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The Bulletin

The POA – Champions of Residents' Rights Since 1975

APRIL 2019

POA4US.org

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UPCOMING POA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Tuesday, Apr. 23, 2019 • 7 P.M.

Eisenhower Recreation Center

Barbara Kays, District Budget Director

Understanding the District Budget Process

Tuesday, May 21, 2019 • 7 P.M.

Laurel Manor

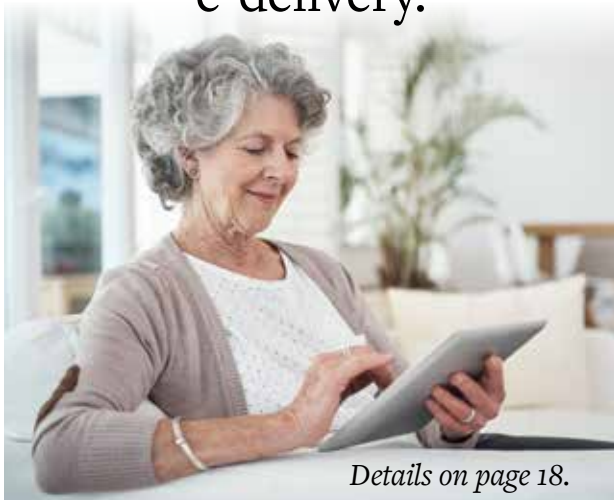
Presented by Len Hathaway

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Details on page 18.

Hospital CEO Defends CMS Quality Ratings

At the March 19 POA General Membership Meeting, Central Florida Health President & CEO Don Henderson stood before a packed room and told residents “the hospital is not perfect,” but is trying very hard to improve.

Central Florida Health was founded in 2008 when the Leesburg and The Villages hospitals were combined. The Villages Regional Hospital (TVRH) was built in 2002, and after a major expansion in 2012, now has 307 beds. Leesburg has 329 beds. Combined, the hospitals have 26,000 admissions annually, 9,800 patients classified as “observation,” 1,800 births (none in TVRH), and 84,000 Emergency Room visits. Mr. Henderson stated they have 65% market share in the primary service area.

TVRH Site Administrator Michael Pittman discussed the Journey to Quality, saying they have identified four major service lines for which they want to be “Centers of Excellence:” Cardiac, Stroke, Hip & Knee Surgery/Replacement, and Oncology. Each of those areas has been certified by the Joint Commission for Healthcare Accreditation and/or its related College of service.

Mr. Henderson defended the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) low star ratings – down to a 1 Star from 3 Stars just 2 years ago – with the rationale that the rating standards

keep changing and because of the elderly population that is served in The Villages. “If you have a lot of elderly, you will score lower,” he said.

To address issues in the Emergency Department, Mr. Henderson said they have added beds (48 total currently,) added seasonal staff, hired outside consultants, and they are building a free-standing Emergency Department with the University of Florida in Brownwood on CR 44. They have also set these new goals:

- Time from door to provider – 15 minutes
- From door to discharge – > 2 hours
- From door to admission – > 4 hours



Quality Ratings continued on page 2

The Property Owners’ Association, Inc. (POA) is the original property owners’ group in The Villages. Established in 1975, the POA operates with complete independence from the Developer of The Villages. Membership is open to all property owners and residents of The Villages. The POA is committed to acting as a watchdog to ensure that the Developer and local government are responsive to the needs, interests, and rights of residents.

The POA Declaration of Independence

The POA is free of any outside influence. This is the only way we can assure our members of absolute autonomy to act on their behalf. From the very beginning in 1975, we recognized this need for independence, and we’ve cherished and nurtured it ever since.

Vision The Property Owners’ Association, Inc. (POA) is a champion for the rights of residents of The Villages. Guided by member input, investigation and determination, the POA brings attention to and acts on issues that may impact property values and quality of life.

Mission Statement The POA provides 1) a forum for discussion of issues; 2) research and analysis; 3) programs of interest; and, 4) is a conduit for objective and accurate information. Specific attention is given to resolving housing, community and local government issues.

Values

- Independence • Honesty • Fairness
- Objectivity • Respect



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ALL content will be monitored by the Administrator and posts containing opinion or debate will be removed.

Quality Ratings continued from page 1

He shared comparative data to the most recent CMS data, showing some more recent improvement in door to discharge data, but did not address door to admission times which were listed at a staggering 503 minutes. He brushed off incidents of sepsis and Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) – both classified as worse than the national average in the CMS data – saying that these “bugs” are colonized in skilled nursing and assisted living facilities, but are reflected in their statistics. He also said it is not uncommon to have higher mortality rates when serving an elderly population.

With respect to Patient Satisfaction Ratings, Mr. Henderson said that only ratings of 9 or 10 show up in the CMS data, and it does not consider “good” ratings of 7 or 8.

Affiliations with University of Florida Grow

Central Florida Health has strengthened its affiliation with University of Florida Hospital (UF) with a formal agreement in January 2018

Two significant areas of affiliation include the Stroke Care service line. UF has stationed a helicopter in Summerfield and is available to transport stroke patients from TVRH after a Rapid CAT scan and brain reconstruction are done at TVRH. Neurologists from both TVRH and Shands consult on the results and determine if the patient will be treated with medication or if further intervention is required and the patient is to be transported to Shands Hospital in Gainesville. TVRH is the only hospital that Shands is working with in stroke care.

The first formal joint venture with UF is the new 24-hour free standing Emergency Department in Brownwood, for which UF is investing ½ the cost.

3rd Hospital Campus Under Consideration

Central Florida Health has purchased acreage south of CR 44 to accommodate the enormous growth of The Villages in that area, and there is a joint strategic planning to determine the scope of services that would be offered to complement existing services.

Both Mr. Henderson and Mr. Pittman invited residents to call or email them any time to discuss patient experiences at the hospital, and Mr. Henderson indicated he hoped this presentation would become an annual event with the POA.

Residents had plenty of questions.

What are the plans for the outpatient surgery center that has closed?

There was not enough doctor volume to keep it open.

Why aren’t the certification processes and the CMS ratings reconciled?

One has nothing to do with the other. The service line certifications are conducted according to the best practices of those areas, while the CMS ratings are based on entirely different criteria looking at other areas of patient care, particularly through-put in the Emergency Department.

What training is done for customer service? Is there a staffing issue?

Weighting was increased for customer service, but training is provided. The hospital adds seasonal staff and utilizes travel nursing services. Mr. Henderson said they are adequately staffed.

Shouldn’t we (residents of The Villages) have the same quality as other hospitals that don’t serve an elderly population?

All of the hospitals are held to the same standards (9 or 10), regardless of the populations served. But, depending on the population, the outcomes will not be the same.

How many beds should an ER like ours have? The standard is one bed for every 2,000 annual ER visits. TVRH exceeds that standard with 48 beds.

It seems that not every section of the ER is used.

The ER has three sections and the beds in the back are considered “swing” beds, used for overflow or sometimes for observation. Sometimes nurses are reassigned to other floors to help ease the load there, and these beds are not used.

Quality Ratings continued on page 3

Quality Ratings continued from page 2

Q What is the nursing turnover rate and why can't the hospital keep personnel?

The turnover rate is 17%, which is consistent with the state average. They are working to keep it lower but it is hard to get nurses to stay here because there aren't a lot of housing choices.

Q The Leapfrog Safety Ratings have gone from an A to a C. Why?

There are many "self-proclaimed" rating programs and the criteria changes. Leapfrog wants a 24-hour intensivist and TVRH only has a 12-hour plus a 12-hour critical care nurse.

Q Why isn't there a 24-hour Urgent Care Clinic?

There was one across the street that wasn't used enough to keep open and they tried to locate one next to the ER that people could easily use, but that didn't work either. They have tried to come up with a workable solution and will continue.

Q Is there a patient liaison?

Volunteers round with patients regularly.

Q Are there any plans for a merger with Shands/UF Hospital?

That could be a possibility as joint ventures and the affiliation agreements go forward. Unlike some of our critics, they like us and our quality.

Q Why aren't doctors or residents in the hospital 24-hours?

They are working toward that.

Q If you don't have funds to staff the current hospital, how can you consider building more?

Mr. Henderson respectfully disagreed with that statement. ■

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- Three years – 2019/2020/2021 - \$30 per/household

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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.

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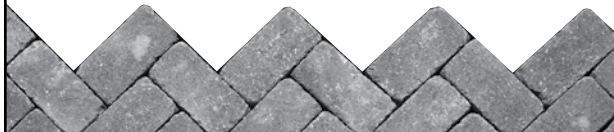
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CMS Star Ratings Are In – The Villages Regional Hospital Falls to a 1 Star Rating!

The Center for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) has finally released to the public the updated Star Quality ratings, and the news is not good for The Villages Regional Hospital (TVRH) or Villagers, as TVRH has now fallen to a **1 Star Rating**. In 2017, TVRH fell from a 3 Star to a 2 Star.

CMS has delayed release of the ratings after hospitals have pushed back hard on how the ratings are calculated and compared. While it may be that TVRH serves a population that is not easily compared to other hospitals of its size, the numbers are what they are. It is unacceptable that:

- Villagers have a 503-minute wait time before being admitted, up from 454 minutes last year, – and 194 minutes longer than other hospitals.
- It takes 260 minutes to leave from a TVRH ER visit, also up from 246 minutes last year – and 80 minutes longer than other hospitals.
- Incidents of sepsis increased from 22% last year to 30% this year. Timely ER care continues to be best for patients being treated for broken bones, and patients presenting with stroke symptoms who received scan results within 45 minutes of arrival is a more positive 79%.

- Under “Infections and Complications,” Catheter-associated urinary tract infections and cases of Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) were classified as worse than the National Benchmark (1.340 and 1.698 respectively).
- In the category of 30-day “Death Rates” (patients who died within 30 days of hospital treatment), heart failure and pneumonia continued to be **worse than the national average**.

Death rates for heart attack and stroke were the same as the national average.

Central Line associated bloodstream infections, intestinal infections were classified as **better than** the National Benchmark (.552,.971,) and surgical site infections from colon surgery were **no different than** the National Benchmark.

To look at and compare TVRH and other hospitals of interest, visit <https://medicare.gov/hospitalcompare>. ■

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Amenity Authority and Project Wide Advisory Committees Discuss Whether to Raise Amenity Fee Deferral Rate

In a first-ever joint meeting, the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) and Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) met on March 20 to begin discussions about whether to raise or eliminate the Amenity Fee **Deferral Rate**. The Amenity Fee Deferral Rate is a maximum rate that can be set by the Amenity Authority Committee or the Sumter Landing Community Development Committee (SLCDD) with a recommendation from the PWAC. The current rate is \$155.

Amenity Fees are used to pay for operating expenses, debt service (bonds), and capital improvements.

The Deferral Rate is different than the Amenity Fee Prevalent Rate, which is set by contract with each individual homeowner by the Developer. The Developer raised the **Prevalent Rate** from \$145 to \$159 for all new or sold homes effective October 1, 2018. Homeowners who owned their homes prior to October 1 and continue to live in their current homes will see an annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustment (up or down) until they reach the current maximum Deferral Rate of \$155.

The Deferral Rates do not have to be uniform north and south of CR466, nor does there have to be a Deferral Rate established.

Each committee in their respective 2019-20 budget workshops received information about the number of rooftops currently at the maximum and projections as to when expenses will begin to exceed Amenity Fee revenues.

District Budget Director Barbara Kays explained that, prior to July 15, 2010, there were not Amenity Deferral Fee Rates set. At that time, the AAC passed a resolution establishing a Deferral Rate because the Amenity Rates were so inconsistent, with many residents paying well below the Prevalent Rate. The Deferral Rate was set to allow residents who were paying a higher amount, based on the Prevalent Rate that was in effect when they purchased their homes, to reach a maximum, while others who were paying substantially lower, to continue to be adjusted until they too reached the maximum. Since that time, only 37% of residents north of CR 466 have reached the maximum. The SLCDD passed a similar resolution in 2012, but because south of CR 466 began at a higher Prevalent Rate, 67% have already reached the maximum.

The 10-year projections show that by Fiscal Year 2024-25, the Recreation Amenity Fund (RAD) expenses will exceed revenues, with the same occurring by Fiscal Year 2022-23, the Sumter Landing Amenity Fund (SLAD).

There are three potential courses of action: 1) Remain at the current deferred rate; 2) Increase the deferred rate; 3) Eliminate the deferred rate in accordance with the original purchase contract.

AAC Chair Ann Forrester and PWAC Chair Peter Moeller assured residents that there will be multiple meetings to contemplate and determine the course of action each area will take.

Circumstances are different for each area with respect to the number of homes at the maximum rate, debt service, and age and renovation of facilities. Each committee will have to determine both the short-term and long-term needs of their areas of responsibility, all with a focus of maintaining the high standards and quality that Villages residents expect.

The AAC and PWAC will hold a second meeting on Monday April 15 from 9 – 11 A.M. at Laurel Manor for further discussion. ■



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March POA General Membership Meeting Forum

Q Why are Amenity Fees rising?

The Developer raised the Prevalent Amenity Fee from \$145 to \$159 on October 1, 2018 on all new homes and homes that are sold. The Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) and Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) are considering whether the Amenity Deferral Fee Rate – the maximum the Amenity Fee can be raised – should go up from the current \$155. Ten-year budget forecasts indicate that expenses will exceed revenues within the next five years. See the full explanation of the issue on page 5.

Q What can be done about an unlicensed vehicle parked on the street in my neighborhood?

Call Community Standards at 352-751-3912.

Q Why are the two ponds at Solliere Villas totally dry?

The ponds are not taking water the way they are supposed to and the Developer is working to fix the problem. The ponds are owned by Community Development District (CDD) 4 but they will not take maintenance responsibility until the problem is fixed.

Q Please clarify the information that was in the March Bulletin about rooftop definitions.

Rooftops are a common way to charge for various services, such as fire protection. Commercial properties that have multiple tenants and multi-dwelling assisted living facilities count as one rooftop, the same as an individual home.

General Forum continued on page 7

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General Forum continued from page 6

Q Isn't Community Watch supposed to move palm frons from the roadways?

Yes, they are, and landscapers are also supposed to be picking them up.

Q There is a safety issue with side street signs that are at the same level as other street signs. These should be adjusted.

Except in CDD 4, these signs are the responsibility of the counties, and they are working on having all the signs replaced. ■



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Bills Filed in Florida House and Senate to Address Sinkhole Insurance Coverage Still Not Heard in Committees

Florida House Bill 541, and Senate Bill 566 that were filed relating to sinkhole and catastrophic ground cover collapse have still not made it to Committees for hearing. **Calls need to be made to make positive changes to the legislation that was passed in 2011.**

Senator Dennis Baxley
Baxley.Dennis@flsenate.gov
352-750-3133

Please state that the Senate Bill will provide meaningful coverage for Villagers that does not presently exist.

Additionally, contact is needed to the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the respective Committees – for either House Bill 541 or Senate Bill 566 – and ask that they please hear these Bills in Committee, as it is a matter of great urgency and need for Villagers.

CONTACTS:

Representative Cyndi Stevenson, Chair,
House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee

Cyndi.stevenson@myfloridahouse.gov
850-717-5017

Representative Chuck Clemons, Vice Chair,
House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee

Chuck.clemons@myfloridahouse.gov
850-717-5021

Representative Shevrin Jones,
Democratic Ranking Member

Shevrin.jones@myfloridahouse.gov
850-717-5101

Senator Doug Broxson, Chair,
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Vacant Homes Cause Neighborhood Concerns

It seems that about once a month there is a public hearing at a Community Development District meeting at which Community Standards Manager Candice Dennis presents information about a property that has fallen into disrepair. Many of these homes are the result of the death of an owner and the property either had no heirs or has fallen into the hands of the bank foreclosure department. Weeds grow, bushes go untrimmed, the yard is not mowed, and sometimes mold starts to grow on the outside of the home. Neighbors become very distressed over this eyesore in their neighborhood.

So why doesn't someone take care of these issues? According to Ms. Dennis, the Community Standards department takes a very proactive approach to help keep these properties as cleaned up as they can – but they must do it within the confines of Florida Statute 190. They are only allowed to do certain things, such as mowing and weeding. They are not allowed to take care of mold issues or even trim the bushes.

Prior to March 1, 2010, the District could not get involved in maintaining any properties. Chapter

190 left it to the Developer and the homeowner to sort out any deed compliance issues. Chapter 190 was changed, allowing District government to get involved and that's when Community Standards began enforcing outside deed compliance. Ms. Dennis believes The Villages is the only special district community that has taken on these issues.

At first, they didn't really know how to handle complaints about vacant homes. Now, they are a well-oiled machine, working proactively with property preservation departments at private

financial institutions, many of whom will take responsibility for property maintenance (and costs), even though they don't technically own the property.

Ms. Dennis said that Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Federal Housing Authority (FHA) properties are not so easy since each of these federal programs has hundreds of pages of guidelines that must be followed.

But Ms. Dennis believes they have made real progress and want to work with neighbors to keep all of the properties they can up to community standards. "When people tell me they are frustrated that these properties become unsightly, I totally understand," she said. "I would feel the same way."

The process begins with a complaint made to the Community Standards office, after which the property is inspected and the complaint is verified. Notice is sent to the homeowner and Community Standards begins to fact check. They look at obituaries and do everything they can to track down a relative, and look at property records to find a financial institution.

From December 1, 2017 through November 30, 2018, there were a total of 4,969 complaints, with 433 written notices. Only 18 ended up in a public hearing. The goal, according to Ms. Dennis, is to reach the property owner and get the property cleaned up as quickly as possible.

If there is a property in your neighborhood you are concerned about, you can call the Community Standards department at 352-751-3912 to report your issue. ■



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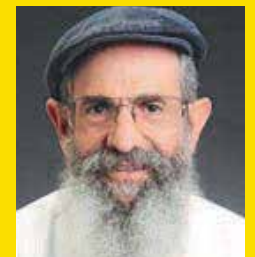
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instructions and time to arrive to complete registration. **All available courses are listed at www.aarp.org/findacourse or call 877-846-3299.**

AARP now offers a 90 minute Smart Driver Technology (SDTEK) program for mature drivers. For more information: www.aarp.org/findaworkshop10 or 352-430-1833.



DATE(S)	LOCATION	INSTRUCTOR	CONTACT #
Apr 2 & 3	Colony Cottage	John Shepard	352-398-2344
Apr 9 & 12	Laurel Manor	Bob Stephenson	702-2751997
Apr 10*	Harbor Chase	Joel Oleksa	610-509-1915
Apr 15 & 18	Savannah	Don Walker	352-430-0610
Apr 17*	Sumter Place	Pauline Bolwell	352-205-3880
Apr 20 & 27	Paradise	John Shepard	352-398-2344
Apr 23 & 24	Rohan	George Meidhof	352-633-7398
April 26	Buffalo Crossings	Jack Haughn	352-603-1420
April 30	Freedom Point	Jack Haughn	352-603-1420

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In Case You Missed It...News Highlights from March Meetings

New Church Property Recreation Center Named: *First Responders Recreation Center*

At its March meeting, after receiving three recommended names from District Recreation and Parks Director John Rohan, the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) unanimously approved naming the new recreation center at the Baptist Church property on CR 42 the “**First Responders Recreation Center.**” The center will be decorated with a first responders theme and recognizes the critical role all first responders have in our daily lives.

Mr. Rohan also reported that 2,400 surveys were submitted with input for programming and recreation to be considered on the 19+ acres of property. At the April 10 AAC meeting a snapshot of the suggestions will be presented. After that point, and with direction from the AAC, staff will continue the process of designing options for the property's use.

Request for Bathroom at Shay Gate House Tabled

District Manager Richard Baier brought a request to construct a bathroom at the Shay Gate House, stating it is the only gate house in The Villages that does not have a bathroom, and requires the gate attendant to walk to a convenience store to use a restroom. The gate is staffed 24/7, which Mr. Baier said creates a safety issue for the attendant. The cost is estimated at \$135,000 - \$165,000. He explained that the gate does not have arms because of how it is located on the property, and the District does not have the right of way to tear down and build a new facility with arms. He projected acquisition of property for that option to be in the \$500,000 range. By a vote of 5-1, the AAC tabled the request and asked staff to come back with a technology solution for an unstaffed gate.

Air Gun Range to be Rebuilt

Thanks to the donation of ¼ acre of property by the Developer, the air gun range on Rio Grande will be rebuilt. The AAC has already approved \$154,000 in this year's budget, and according to District Property Manager Sam Wartinbee, the

cost will be in the \$130,000 range. He said they would bid the project and adjust the budget at the end of the fiscal year.

Morse Bridge Island Revetment Continues to be Hot Topic at PWAC Evening Q & A

The revetment of the Morse Bridge Embankment, a \$1.7 Million project approved by the Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) over 2 years ago, continued as a controversial issue at an evening meeting held in late February by PWAC. Several residents questioned the approved expenditure, the proposed solution, and whose responsibility the embankment repair really is.

District Manager Richard Baier repeatedly explained that the property in question is not the bridge itself (which is owned by Sumter County), but the island below it that is owned by Community Development District (CDD) 5, and which is included in the PWAC's list of shared maintenance properties. PWAC Chair Peter Moeller said the island has eroded due to wind and heavy rain.

Since Hurricane Irma, the Lake Sumter water levels have been too high to determine if any additional erosion has occurred, and has prevented the approved repairs from being made. Mr. Baier said this has given the District the opportunity to re-examine the issue, and explore other solutions. A dive team will be sent down to conduct a visual inspection (if the water is clear enough) and additional radar testing will occur. Solutions will also be looked at again and District staff will report back to PWAC with recommendations.

Other resident questions included:

- Pool Hours – why can't they be open past dusk? A. Staffing & safety issues.
- Scoreboard malfunctioning at Buffalo Glen Softball fields. A. Under the purview of the Developer and staff forwarded a work order request to Commercial Property Management.
- Mosquito control. A. Responsibility of the County in which resident resides.

- Use of bird and bat houses to control mosquitos. A. Chairman Moeller suggested discussion at a future meeting.
- Parking at Fenney Putt and Play. A. Designed and controlled by the Developer.

Janitorial Standards Upgraded/ Increased Costs Anticipated

District Property Manager (DPM) Sam Wartinbee stated that most janitorial contracts will expire or will begin renewals on October 1, the beginning of the new fiscal year. In the past, contracts have been awarded with different scopes of service and specifications. A single RFP will be issued with the same scope and specifications that includes the following upgraded standards:

- Pool bath showers – weekly steam cleaning, and the application of approved anti-slip products quarterly on all dry surfaces
- Daily washing of doors, windows, and walls
- Daily polishing of kick plates using stainless steel and brass polish where appropriate
- Daily kitchen cleaning
- Daily securing of the entire facility
- Daily cleaning of interior and exterior windows
- Postal facilities: cleaning of walls, ceilings, boxes, fixtures, polishing of water coolers, ATMs, and display cases. All tasks are now performed daily
- Additional 20 hours per week for a day porter per regional area
- Facilities will now be closed for quarterly maintenance (machine scrubbing ceramic tile, sealing grout lines, striping and waxing of VCT flooring, etc.)

DPM anticipates as much as a 20% increase in the cost for janitorial services in the upcoming fiscal year, equating to approximately \$292,000.

LED lighting has now been installed at all postal facilities, providing for better night lighting and reducing the collection of bugs in the lights.

News Highlights continued from page 14

34 Aquatic Chair Lifts Approved

At its March meeting, the Project Wide Advisory Committee approved the capital expenditure of \$340,000 to purchase and install aquatic chair lifts at the remaining 34 pools that do not currently have them. Several residents spoke in favor of installing the lifts.

Request for Lights at Pickleball Courts Denied

A resident of Fernandina presented a petition to PWAC from more than 1,000 residents requesting that lights be installed at the Rohan Recreation Center pickleball courts, which District Manager Richard Baier cautioned would be a “slippery slope,” saying this is an issue that has come before PWAC and the AAC on previous occasions. District Property Manager Sam Wartinbee said he has not recently priced lighting, but the last time he looked into it for a pool the cost was \$85,000. Several issues were raised including light pollution, noise, and setting a precedent to light other facilities such as pools, shuffleboard and tennis courts, etc. Setting a standard would involve a consultant study. Mr. Baier indicated they would review and bring back a lighting policy for consideration.

District Redesigns Resident Academy

Resident Academy is an interactive program to help residents understand more about how their District government operates. Participants will learn about the history and benefits of special districts, have the opportunity to tour the North Sumter Utility Plant, and get information from The Villages Fire Rescue, Property Management, Customer Service, Community Standards, Community Watch, Recreation & Parks, Executive Golf, Budgets, Utilities and Finance.

Residents can choose from three convenient dates in 2019 in an updated format with no waiting list:

April 29, 2019

12:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Rohan Recreation Center

July 29, 2019

12:30 PM – 5:30 PM

Rohan Recreation Center

November 13, 2019

8 AM – 1 PM

Savannah Center

Register online at DistrictGov.org, in person at the District Customer Service Center at 984 Old Mill Run in Lake Sumter Landing (located on the 2nd floor), or at any Regional Recreation Center.

Residents may also choose to attend the Community Development District (CDD) Orientation, an abbreviated opportunity to learn about how the districts operate. No signup is required and sessions are held every Thursday at 10 am at the District office. ■



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Local Lightning On The Increase In 2018

By Len Hathaway

Statistics Show Why Florida Is The Lightning Capital Of USA

The number of days with lightning increased to a new five-year high in 2018 following a five year low in 2017 according to the unofficial record-keeping by local weather observers.

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
110	119	114	91	124

According to the National Weather Service (NWS) the average number of thunderstorm days for Central Florida is 80. Our five-year average is well above that at 111.

Here is another measure that demonstrates the frequency and severity of lightning in Florida.

	2016	2017	2018
US fatalities	36	14	20
FL fatalities	7 (19%)	5 (36%)	7 (35%)
US injuries	76	80	82
FL injuries	19 (25%)	22* (28%)	19 (23%)

Sources: NWS weather.gov/safety/lightning-fatalities and Struckbylightning.org

*Including one injury in The Villages on September 4th
Local fire departments responded to over a dozen homeowners who experienced a direct or a nearby strike, the most serious of which caused roof damage to a home in Osceola Hills and blew out living room drywall at a home in Piedmont. An unknown number of homeowners experienced lightning-induced

surge damage to appliances and sensitive electronic equipment such as computers and TVs that sometimes results in thousands of dollars to replace. These events occurred principally in the high lightning months of June, July, and August where we exceed 20 days with lightning per month. Last July we experienced lightning in 28 of 31 days.

According to an AP article published in The Villages Daily Sun on November 26, 2017, a warming world will likely contribute to larger and more frequent thunderstorms in the future. A more recent study published in Science Daily reported that the Earth could expect a 12% increase in lightning activity for the same reason. Understanding the lightning threat and preparing for the lightning risk may become even more critical than ever before.

Lightning continued on page 17

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Lightning continued from page 16

Lightning 101

If your club, organization, church, or civic group would benefit from a free community service non-commercial Power Point presentation, **Lightning Tips for Villagers**, that addresses personal lightning safety, lightning protection systems (rods) for homes, lightning surge protection for electronic equipment, the susceptibility of corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) gas pipe to lightning, and debunking nine common lightning myths contact Len Hathaway at LHATHA@AOL.COM.

NOTE: Come to the May 21 POA General Membership Meeting at 7 PM at Laurel Manor to learn all you need to know to protect yourself from the dangers of lightning! ■

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A couple hundred people have already signed up for E-Delivery of *The Bulletin*! We're not quite ready yet, but will be sending some test deliveries this month. If you have already signed up, please do not sign up again. When we are ready to begin you will receive a confirmation email. If you haven't signed up and are interested please email the following information to us and we'll add you to the list!

You'll receive an email with a link when *The Bulletin* comes out and you can read it on your tablet, laptop or any computer device.

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You do not have to be a POA member (but we wish you would; it's only \$10/year) to sign up for email delivery since *The Bulletin* is available for delivery to every household in The Villages.

We are working out the details but want to start getting our email list compiled. Please fill out the form at right or send an email to thebulletin@poa4us.com with the same information, or mail the form on this page to POA, 8736 SE 165th Lane, PMB 111, The Villages, FL 32162. ■

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Gardening Spot

Herbs – Common and Cool

by Anne Lambrecht Fanatical Gardener mrsanne04@gmail.com

An herb is defined as any plant with leaves, seeds or flowers used for flavoring food, medicine or perfume. Herbs are used mainly to season, enrich or improve the taste or smell of certain foods. They are not classified as a vegetable but due to the similarity of growth habits and cultural requirements, herbs are often included with vegetables in the garden.

Because of our vast amounts of sun, most herbs do very well here in north central Florida. Since only a small portion of the plant is usually needed at one time and because the plants are small, they do very well in containers. Their attractiveness as an ornamental plant makes them a good fit for the home landscape, either in border plantings or included in the flower garden. And they’re wonderful pollinator attractors. Most herbs need at least six hours of sunlight daily and the soil should be well drained with additions of organic matter since most herbs are shallow rooting.

Here is a group of herbs that most of us know, are easily obtained, and really do well here:

ROSEMARY is a beautiful ornamental plant as well as a culinary seasoning. It is a dense, evergreen, aromatic shrub with resinous, needlelike leaves and soft, blue pollen-rich spring flowers loved by bees. Rosemary is popular in Italian dishes as well as with shellfish, pork and lamb. The leaves aid in the digestion of fat. Rosemary is known to stimulate circulation. You are better off buying an established plant as they are tricky from seed and can take forever. Rosemary likes to be trimmed and is considered a “woody” herb.

PARSLEY is a tap-rooted biennial with solid stems of triangular, toothed, and curled leaves. Vitamin and mineral rich leaves and stems are added to salads and savory dishes. The root is eaten in soups and stews. Parsley is best used fresh and added at the end of cooking to keep its dark green color. Curly leaved parsley is a little bitter for some palettes and the flat-leaved or Italian parsleys are more in favor with today’s cooks.

Many species of butterfly larva enjoy parsley so plant extra for them.

CHIVES AND GARLIC CHIVES have single stems with long, thin leaves, and edible flowers. These add pungent flavor to savory dishes and are said to purify the blood and help to reduce blood pressure. The allium family of these chives contain iron and vitamins. The flowers, along with the stems, can be added to softened butter for a special treat on breads and meat. Chives are easy to divide and share.

THYME. There are many kinds of thyme: lemon, creeping, wild, caraway. It is a much-branching tiny shrub with numerous small pointed strongly aromatic green leaves and lilac summer flowers. Thyme is essential in French cuisine as part of “bouquet garni” as well as in many other dishes. Thyme aids in the digestion of fatty foods and is ideal for the slow cooking of braises, stews and soups. Thyme can completely dry out in our summer heat so keep it moist and place in afternoon shade.

SWEET BASIL is a perennial herb (African Blue Basil being the exception which will not reseed) with square stems and a strong, fresh, clove-like scent, with small late-summer flowers. During the past few years it has become sensitive to fungus problems. Basil combines well with tomatoes, garlic, eggplant and Italian and Thai dishes. And basil also is wonderful to flavor vinegars, sauces and oils. The flowers look nice in arrangements and are very attractive to bees. Basil is sensitive to cold so plant it in the spring/summer and bring it inside or harvest it when the cool comes.

Here are some herbs that are a tad different, but are really cool in our gardens:

RUE – an evergreen subshrub with little yellow flowers and deeply divided bluish strong musty aromatic leaves. During the Renaissance, it is said, that a leaf wash was used by DaVinci and Michelangelo for their tired eyes. The oil is used in the perfume industry. Nosegays made from rue countered pestilence and smells. Rue’s round-lobbed leaves inspired the symbol for the suit of clubs. But wait, there’s more! If you keep a clump by your front door, you will not be visited by any witches!

BORAGE – easy growing annual plant with oval leaves on hairy stems and vivid blue flowers all, when crushed, smell like cucumbers. In the old days it was said that the leaves and flowers steeped in wine was a popular remedy for melancholy. (I think it was just the wine.) But also, competitors in jousts and tournaments drank borage tea to strengthen their spirits: “I, Borage, bring always courage”. It is considered a great little herb and I know it is an easy grower.

ANISE HYSOP – an upright perennial with soft anise scented leaves and nectar-rich purple flower spikes. I think the plant looks like a candelabra. Native Americans used anise hyssop as a cough medicine. A cultivar called Agastache Rugosa, or Korean mint, is used in Chinese medicine. The seeds are teeny-tiny and need sun to germinate.

GARDEN OR SALAD BURNET – a little-known herb whose cucumber scented leaves are used in salads. But its botanical name, Sanguisorba, translates loosely as “blood absorber” and it has an interesting history. It is a great little plant that is not bothered by insects or disease.

I have purchased these unusual herbs from herb vendors at plant festivals and I have also planted them from seed.

My Garden Buddy doesn’t always buy into the mystical and healing folklore associated with herbs like I do. But he does appreciate all the insect visitors that come to our gardens. ■

Herbs in the Florida Garden www.edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vho20

Herbs by Lesley Bremness (Dorling Kindersley Handbooks)

Herb plant and seed sources: Burpee.com, johnnyseeds.com, selectseeds.com



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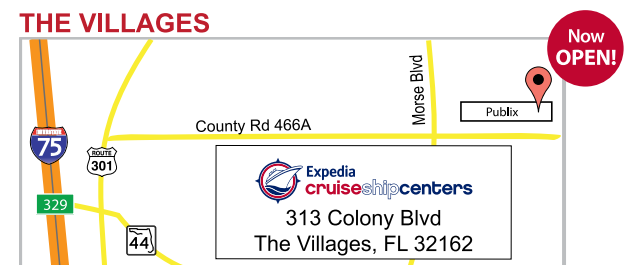
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Seniors vs. Crime

Worthless Warranties

Do you feel confused, bamboozled and even suspicious when anyone utters the word “warranty” to you? Or, when a letter or email arrives saying your warranty is about to expire?

You are not alone. Warranties are supposed to protect you against faults with products you bought. But sometimes they're like a license to print money for whoever's offering them.

For instance, did you know that, according to *Consumer Reports* magazine, retailers and manufacturers who offer “extended warranties” – sometimes referred to as service contracts, a type of insurance that kicks in after a standard warranty expires – pocket 50% of the fee you pay?

In some cases too, warranties or service contracts are a downright scam, especially when whoever issued them refuses to honor them, either ignoring claims or using small print to wriggle out of their legal commitment.

In one example, the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has come down on companies who said they wouldn't honor warranties if the consumer either used a non-branded part or an unauthorized repair shop, or if the “warranty” seal on the product was broken.

Those restrictions are illegal says the FTC.

More recently, the agency has addressed confusion about the difference between regular and extended warranties, or service contracts.

The cost of a standard warranty usually is included in the price of the product you buy and is covered by the manufacturer. But you usually have to pay for an extended warranty or service contract.

Other times, you receive an official-looking warranty expiration warning/renewal notice in the mail. Often these are actually just sent out on speculation to random consumers, when the issuer really has no idea when the product warranty they're writing about – usually a car – expires.

Consumer champion and broadcaster Clark Howard reported recently that these dubious vehicle service contract (VSC) providers “often go bust and leave their customers high and dry when repair bills need to be paid.”

He suggests that if you can cover the cost of repairs from your own wallet, you should never buy one of these contracts. If money is likely to be an issue, only consider buying coverage from the manufacturer, never from a third party.

Seniors Vs Crime would also like to add that you should never buy an extended warranty or service contract without first reading it, including the tedious small print. Remember, the small print is there for a reason – usually a reason that does not benefit you! As we often note in our offices, “The large print giveth; the small print taketh away!” Look particularly for ‘get-out’ clauses in the contract.

And if you're thinking about buying an official extended warranty on a new auto from the dealer, think twice about that.

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Make sure the warranty is provided by the manufacturer, not just another third-party warranty company. Just as important, bear in mind that the reliability of new cars these days means that claims are rarely made on an extended auto warranty, which often cost a couple thousand dollars. It's easy money for the dealer and the warranty company.

If you need assistance with understanding any aspects of warranty service, contact your nearest Seniors Vs Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance. Seniors Vs Crime can be reached at:

The Fruitland Park Police Department Annex in the Moyer Recreation Center in The Villages – (352) 674-1882

The Marion County Sheriff's Office in The Villages – (352) 753-7775

The Sumter County Sheriff's Office in The Villages – (352) 689-4600, Extension 4606

The Wildwood Police Department Annex at Brownwood in The Villages – (352) 750-1914
(temporarily located at the Moyer Recreation Center while the Wildwood Police Department wrestles with repairing fire damage at their main police station).

Volunteers at all four offices are ready, willing and able to assist you. To keep up with the latest scams, LIKE ‘Seniors vs. Crime Region 4’ on Facebook. Hablamos Español. Por favor pregunte por Yolanda. Martes a Viernes: 10:00 A.M. a 2:00 P.M., (352) 689-4606. ■

On This Date in 2017...

Two years ago, in April, the POA released the results of a member survey that indicated residents preferred that the Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) be given the same powers that the Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) to make decisions with respect to setting the Amenity Deferral Rate and full financial authority over Amenity Fee spending.

In the end, because Florida statute did not allow the same kind of Interlocal Agreement between the Sumter Landing Community Development District (SLCDD) and PWAC, a resolution giving PWAC an Advisory role was passed. However, the resolution, in essence, mirrors the AAC Interlocal Agreement, giving PWAC broad advisory capability and includes a clause that allows for a joint meeting with SLCDD if it chose not to accept a PWAC recommendation.

The POA considered this structure a WIN for residents!

DISCOUNT PARTNERS

Another benefit for POA members is this Discount Partner program.

Most vendors will ask you for your current POA Membership card to receive the offered discount. If you have a favorite business who is currently not offering a POA Discount, tell them about our program. Please say "thanks" to our Discount Partners for their participation.

The up-to-date list of Discount Partners can always be found on our website poa4us.org.

Click 'Discount Partners' on the left menu.



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SURVIVAL ON THE HUDSON RIVER

Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger was an experienced aviator: a former Air Force F-4 'Phantom' pilot who wrestled military aircraft when engine "flame-outs" happened. Years of training prepared this hero to exhibit unnerving skill when the ultimate situation demanded. With his team of co-pilot and crew, Sully ensured that every passenger would walk (not swim) away from death's door.

Certainly the aircraft on that day was well designed and maintained. But that "bird" did not make the difference: rather, it was the combined knowledge of those professionals strapped within that fuselage. Radiation cancer care truly differs from the portrayal of a treatment machine somehow transformed into a life-saving "craft" whose performance and price tag cause spell-bound viewers to expect something magical to happen: it won't!

Put decisions for care where they count. Let's compare "flight crews" and experience. **The Robert Boissoneault Oncology Institute** (RBOI) has four Villages radiation oncologists whose total expertise approaches 150 years, a nurse practitioner with almost 20 years, three PhD physicists where local competition has none, and 12 physics staff personnel. RBOI continues to hold American College of Radiology accreditation, the most respected recognition awarded a comprehensive cancer center. Since Moffitt's departure, we are now the only radiation facility on The Villages campus with such accreditation...an honor we have attained for over 22 years.

This is your life. Sound medical decisions are only found when you interact with physicians. With that in mind, bring this article to our office, and be scheduled to meet with one of our physicians for a second opinion...without cost.



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