!

What should you do if you are the target of this new SSA scam?

If you get **ANY** questionable email, **DO NOT CLICK** on any links. Instead, notify the FTC by forwarding suspicious emails to spam@uce.gov immediately.

Are you unsure about whether it's for real? Here are a couple clues:

- "hover" your cursor over the address link in the email. If it's fake, you'll see that the address is an unrelated .com address, not the .gov address it appears to be.

- Did it end up in your junk folder? If so, that's because your email filters recognized that it wasn't for real
- If you're unsure if an email is coming from the government, call them yourself. But use a phone number you look up yourself, not the contact info listed in the email.

Please share this alert with your friends and family and urge them to do the same! Together we can stop scammers in their tracks and keep your hard earned dollars in your pocket where they belong!

Remember, no one will watch out for your interests better than YOU. When in doubt as to what you can do to protect yourself against unscrupulous SSA impersonators, contact your nearest Seniors vs. Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance. There is never a charge for their services.

Seniors vs. Crime can be reached at (352) 753-7775 at the Marion County Sheriff's Office in The Villages; (352) 689-4600, Extension 4606 at the Sumter County Sheriff's Office in The Villages; or (352) 750-1914 at the Wildwood Police Annex in Brownwood.

Volunteers at all three offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. To keep up with the latest scams, LIKE 'Seniors vs. Crime Region 4' on Facebook. □

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Dr. Ceriani Going from House to Hospital, 1948. Photograph by W. Eugene Smith

Accreditation means patient safety: FDA urges patient protection

The US Food and Drug Administration has reviewed a decade of data concerning the delivery of radiation for cancer treatment. In April of 2010, they concluded that much greater safety measures are necessary. The agency realizes the critical need for more intense patient protection.

In light of the FDA's conclusion, the American College of Radiology (ACR) called for compliance with its accreditation program for facilities that deliver radiation therapy to cancer patients. Years ago, the ACR established credentialing boards for this specialty. Rigid standards were established. So rigorous that, in radiation treatment, only a small percentage of all facilities are approved. Every facet is evaluated including the physicians, physics and treatment staff, nursing staff, equipment, quality control, and training. The ACR evaluates completely and methodically. Not one thing is left to chance.

In our area of Florida, few facilities are accredited by the ACR. The Robert Boissoneault Oncology Institute shares this distinction with sites like the Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, the Moffitt Cancer Center, Tampa, and UF Shands.

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