

The VHA VOICE

THE VILLAGES HOMEOWNERS ADVOCATES: KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE

MAY 2021 • Vol. 27 No. 5



THE VHA'S QUARTERLY TOWN HALL MEETING WAS HELD IN PERSON ON APRIL 20, 2021. MANY QUESTIONS WERE SUBMITTED BY OUR MEMBERS AND VILLAGES RESIDENTS. WE HAD TO PICK AND CHOOSE THE BEST AND MOST RELEVANT QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS DUE TO THE HIGH VOLUME WE RECEIVED.

We want to thank the following community representatives for participating in this month's forum: Dr. Gary Lester – Vice President Community Relations, Richard Baier – Villages District Manager, Carrie Duckett – Assistant District Manager, Lt. Robert Siemer – District Lieutenant from the Sumter County Sheriff's Department, Bradley Arnold – Sumter County Administrator.

1. Would you please give an update on the plans for the site of the former Hacienda Hills Country Club?

Dr. Lester: This project is on hold as we are in discussion with the Town of Lady Lake. We remain committed to supporting our residents and our Spanish Springs merchants and keeping that Town Center strong. Adding a small number of second story apartments is a positive option for enhancing that Town Center. Just as we persisted in working with the City over twenty years ago to create Spanish Springs Town Square, we will persevere now to support our residents and businesses and keep that area active and vital for years to come.

2. Are there plans to build condominiums for residents who wish to move to a maintenance-free lifestyle in an investment property rather than pay rent for an apartment?

Dr. Lester: There are no plans to build condominiums.

3. Would you please give an update on the movie theaters?

- a. Progress and completion date of the Rialto Theater.
- b. Future plans for Villages movie theaters? i.e., technology; usage; a fourth theater.



Dr. Lester: The roof of the Rialto Theater is being worked on now. The movie industry is going through many changes. Completing the Rialto Theater and decisions we make for all The Villages movie theaters is dependent on how the movie industry proceeds. Old Mill Playhouse in Lake Sumter Landing is now showing movies and hosting a variety of activities.

4. Are there plans for more dog parks particularly near the Village of St. Catherine?

Dr. Lester: Yes, there are plans to build a dog park east of the Village of St. Catherine.

5. Would you please respond to residents who state "The Developer promised a 4th Town Square"?

Dr. Lester: Going forward, we are expanding the town center idea into more of a broader "lifestyle area". So, like our current town centers, a lifestyle area will continue to be a focal point for the community with entertainment, shopping, dining and other services much like our current town centers but also adding more recreational opportunities to the mix...possibly golf or pickleball or even water sports. We are always listening to the residents and they have given us some great ideas on how to improve

the model. There's a lot of creativity and energy right now going into designing what a new "lifestyle center" could bring to the community.

6. Plans for parking around Sawgrass appear to accommodate more golf carts than automobiles. Would you please provide more details about this?



Dr. Lester: The parking spaces for automobiles around Sawgrass are comparable to other parking areas in The Villages.

7. Are there plans to install fast-charging electric stations for electric golf carts around The Villages now that connectivity has reached many more miles?

Richard Baier: The District has no plans to invest Amenity Funds or other Maintenance Fee Funds into electric charging stations as it is reported that well over 80% of the carts are gas and the fees charged to recoup the initial investment would make their use prohibitive.

8. The following questions referred to The Villages planned championship golf courses south of SR 44:

- a. What are the approximate dates for completing the 5 championship golf courses?
- b. What are the names of the other 4 championship courses planned after Southern Oaks?

Dr. Lester: There are no names and dates of completion yet. When determined, these details will be published in the Daily Sun.

9. What is the approximate date of completion for the combined vehicular & multi-modal bridge over the Florida turnpike?

Dr. Lester: The pace of house sales will determine the timing to proceed in building this bridge.

Q. Are there any permit issues building this bridge?

A. There are always conversations but no problems that I am aware of.

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I want to start my letter this month by saying THANK YOU. With the help of a VHA email blast, The VHA website (www.thevha.net), the Daily Sun, VNN, and the residents of Florida's Friendliest Hometown, our Equipment for Donation event was a resounding success. Most of all, I want to thank the Volunteers of the VHA Helping Hands Neighbors-Helping-Neighbors program. Without them we would not have had the opportunity to take over 5,000 calls during the last 12 months and assist those in need of medical equipment.

Do you know where the equipment offered by Helping Hands comes from? The VHA has events like Bingo and the Country Western Hoedown that supplement the cost of running our program, but the biggest impact for us is the generosity of residents when they drop off equipment to add to our inventory, or make cash donations to replace or purchase spare parts for the over 900 pieces of equipment we currently have. It is your generosity that keeps the Helping Hands program up and running for residents of The Villages.

Please remember:

- For our residents, the phone line remains open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday. The equipment request line is (352) 973-2284. Leave a message if we fail to answer. We will return your call.
- For those wishing to use email rather than calling in your request, write us at: vha.helpinghands.officemail@gmail.com. When using this service leave your name, phone number, and the equipment you are requesting. We will respond to your request.
- Equipment can be picked up at, or returned to our office Monday thru Friday between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.
- All residents and staff must have their temperature checked and wear masks while conducting transactions.

- All returned equipment should remain outside the door until sanitized by office staff. If possible, please have your ticket number or copy of your receipt when returning equipment. That will expedite the return process.
- Our location is 1104 Main Street, a half block from the Spanish Springs Town Square in the breezeway next to Kilwin's Ice Cream, Fudge and Chocolates.

I believe these simple procedures will keep both the residents and volunteers safe and our program open.

In closing, we can always use more volunteers who might consider joining our team. Email us at vha.helpinghands.officemail@gmail.com or give us a call at (352) 973-2284.

VHA Helping Hands is a not-for-profit corporation (501 c3) recognized by the laws of the state of Florida.

God Bless, stay safe, and thanks for the opportunity to serve.

*Bill Gottschalk
 President*

The VHA Helping Hands, Inc.



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For contact information go to
www.thevha.net

Or email us at:
vha.helpinghands.officemail@gmail.com

VISION

Keeping the Dream Alive

MISSION

The Villages Homeowners Advocates (VHA) is a lifestyle organization whose members are committed to championing the needs of Villagers through:
 • Positive, constructive dialogue • Problem solving • Education • Philanthropic efforts

VALUES

The VHA is committed to excellence and driven by the following values:
 • Integrity • Honesty • Accountability • Independence

VHA OFFICE
 1104 Main St., Spanish Springs
VHA MAIN PHONE:
 352-753-4650
VHA WEBSITE:
www.thevha.net

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10. What is being done to bring the Villages golf courses into top-flight conditions?

a. Championship courses

Dr. Lester: Crews have been working diligently to maintain these courses. This past year has had a record number of tee times and rounds of golf. Golf carts were doubled with requirements for single riders. Conditions are beginning to improve as crews continue to work.

b. Executive courses

Richard Baier: In order to keep courses in a top-flight condition, we have implemented yearlong scheduled course maintenance closures for contractors to perform key agronomic practices. We also have enhanced accountability of maintenance contracts with additional supervisor positions and geographically assigned areas of supervision. The summer application for nematode control is in conjunction with Championship Golf for improved turf health and density. Capital golf course improvement includes plans for aging infrastructure. As we have had to implement safety protocols over the past year to keep golf an essential outdoor activity during COVID -19, we have also had to adapt our maintenance practices to support an increase of 440,000 rounds over the prior year.

11. Are there plans to add more golf practice facilities south of 466A? Sarasota has become exceptionally crowded.

Dr. Lester: Yes. The Sarasota facility is certainly popular and additional practice facilities are planned.

12. What are the plans for adding more Executive golf courses south of SR 44 to support the new population? Many neighborhood golf groups are having great difficulty getting tee times.

Dr. Lester: There are plans to add more Executive golf courses. It needs to be noted that no day has ever had all tee times booked. Flexibility in scheduling is important.

13. Dog parks in The Villages have been upgraded. Mulberry Dog Park has been slated to be improved. When will this happen?

Richard Baier: I am pleased to announce the Mulberry Dog Park re-opened at 7:00 a.m., on Monday, April 19th, following the installation of a beautiful shade structure and other improvements. The new shade pavilion is approximately 924 square feet (steel structure, PVC columns and trim with shingled roof). Other improvements included upgraded sidewalks, fencing, grounds around dog water guzzlers, as well as an application of rejuvenator and new striping on the parking lot. The total cost for this project



was approximately \$113K, and we are extremely grateful to the members of the Authority Amenity Committee for authorizing the improvements to this recreational amenity. The Mulberry Dog Park is sure to be a wonderful area for residents and their pets.

14. Can the adult pools have The Villages radio station piped in as is done in the family pools? While the music is pleasant to hear, the radio also provides emergency weather warnings.

Richard Baier: Due to the number of offsite pools (over 50 of them would need to be wired for speakers and amp system) the cost would need to be approved by the respective boards. The resident is certainly welcome to attend either AAC or PWAC for further direction.

Carrie Duckett: We encourage residents to add warning alerts to their cell phones. We also want to remind residents that the Public Safety Department will program weather radios for free.

15. Could you please explain why Community Watch does not report deed violations instead of requiring residents to report them? Owners of pre-owned homes are not always informed of their restrictions.

Richard Baier: Deed compliance is a complaint-driven process throughout each one of the Districts. Rather than having Community Watch or other District staff “police” deed restrictions, only those deed compliance violations reported are acted upon. Providing potential deed compliance violations is an easy process that can be done in person, over the phone, through email, or by mail. Once Community Standards receives a complaint, a Deed Compliance Officer familiar with the Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions for that specific unit verifies the complaint.

Copies of your Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions can be obtained online at www.District-Gov.org For assistance, contact Community Standards at 352-751-3912.

Carrie Duckett: The complaint-driven process in District 5 states that no anonymous complaints may be made. In District 7 only one complaint may be made per method of communication

16. Can the walkway on the Sumter Landing Bridge be reduced in order to widen the golf cart lanes which seem too narrow for the newer model carts?

Richard Baier: Unfortunately, for several reasons, it is not possible for the Golf Car lanes in the vicinity of and crossing Morse Island into and out of the Lake Sumter Landing area to be altered. First, given the limited overall width of the lanes in that area, and the heavy automotive, golf car, and pedestrian traffic, there are no viable options that allow for expansion of the golf cart lanes while affording safe pedestrian lanes. The Morse Island Bridge itself would require a major re-engineering, reconstruction effort (or replacement) to accommodate expanded lanes while providing for adequate automobile and pedestrian lanes. As originally designed, there is adequate width for automobile and golf cart traffic while also affording safe access for pedestrians. Again, with the heavy traffic through this area in terms of automobile, golf car, and pedestrian traffic, it is optimally designed and configured

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The VHA

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For contact information go to
www.thevha.net





Contact Us
To become a member
or renew, simply go to
www.thevha.net

or

VHA deposit boxes are available
 at every Postal Station.

Our mailing address:
 The VHA, 1104 Main Street
 The Villages, FL 32159

- New Membership
- Renewal
- \$25/Household for 2 years
- \$100/Household for Lifetime

Name: *(All in Household)*

Address:

Email:

- I would like to volunteer
- Town Hall questions

Questions/Comments:

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to ensure the safety of all who transit (auto or golf car) as well as jog, walk, or bike this area.

17. Are there plans to add safety features to the multi-modal paths south of SR 44 for night use such as guard rails; reflectors; lighting? There are long unlit stretches plus curves that create dangerous situations. i.e., traveling north on the path leaving the Village of Bradford.

Richard Baier: District Property Management (DPM) has been actively surveying and addressing incremental upgrades to the multi-modal paths south of SR44. The multi-modal paths were engineered and constructed under the supervision of a professional engineer and were turned over to the District as designed by the Developer. However, we have installed reflectors on all cart paths in District 13 and are surveying District 12 this week for the installation of reflectors. DPM is evaluating the impact to resident safety of installing reflectors every 20' in areas that are currently not well lit, such as the Chitty Chatty area. This is an ongoing project and DPM will make recommendations to District Supervisors and the Project Wide Advisory Committee based on the safety assessments that are currently being performed to ensure that our multi-modal paths are as safe as possible for everyone.

18. Would you please explain why renovations of Fenney Recreation Center included removing the Orange Blossom coffee shop? Residents believed this amenity would remain.

Dr. Lester: The Recreation Department indicated that they could utilize that space for additional recreation activities and since the Fenney Grill was open next door, we agreed to the new use by our residents.

19. Are residents allowed to park on the streets overnight in the Sumter County section of The Villages?

Lt. Siemer: Yes, in the residential areas, as long as the vehicle is parked with the right-hand wheels parallel to and within 12 inches of the right-hand curb or edge of the street. You cannot block other driveways, or be within 30 feet of a stop sign. You cannot park within 15 feet from a fire hydrant and emergency vehicles must be able to pass.

20. Our amenity fees include a cost for fire support. Residents also pay an annual fire assessment fee which is supported in part by our property taxes. How is the amenity fee portion spent for fire support?



Richard Baier: An amount of \$4.08 month/ \$48.96 annual per amenity unit is provided to VPSD from the amenity funds. These funds are used to provide additional services including various fire prevention services, fire alarm battery change-out program, and other emergency medical services expenses.

21. The following questions related to a grant received by The Villages:

- a. The Villages received a 3-year grant to increase Villages Public Safety fire staffing by 27 positions and engines. Please share when these positions will be staffed.**

Richard Baier: The positions were staffed on December 28, 2020.

b. Does the grant impact our normal VPSD budget proposal for the County: showing an increase over the prior year or a reduction by the receipt of the grant?

Richard Baier: The grant was funded 100% by FEMA. The Sumter County Budget FY20-21 was reduced by \$648,595 due to the grant. We increased the VPSD budget by \$301,196 to cover expenses such as uniforms, bunker gear, and Life Scan Physicals.

22. Can gate arms be painted yellow or reflectors added? Some people are color blind. Further, when driving at night or entering heavily shaded areas during the daytime, gate arms are difficult to see.

Richard Baier: The Traffic Control Guide states to use red and white reflective bands. Maintenance of lights on gate arms would increase the amount of repair work and costs when gate arms are knocked down. Driver responsibility is a key safety factor. By establishing consistency for drivers' expectations, safer conditions are established. When reviewing the gate strike recordings, the most common issue is distracted motorists when going through the gates.

23. What is being done to reduce continuous speeding on Buena Vista Blvd and Morse Blvd?

Lt. Siemer: Every quarter the Sumter County Sheriff's Office issues an average of 800-1200 citations in The Villages. We use traffic units, road patrol, unmanned patrol vehicles, and speed enforcement signs to deter traffic violations. The speed enforcement signs do record speed, the day and times even when the speed is not displayed.

24. While being used as a speeding deterrent, can the unmanned patrol cars be relocated more frequently? Grass grows rapidly around them reducing their purpose.

Lt. Siemer: We try to move the unmanned vehicles weekly depending on the traffic units' workload. We will make it a priority.

25. What is the District AED program?

Richard Baier: The Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD) is a District within the Village Center Community Development District (VCCDD). VPSD operates, manages, and supervises an AED Program called Neighbors Saving Neighbors. There are 228 operational Neighbors Saving Neighbors AED groups and 29 new groups forming. There are over 800 AEDs in service and more than 5,500 trained responders. Also, there are AEDs located at Recreation Centers, Schools, Offices, plus Community Watch maintains 23 AED's as well. There is approximately one AED for every 216 people in The Villages. The cardiac survival rate in The Villages for the year was 17% as compared to the National Average of 10%. VPSD is actively researching how we can increase the availability of AEDs to the general public and provide more education at an even more affordable cost.

26. Recently an AED program supported by the County has been introduced in an area of

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The Villages. The program would use the application of Pulse Point as well as receive funding from the County for equipment. What update do you have on this program?

Bradley Arnold: The program is growing at the request of residents in The Villages® development and outside of the development. For more information on the program, residents can view the information on our website at <https://www.sumtercountyfl.gov/1232/Ambulance-Services>

27. EMS ambulances are experiencing response delays. What is creating the time delay and how is the County addressing the issue?

Bradley Arnold: For any response delay incidents, we review each of those, including the system as a whole to include the call taking, dispatch, all first response agency activities, transport (if part of that process), and time to offload the patient to the hospital. The pandemic has impacted the system for over a year; therefore, looking at other causes is the task when reviewing each incident. The review includes our Medical Director team from the University of Florida College of Medicine since we are patient-focused and provide patient-care oversight of the two fire departments and ambulance service. Since they are part of the University of Florida, it provides an additional communication avenue with our local UF/Health hospitals. Sumter County is addressing the system as a whole by reviewing alternative systems that can significantly improve patient outcomes and reduce the duplication of services that increase the unnecessary cost to the system.

28. Prior reference had been made by the County that work was being done to “improve patient outcomes”. What is the conversation and what would this mean for residents of the Villages and the County?

Bradley Arnold: See my response in the question above regarding the review activities that are occurring. On May 18th, the Medical Director and I will be presenting information for Board direction to have a dedicated Medical Director Team-driven medical response that would include more units available and dedicated for medical response to reduce the burden of that response on the fire departments. If directed, the updated system would have a secondary benefit by gaining efficiencies in the system and reducing the duplication of costs for a medical response. The Board of County Commissioners is charged with the statutory authority for the provision of these services and the funding of both fire departments and ambulance service in Sumter County; therefore, the Board’s direction and approval is required for structural changes to the system to service.

29. The County is expected to receive Covid relief funding from the Federal Government. How do you envision those dollars being used and are there any restrictions on their use?

Bradley Arnold: Any federal funds from the COVID relief funding will funnel to the State of Florida before distribution by a contract with conditions to Sumter County. There is no timing on when that will occur and what allocation limitations will be contained within that

agreement. The U.S. Treasury is the rule-making entity for the federal law regarding the limitation and restriction interpretations of the law. Since it is only a one-time revenue, then matching it to one-time expenditures such as capital improvements if used for County government purposes would be my recommendation.

30. Cazaras Avenue in Santa Domingo East needs repair. Camero Dr. and Enrique Dr. are smooth. Other streets seem to have been scraped but never repaired. Is there a schedule for them to be resurfaced?

Bradley Arnold: We have a state grant that is programmed for FY 24 in the Florida Department of Transportation budget to support resurfacing of the neighborhood streets off of Cazaras Avenue (from El Camino Real to Madero Drive). Cazaras is not part of the grant funding but is planned for budget consideration after FY 24 when the grant-related work is complete. The grant-related resurfacing work programmed includes the side streets in the neighborhood stemming from the following roads off Cazaras Avenue (from El Camino Real to Madero): Dorian Lane, Santo Domingo Drive, Enrique Drive (East side only), and Cordero Ct (East side only).

31. Can a stop light be installed at Canal Street and 466A?

Bradley Arnold: The original design did not warrant the installation of a signal at this location. The traffic conditions at the intersection have not exceeded the original design considerations to support a warrant study.

32. Can an overhead yellow caution light be installed at the intersection of County Road 470 and 501?

Bradley Arnold: The current design plans for Central Parkway (formerly known as C-470) at Marsh Bend Trail (formerly known as C-501) will have a roundabout at this location. This project is nearing the final approval of the budget and construction drawings as part of The Villages® Companies Regional Road Agreement; therefore, this project will resolve the increased traffic concerns at this intersection.

33. An increase in the Fire Assessment fee maximum was recently advertised. Do you anticipate the current fee of \$124 increasing in the upcoming 21/22 budget? Any estimate of increase?

Bradley Arnold: That discussion and decision by the Board will not occur until July; however, based on the Board’s decision on 4/13/21, if there was an increase, then it could only rise to \$125 per improved parcel since that is the current maximum rate.



THE NEXT VHA TOWN HALL WILL BE IN JULY

Send your questions to The VHA anytime using The VHA Contact Form in The Voice on Page 4 or contact us via our website at: www.thevha.net

TO CONTACT DISTRICT OFFICIALS: www.district.org

CUSTOMER SERVICE: 352-753-4508



PROTECTING THE VILLAGES PRESERVES AND WETLANDS



Did you know that in The Villages there are 1,400 acres of water retention areas and 2,700 acres of wetlands? The District currently owns and manages 83 wetlands. Some of the wetlands that can be accessed include the Sharon Rose Wiechens Preserve in District 11, Reader Preserve in District 12, Hog-eye Preserve in District 12, and the Chitty Chatty Preserve located in District 13.

Wetlands are defined in Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 328 (33 CFR 328) as “those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.”

Wetlands are important to The Villages for many reasons. They benefit stormwater management by collecting and storing runoff and store those floodwaters to prevent flood damage. They filter and remove pollutants such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Also, preserves and wetlands provide food, water, and shelter for wildlife (some of which are protected species).

These wetlands and preserve areas are heavily regulated by The Southwest Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The permits are closely monitored by the District’s contracted environmental consultants.

In many cases, the wetland or upland buffer area extends directly up to a fence or wall creating a visual delineation of the permitted areas. For nature trails and walkways on District property, those improvements and associated maintenance are included in the permit conditions and maintained by those requirements.

For a wetland or associated upland buffer areas adjacent to private property, there are no provisions for encroachments or clearing upon District property by others. The District does not maintain these areas for private property viewshed.

Cutting and/or trimming of vegetation is illegal in The Villages wetlands and may result in criminal actions or fines.

If you see something happening in any wetland or preserve area, please contact the District Property Management Department at 352-753-4022. For additional information, please visit www.DistrictGov.org. We appreciate your assistance in ensuring the environmental health of our beautiful community!

*Richard Baier, P.E., LEED AP
District Manager*

AREA AND REGION NEWS

NORTH AREA

North of 466

Jan Palmer – Editor of The Voice



I was saddened to read about the fatal accident that happened at Avenida and DelMar Avenues this past week. The two victims were young, so obviously not residents of The Villages, but my heart goes out to their families and to the first responders who had to take care of a tragic scene and the aftermath. Safe driving by all those within our boundaries must be a priority, whether the vehicles involved are cars, motorcycles, golf carts, or bicycles. We need constant reminders to stay alert, practice defensive driving, and observe speed limits.

Not a week goes by when we are driving out and about that we don't see gate arms missing and lampposts destroyed by careless and/or impaired driving. Two recent downed lamppost sightings were, of course, ones situated on round-a-about.

The VHA is well aware of the need to promote safe driving, which is why we include monthly columns on bicycle safety, information on how to take advantage of the AARP Safe Driver Course, and often highlight the How to Navigate Roundabouts on the District website: <https://www.districtgov.org/community/Roundabout-02-08-12.pdf>. Public safety is an important factor in "Keeping the Dream Alive" and we all need to do our part.

Some miscellaneous tidbits I want to share: It looked as if Fiesta Bowl was going to have to close for the summer due to the effects of Covid drastically reducing the number of leagues and recreational bowlers. Fortunately, that decision was reversed due to the support of The Villages and promises of leagues returning.



A friend of mine moved here in 2019, bought a house in Bellaire, sight unseen, and renovated it over the past year. She is very happy that homes in her neighborhood are selling well above what she paid for her own home less than two years ago. It has proven to be a good investment. Home values continue to rise throughout The Villages, including the charming, historic north area.

Jan Palmer
Editor, The VHA Voice

CENTRAL AREA

Between 466 and 466A

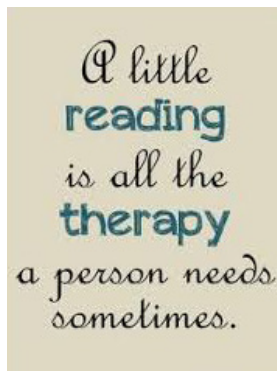
John Dean, Vice President

vhajohndean@gmail.com – 207-557-0371



Well, we finally had our first New Resident Night after suspending them for a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While I understand how some people may still be somewhat reluctant to venture out in the public, this VHA program has always been extremely popular, and we wanted to bring it back with all the reasonable safeguards in place. It was nice to see folks and to welcome new, as well as experienced residents. The turnout was incredibly good.



I, like most of you, discovered a lot of ways to cope with the separation and isolation of the last year. One way I dealt with it was by doing a lot more reading, and I found that I enjoyed it probably more than any time in my life. In my career, I had to read a lot of things, but most were trade/technical textbooks and periodicals, legislative agendas and proposals, or other work-related pieces. In retirement I can now read anything I want so I have read novels, historical books, and I am even reading what is the Bible but written more like a novel, which is remarkably interesting.

But I need to also mention a local writer whose column in The Villages Daily Sun is worth seeking out. Nancy Wood is a former counselor and minister who writes a great piece every Sunday in the Lifestyle section. While she probably has written this column for some time, I think I just discovered it over the last year while in lockdown. She writes about life events and makes observations that are inciteful and practical and that we can all relate to. She is never "preachy" but always uplifting. The title of her column says it all – On the Bright Side.

Interestingly, Nancy recently wrote about The VHA Annual Awards Night where we recognized individuals and organizations whose contributions add to the richness of our community (I was privileged to be able to present one of the awards). Nancy was in attendance and she wrote about the event and how much she enjoyed it. Regrettably, I did not get a chance to meet her that night. I sure wish she had introduced herself – I would have loved the chance to thank her for her great words I read every Sunday. Maybe the opportunity will arise another time.

Stay safe and healthy!
John

SOUTH AREA

Between 466A and SR44

Mike Dollard, Vice President

mjdollard@hotmail.com – 585-315-8338



I have lived in The Villages for eight years, and I have never regretted moving here in the slightest. I still find it amusing that in talking with people, I find I used to live near others who also moved here. I grew up in Rochester, NY but lived in the outer ring suburbs as an adult.

One day I was playing golf here with a guy and the usual subject of "where are you from" came up. He told me where he was from and added that I had probably never heard of it. He seemed shocked when I explained that I had lived about half a mile from him.

Fast forward to last week – I was leaving the gym and a woman was standing by my cart looking at another golf cart. We exchanged greetings and she asked a question that led to my picking up that she was new to the area. Yup – she was from the area that I had moved from and was here looking at The Villages as a place to move to. It was refreshing to hear from someone who was seeing TV for the first time – she was in disbelief over what a beautiful place this is.

In keeping with the theme of beauty in The Villages, not everything that is beautiful is an inanimate object... so are the people. I would like to give kudos to the woman I saw this afternoon on Hillsborough. She was walking along and carrying a plastic bag, initially not unusual. Then I noticed that she was periodically stopping to pick up a piece of litter. She, and the woman that does this on a regular basis on Pinellas, are my heroes.

Did you miss New Resident Night at Colony last week? There was an exceptionally large turn out and it was great to see so many in attendance to learn more about our community. NRN is the second Tuesday of the month, usually at Colony, but an exception is in July when it will be at La Hacienda.

An observation – driving home from New Resident Night in my cart there were two carts going in the opposite direction. Not unusual, but this time there was something odd about it. The second cart had the bright lights on along with an accessory light under the front bumper that was extremely bright. Folks – most newer carts have Hi/Lo headlights that should be dimmed when meeting an oncoming cart or traveling behind someone – the same goes for adjunct lights.

Mike Dollard

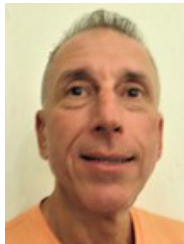
Where are you from?

AREA AND REGION NEWS

FAR SOUTH AREA

South of SR44

Andrew Bilardello, Vice President
andy@bellicus.net – 561-644-1358



The VHA was finally able to host a New Resident Night on April 13, at Colony Cottage Regional Recreation Center. It was our first one in over a year and was attended by approximately 220 residents! A fantastic turnout, which hopefully will continue well into the future. Please continue to visit The VHA's website for future dates of not only upcoming New

Resident Night presentations, but for all of the amazing programs offered by The VHA.

At our monthly senior staff meeting we discussed new ways in which The VHA can become more involved in the local community. I recently heard of a wonderful idea, from a different community, in which residents are providing needed supplies to homeless shelters, soup kitchens, battered women's shelters, etc. It works like this; when you go to your local grocery store of choice and they're offering a buy-1-get-1 free, you donate the extra one.



BUY ONE - GIVE ONE

For each item purchased, another is given to someone in need.

As an example, if I need mayonnaise and Publix is offering a BOGO, I'll donate the extra one to our local homeless or battered women's shelter. This is an amazing way to give back to our less fortunate neighbors and show them that we care. For those of us here in the Far South regions of D-12 and 13, I will come to your home and pick up whatever it is that you wish to donate (food items must be new and factory sealed) and make the deliveries to the aforementioned shelters. Please consider taking part in this very worthwhile program.

Andrew Bilardello
 VHA VP Far South

LADY LAKE NEWS

Lynn Davis

Lynna527@aol.com – 352-250-7782

It looks like a new bakery is coming to La Plaza Grande. The bakery sells many flavors of bundt cakes and cupcakes. This store anticipates opening in the fall at 988 Bichara Boulevard.

I heard a rumor that there is construction activity going on in the closed Sweet Tomato Restaurant on Hwy 441. Hopefully, another restaurant. Stay tuned for more information in the future.

The Flip Flop Shops & Shoes store had its Grand Opening April 30th. It's located at 992 Alvarez Ave. in Spanish Springs.



Ye Old Thrift Shoppe 106W Lady Lake Blvd. is open while the new section is being built. They are working on both the interior and exterior painting with a new reopening scheduled mid-summer. This thrift shop is a charity shop run by The Villages Hospital, with all profits going there.

The annual Arbor Day Tree Raffle held its drawing May 3rd. Hopefully some of the Villagers in the Lady Lake portion of The Villages won some of the 25 gift certificates for \$200 each to be

used at the Fairfield Farms Nurseries, Rt 301N in Oxford.

FYI: The Lady Lake Farmers Market has moved back to the Log Cabin every Tuesday 9:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m., 106 Hwy 27/441, Lady Lake.

The Town of Lady Lake is accepting applications for current vacancies on the following volunteer boards and committees: Library Advisory Board; Parks, Recreation & Tree Advisory Board; and the Police Pension Board. Note: Applicants must be residents living

within the town limits of Lady Lake.

Submitted by,
 Lynn Davis

A VILLAGER'S VIEW: CONTINUING THE DREAM

Sawgrass Grove
 A NEW KIND OF GATHERING PLACE

All renderings and artwork are artist interpretations and are subject to change or vary from actual developments. ©2021 Holding Company of The Villages, Florida, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

The question was asked at The VHA's recent Town Hall about whether or not there would be a fourth Town Square in the new far south area of The Villages. Another question mentioned the parking at Sawgrass, so, being curious, I checked both questions out for myself.

I must admit, I rarely go exploring on The Villages website, but when I did, I found a wealth of information. Under "What's New" I found some delightful videos, including one that featured the new lifestyle model at Sawgrass Grove. So, to keep this short, CHECK IT OUT at <https://www.thevillages.com/whatsnew/continuing-the-dream>

P.S. I have not encountered designated parking spots for golf carts vs. automobiles. We have figured out how to use all parking spots, throughout our community, for whatever form of transportation we are using.

The VHA News & Notes



We are pleased to announce the consolidation of the activities of The VHA Community Foundation into the daily operations of The VHA. Since The VHA is now its own non-profit, 501 c 3 organization, it is our staunch belief that this decision will bring about positive changes for everyone.

It will make the VHA stronger and able to ensure its long- term viability.

Joining these two great forces together will mean greater things for our members, including access to additional educational programs, and special events benefitting the entire community.

We assure you that the mission of the Community Foundation and its initiative of working on “aging in place” issues will continue within the structure of The VHA.

We are looking forward to the numerous benefits that we can all reap from taking this step.

We greatly appreciate your continued support of The VHA as we move this organization ahead to meet the needs of The Villages residents.

*Sincerely,
The VHA Board of Directors
The VHA Community Foundation Board of Directors*

**NEW RESIDENT NIGHT • MAY 11
AT COLONY REGIONAL
RECREATION CENTER AT 7:00 p.m.**
**Presenters may include, and information/
handouts will be available from:**

- Honorable Paul Militello, Sumter County Judge
- Sumter County Sheriff's Office & other local law enforcement
- Sumter County Property Appraiser
- Sumter County Tax Collector
- Sumter County Clerk
- District Government
- Serving Health Ins. Needs of Elders (SHINE)
- Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches
- The Villages Regional Hospital Auxiliary
- Seniors vs. Crime
- SECO
- Sumter Landing Bicycle Club
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Friends of the Library
- The Enrichment Academy
- Veteran's Services
- The VHA



HELPING HANDS WORK FROM HOME:

Helping Hands is looking for someone who is interested in volunteering one day a week handling requests for durable medical equipment. We will provide the computer and phone needed. If interested, please call 352-973-2284.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT FOR THE VOICE:

This position would involve learning the ropes, helping with graphics and content, some reporting, and proofreading. Contact: Jan Palmer at mjpalmer2@comcast.net

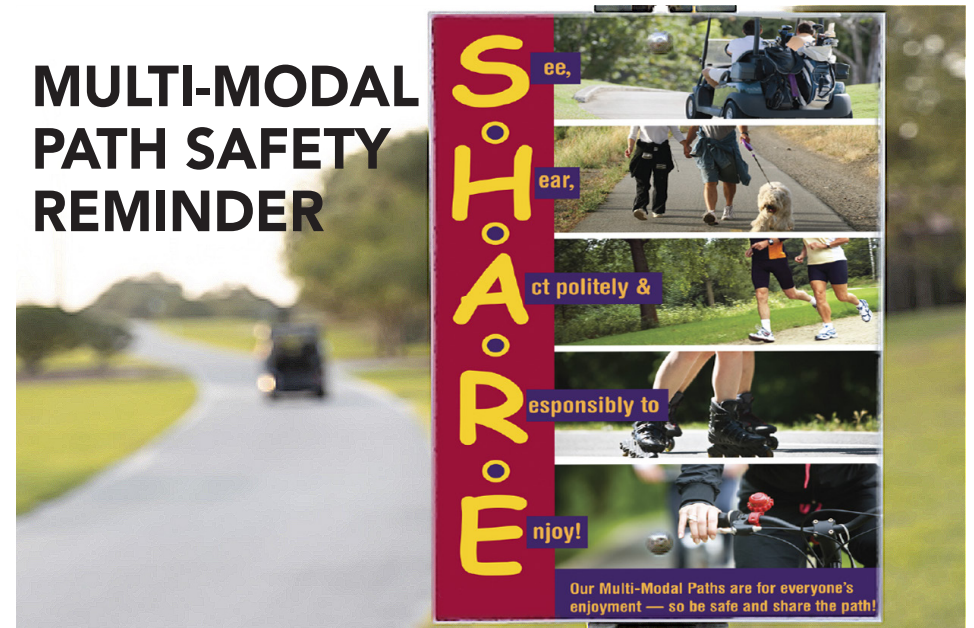
NEW RESIDENT NIGHT COORDINATOR:

The ideal volunteer for this program would be responsible for set up, contacting presenters, refreshments, and overseeing the monthly meeting. Contact: Kathy Porter at kathymporter@comcast.net

MISCELLANEOUS:

If you are interested in just getting your toes wet, so to speak, and would like to volunteer for one of our events, or to help out as needed with any of our programs, use the contact form on Page 4 or visit our website at www.thevha.net and let us know your availability and interests.

MULTI-MODAL PATH SAFETY REMINDER



**The VHA Membership has its rewards...
Join today at thevha.net**

Upcoming EVENTS

FOR MAY AND JUNE

NEW RESIDENT NIGHT:

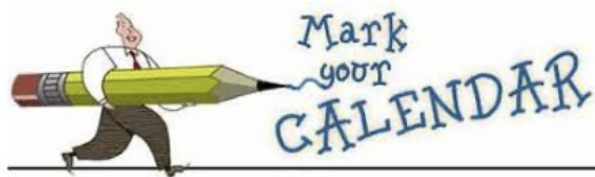
TUESDAY, MAY 11 and JUNE 8 at 7:00 p.m. at COLONY COTTAGE REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER

GOLF CART SAFETY CLINIC:

MAY 19 at 9:00 a.m. at COLONY COTTAGE REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER and JUNE 16 AT WATER LILY RECREATION CENTER.

VHA-CF BINGO:

MAY 27 at 6:30 p.m. at ROHAN REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER.



THE VHA VOLUNTEER SOCIAL:

Plans are in the works for an appreciation social in JULY for current volunteers and a get-acquainted time for those interested in volunteering.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE DETAILS.

THE NEXT VHA QUARTERLY TOWN HALL MEETING:

JULY 20th with question deadline of JULY 14th

THE VHA COUNTRY WESTERN HOEDOWN:

JANUARY 29, 2022

AN EVENING WITH THE DEVELOPER

AT THE SHARON:

MAY 11, 2022



THE ON-LINE REFRESHER COURSE CONTINUES TO BE OFFERED:

The AARP Smart Driver course is recognized as an approved accident prevention course for drivers age 55 and older by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Insured drivers, age 55 and older, may be eligible for an appropriate reduction in automobile insurance premium charges good for three years after completing this course. Please check with your insurance company or agent for any additional requirements for eligibility.

For more information and to register, go to:

<https://www.aarpdriversafety.org/>



AMAC Foundation

Supporting & Educating America's Seniors

SUDDEN DEATH: ARE YOU PREPARED?

3-PART SERIES BEGINNING

TUESDAY MAY 18, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

The long-awaited return of one of our most popular offerings is here! This seminar series walks participants through what needs to be considered to help ensure that survivors are prepared to deal with the aftermath of a loved one's death. Participants are led through the creation of a "Survivor's Notebook" focused on identifying critical material and assembling it in an accessible format. Equally important, the sessions focus on developing an approach to maintaining the material so that it remains current. The result is a physical roadmap—in the form of a "Survivor's Notebook"—that will be of immeasurable value to those left behind.

This will be a 3-part session, with the second part scheduled for May 25 and the third part scheduled for June 4. All sessions will be held at the Lady Lake Library starting at 10:00 am. Additional details are available on the Foundation website at: amacfoundation.org.

Light refreshments will be served at each session. Notebook materials will be provided. There is no cost for this workshop series, *but attendance is limited so you must register to attend.*

Contact the AMAC Foundation, 888-750-2622 or email: info@amacfoundation.org to register.

Also, please be advised that COVID-19 restrictions are expected to remain in place for this event, with face coverings and social distancing required.

M2M: THE VHA MERCHANTS TO MEMBERS DISCOUNT PROGRAM



Visit our website at www.thevha.net for a complete list of vendors and service providers who generously offer VHA members significant discounts. Be sure to have your VHA membership card with you to receive this member benefit.

H A P P Y
M O T H E R S
D A Y

TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT PRIZE AND LOTTERY SCAMS

**Seniors
VS.
CRIME**



The pandemic has caused financial distress because of lost jobs, income, and homes, and emotional distress because of social isolation. According to Bridget Small, with the Division of Consumer & Business Education at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), they want your help to reach people who might be a bit cut off from their social network. The FTC knows that people who talk about scams are less likely to fall for them, and they hope to spark discussions by offering conversation-starting ideas. Here are a few ideas to help you and the people you care about spot and avoid a “free prize” con.

Prize and lottery scams can start many ways, but they often begin with an unexpected phone call. The scammers may claim to be from the government or some other “official sounding” organization. They make wild claims about big winnings, and demand payment up front. If you get a call like this, hang up. You probably already know that. But you may know someone who doesn’t. So, give a call to someone who might be a bit isolated, who could use a reminder about these scams. Chances are, they would like to hear from you, and have a chance to talk about how things are going and what’s on their mind.

Here are a few tips you can share about prize and lottery scams when you chat:

- Legitimate contests don’t ask you to pay a fee, or give your bank account or credit card number to get your prize.
- Never send money by wire transfer, gift card, or cryptocurrency. Anyone who asks you to pay for things that way is a scammer.
- Don’t trust caller ID. Scammers can make it look like they’re calling from anywhere.

When it comes to fraud, vigilance is our number one



weapon. You have the power to protect yourself and your loved ones from scams. Please share this article with your friends and family.

After you talk, invite your friend or relative to call you back if they have questions, or if they get a surprise phone call. If they say they already spotted a scam or sent money, please ask them to report it to [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov). You’re welcome to file a report for someone, if

they ask for help.

If you need assistance with understanding any aspects of Fake Prize Offer scams, contact the nearest Seniors Vs. Crime office in The Villages for advice or assistance. Seniors Vs. Crime also has a Speakers Bureau that will gladly come to your club, church, or group to speak about scams. To schedule a presentation, contact any of the offices. There is never a charge for their services. 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) 753-0727

During this pandemic, our offices are closed for walk-in complaints. Please call before you come to our offices. Hours may vary or may require appointments. You can also file online, or by calling 1-800-203-3099. Our staff will call you back and you can file your complaint over the phone.

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 Face Book. Hablamos Español. Por favor pregunte por Yolanda. Martes a Viernes: 10:00 A.M. a 2:00 P.M., (352) 689 4606.

Can the Driver Who Never Actually Hit Me Still Be at Fault?

BIKE • FRIENDLY • COMMUNITY • CORNER

**THE FLORIDA
BIKE GUY**
Cycling Attorney Helping Fellow Cyclists



Jim Dodson, a personal injury attorney, bicyclist, and advocate for safe cycling shares his insights on this topic: “I commonly receive calls where a cyclist was in a pretty serious crash, but the driver did not contact them. The question is: Can they still pursue a claim?” The answer is “YES.”

If you are forced to take evasive action to avoid a collision and crash, you may still be able to recover if the driver’s negligent actions are the reason you were hurt. The question under Florida Law is not whether the car made contact, but rather, if the driver placed you in a “zone of risk,” meaning that the driver’s actions negligently placed you in immediate risk of physical harm.

This commonly occurs when a driver fails to see the cyclist and pulls out right in front of them from a driveway. It also commonly happens when drivers run, roll through stop signs, or make turns without seeing the cyclist. These left-cross/right cross maneuvers force the cyclist to make a split-second decision to either deflect (often hitting a curb or other object) or stop suddenly and fall over the handlebars to avoid an accident.

Another common example we see occurs when cars pass too close. Jim speaks often about the three feet rule in Florida, though cyclists know that many motorists fail to give them three feet. (Question: How can one measure three feet accurately when both the bike and passing motorist are moving? Answer: Bike mounted video camera). Close passing can sometimes force a reaction and then force you off the road.

When close calls occur, it is important to get as much information as you can about the driver and the car. You should report it to the police as soon as possible to allow them to investigate. You will also want to have witnesses who can confirm details about the accident. (HINT: A video camera mounted to your bike will help tell the story of what happened. Dave Lawrence, Bike Friendly Advocacy Committee Safety Director, discussed cameras and their uses in this column last month.)

In the photo below, both the truck and cyclist with bike mounted camera are doing 20 MPH for a closing velocity of 40 MPH. With under 60 feet of separation, the tandem cyclists had less than one-second to react. Just because there was no contact, does not mean there was no claim.

Stay safe out there!

Jim Dodson

<https://thefloridabikeguy.com>



NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM YOUR DISTRICT WEBSITE:



Email Safety Tips: The District is aware of emails that residents have received, inclusive of official District logos, requesting contributions to a charity account and to update “membership”. As a government entity, there is a significant amount of information that is

available to the public and it is unfortunate that individuals leverage that in an effort to gain access to personal information. As a reminder, the District will never prompt you to provide banking information, change a password or contribute funds to a charity via email. If you do receive an email that you are not expecting which requests you to click on a link or download information, it very likely is a phishing attempt. (For more information on identifying phishing scams, visit the district website’s weekly bulletin from April 22, 2021).



DISTRICT WEEKLY BULLETIN: Do you want to stay up to date on what is happening in the various departments within the District? On the District website’s Home Page, on the left-hand side, is a menu with District Weekly Bulletin as an option. Current, valuable, and pertinent information is available weekly, including closures for maintenance, frequently asked questions and answers, committee vacancies and applications, and much more.

All District Government Committee Meetings (CCD, PWAC, Amenity Authority, Architectural Review, etc.) with dates, times, and locations, are available on the website.

Media Release Info: Participation in clubs, activities and events throughout The Villages® community may be photographed and recorded. Participant, by engaging in the activity, irrevocably consents to be photographed and recorded and grants The Villages of Lake-Sumter, Inc. and its successors, assigns and licensees the right to publish and use such photographs and recordings for informational, advertising, marketing, and similar purposes.

“In Our Efforts To Keep The Recreation Facilities In Optimal Condition:” Check the District Website and watch for this phrase under “What’s Happening” for recreational facility closures for maintenance for each District. Additional closure schedules for maintenance, construction, and upgrades, etc. are also included.

Camp Villages Summer 2021: Whether your grandkids live nearby or are coming for a visit, mark your calendars for the upcoming summer Camp Villages program. This year’s activities begin June 7th and continue through August 6th. The camp brochure, with details regarding activities, age recommendations and registration information, will be available early May. Be sure to check DistrictGov.org and the weekly Recreation & Parks publication for further updates on all Camp Villages activities.



This is just a sampling of what our district government provides in the way of information for residents of our hometown on its website.

PLEASE NOTE!

Editor’s Note: While we try to publish the most accurate information available to us at the time of publication, due to circumstances beyond our control some events may need to be cancelled or postponed. Please confirm with the source of the information provided if there is any doubt about whether or not an event is still being held as planned.



Scholarship Program Provides Endless Possibilities

Auxiliary Foundation

Established in 2015, the Scholarship Program at UF Health The Villages® Hospital Auxiliary Foundation has been a highlight for the community. Since its inception, the program has awarded over \$605,000 to benefit 59 high school seniors and 88 hospital team members pursuing or advancing their careers in medically related studies. The high schools participating in the program are South Sumter, Wildwood and The Villages.

In 2016, Project S.O.S. (Support Our Soldiers) joined forces with the Foundation to provide a scholarship to a student who has a family member that served honorably in the United States Military. “Many of our military families in Florida and throughout the Nation often live at or below the poverty level, and the cost of sending their children to college is just a dream. Each year the Foundation, in conjunction with Project SOS, provides at least one Military Scholarship to a deserving family in order to make that dream come true,” said Gary Kadow, Founder and President of Project SOS, and Chairman of the Auxiliary Foundation’s Scholarship Committee.

This year, the program has been expanded to include naming opportunities. David and Cindy Taylor and Dr. Erika Jasper established scholarship awards in their names. If you are interested in funding a scholarship or learning more about the program, contact the Foundation office at 352-751-8871.



Roneisha Parrish: A 2019 recipient of a UF Health The Villages® Hospital Auxiliary Foundation Scholarship, Roneisha is now a sophomore in the nursing program at Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida and embracing the academic life. “I love science,” she states, “and I love the rigor of my studies.” She acknowledges how valuable The Villages® Hospital Foundation scholarship is to her success in school. “I can spend my time figuring out how I can keep my classes in order and how I can keep my social life in order instead of wondering how I can pay my bills,” she explains.

Easter Bunny Makes Everyone’s Day! On Easter, a BIG bunny hopped through the door of the

hospital. A greeter asked him who he was there to visit and the Easter Bunny said, “Why everyone, of course!” With that, he hopped to the elevator and up he went. First, he stopped at the nurses’ station and then he was on his way down the halls. Hopping from room to room, he left a small little bunny with each patient. The Auxiliary Foundation would like to thank volunteer, Roger Akers (shown with hospital team member Yahima Ramirez Leon) for his amazing portrayal of the Easter Bunny and for the joy he brought to so many!



VISIT OUR WEBSITE THEVHA.NET FOR INFO, MEMBERSHIP, HELPFUL LINKS, VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, AND MORE

Home Join/Renew About Donate Contact



Members News Events Volunteers Merchants

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

HELPING HANDS

NEW RESIDENT NIGHT
TUESDAY, MAY 11 AT 7:00 P.M.
AT COLONY REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF GETTING TO KNOW THE VILLAGES, INSIDE AND OUT. SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 8.

VHA-CF BINGO
MAY 27, 2021
6:30 p.m. (Doors open at 6:00)
ROHAN RECREATION CENTER
\$10
for Disposable BINGO Cards & Personal Marker

BYOB AND SNACKS
THREE 50/50 WINNERS
FIRST COME FIRST SERVED
COVID COMPLIANT

GOLF CART SAFETY CLINIC

MAY 19 @ 9:00 A.M.
COLONY REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER
CAPACITY IS 50% SO GET THERE EARLY
CLINIC TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Not a Toy • Golf Cars & LSV • Golf Cars vs. Others • Tunnels
- Intersections • Passing & Road Crossings • Bridges • Turns
- Circles (Roundabouts) • Parallel Parking • Pulling into a Parking Space • Sharing Parking with Cars • No Parking Zones • Insurance
- Legal concerns • Maintenance

NEXT MONTH: JUNE 16 @ WATER LILY RECREATION CENTER

HELPING HANDS

DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM

VISIT WWW.THEVHA.NET TO VIEW OUR CURRENT INVENTORY, THEN CALL:
352-973-2284
OR EMAIL US AT:
VHA.HELPINGHANDS.OFFICEMAIL@GMAIL.COM

**WE WILL THEN SCHEDULE YOUR PICK-UP FROM:
THE VHA OFFICE • 1104 MAIN ST. • SPANISH SPRINGS
MONDAY THRU FRIDAY BETWEEN
11:00 A.M. AND 1:00 P.M.**