



THE VHA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING FEATURES MR. ED JIMENEZ, CEO UF HEALTH SHANDS

VHA President Phil Walker (left) welcomed The VHA members who attended the General Membership Meeting on December 9, 2020 and introduced the evening's speaker, Mr. Ed Jimenez (right). Mr. Jimenez has served as Chief Executive Officer for University of Florida Health Shands since 2014. Prior to his current role, he was the Chief Operating Officer from 2010 to 2014.



Mr. Jimenez oversees the UF Health Shands campus in Gainesville, as well as the two Central Florida Hospitals; The Villages® and Leesburg Regional Hospitals. UF Health Shands Hospital routinely appears on the US News Best Hospitals lists. He also works closely with the University of Florida College of Medicine. He has served as the chair of the Safety Net Hospital Alliance of Florida; a board member of the Council of Teaching Hospital and Health Systems, part of the American Association of American Medical Colleges; and a board member of Vizient, an organization that includes some of the most prestigious hospitals in the country. Past appointments include serving on the Transition Advisory Committee on Health and Wellness for Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. Prior to coming to Florida 10 years ago, Mr. Jimenez spent his career in New York and New Jersey. He went to college outside of Boston at Brandeis University, and went to Business School in New York City at Baruch College.

Mr. Jimenez explained the background of the January 2020 merger of Central Florida Health (The Villages and Leesburg Hospitals) into the UF Health Shands organization. It was driven by shared values, compatible goals, a quest for exceptional comprehensive healthcare for our communities, and career opportunities for employees. It also provided for additional opportunities with The Villages Developer to build a third hospital in the community.

Covid-19 put integration activities on hold in mid-March. When activities picked up, land was finalized where a third hospital could be built. Furthermore, the concept evolved into a larger plan to develop a medical city with a hospital and academic buildings for clinical research and physician training. Villages Health, the largest local provider of primary care, also plays an integral role.

While these are longer term goals, Mr. Jimenez stressed the importance of doing tactical things now to keep the ball moving forward on improving healthcare for the community.



- The first area of focus is the Emergency Departments in the Hospitals. It is important to get feedback from patients and staff; Get the facts and fix the situation.
- A second area being assessed is the turnover rate of nurses. Shands' turnover rate is 12% compared to the 23% average among the 180 national teaching hospitals. The higher turnover rate for nurses at The Villages hospital is under review to learn ways to build team commitment and pride of performance, thereby reducing the turnover rate.
- Finally, as an example of opportunities for professional growth, he cited the Gainesville Simulation Center that Villages area medical professionals can now use to learn and practice medical techniques.

Mr. Jimenez welcomes emails that identify specific incidents related to The Villages or Leesburg hospitals that indicate a need for improvement. Emails need to specify a date, time, location, and details in order to evaluate how better care may be provided. The goal each day at the hospitals is "Make Each Day Better - Striving to Improve." You may contact Mr. Jimenez at edward.jimenez@shands.ufl.edu

In closing, he reiterated his optimism, excitement and commitment for providing exceptional healthcare with these new relationships. "It's my goal to make sure that our two hospitals can become the best they can be, compared to similar hospitals."

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The VHA President's Message



Happy New Year 2021! 2020 was my first year as the President of The VHA and it proved to be a year with new challenges and experiences like no other. The health issues related to Covid-19 are, hopefully, going to end in 2021. The toll that was experienced by each individual was very different. I wish everyone the best as you fight to get back to a more normal year ahead.

The VHA was able to hold some events early in the year, including a presentation by The Villages Grown, our popular "Cutting the Cord" workshop with information on how to leave cable TV, and the "Where Did Your Money Go" seminar on the use of our amenity fees. Now that 2021 is here we will try very hard to bring back these and other educational programs to our members in all areas of The Villages.

Our Community Foundation is following their theme of "Aging at Home" by interviewing organizations that help residents toward that goal, and then choosing to support those efforts. Two examples of organizations they support are Our Moment Café and the Wildwood Soup Kitchen.

Helping Hands opened up their doors to residents again in September to resume supplying loans of Durable Medical Equipment to residents upon request. 2020 also saw the VHA website updated. We hope you will take a moment to check it out at: www.thevha.net



- Our annual Country Western Hoedown will be held May 29th. Our January date was postponed until May because of Covid 19.
- New Resident Nights will resume in February. We will be cautious to use The Villages recreational room restrictions to be as safe as possible.
- The VHA Golf Cart Safety Clinic has resumed meeting on the third Wednesday of each month.

Members have been saying they would like us to have more social events. The VHA would like to do that, and is asking for ideas and volunteers who would be willing to plan and execute such events.

I would like to once again thank our members who volunteer for events and board positions. You are appreciated, and I wish you the best in 2021.

*Sincerely,
Phil Walker
President, The VHA*

THE VHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBERS

Phil Walker, President
Fred Briggs, Past President
John Conboy, Treasurer

Karl Arps * Russ D'Emidio
Peter Moeller * Steve Printz
Peter Russell * Diane Spencer
Vivian Stephens * Chuck Wildzun

For contact information go to www.thevha.net

THE VHA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

Duane Johnson, President
Kathy Houser, Vice President
Linda McPherson, Secretary
Fred Oehling, Treasurer
Dick Boyden * Don Kingsley
Jim Noce * Phil Walker

For contact information go to www.thevha.net
Or email us at: VHACF@THEVHA.NET

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

A Message From The Past President:



Dear Members of The VHA:

It's been a full year since I turned over The VHA President's job to Phil Walker. Let me start by saying that Phil has done a great job during the most trying times we as an organization have ever faced since our inception. During my five years as President there were many issues to deal with,

but none like this. We, the thousands of VHA Members, owe Phil a big "Thank you" for his leadership!

Many of the various VHA programs and events that are normally provided to our community, such as New Resident Night, Golf Cart Safety, The Hoedown, Bingo, A Night With The Developer, Quarterly Town Halls, along with educational programs such as Where Your Money Goes, Snakes and Venom, Covenants and Restrictions, Living to 100, Cutting the Cord, and many others, have been severely impacted by the virus. We sincerely hope in 2021 and going forward that we can get back on track serving our members and The Villages as a whole by reinstating these and other programs on your behalf.

The VHA Leadership made the decision that our organization would be an apolitical one. There are enough quasi-political organizations in The Villages that bombard voters with mostly negative data trying to influence their choices, all the while searching for their next cause to use as a recruitment tool to get their candidates elected. **I would caution you to beware of those who want to destroy what works, without a plan and proven evidence, but claim their way will be better.** I've always wondered why people move here because they thought it was a terrific place to live in retirement, and then try to turn it into what they left behind. The Villages and District Government have a system in place that works very well even though it may not be perfect. I always remember the old axiom that says: **"Don't destroy the Good, in search of the Perfect."**

The VHA tries to establish working relationships with all entities that impact the lifestyle and property values that we've all chosen for our retirement years. Those entities include The District Government, The University of Florida Healthcare system, the Villages Health, The Hospital Auxiliary, the County Governments, the Wildwood, Fruitland Park, Lady Lake Governments, Law Enforcement and The Developer. Our efforts are directed towards being positive and trying to work with the organization with the ability to solve a problem. If not solved by working together, it could degrade into a law suit which, as we've learned in the past, can unnecessarily cost Villagers thousands of dollars to defend.

We worked with the District, PWAC, Village Center District and Sumter Landing District to get The Enrichment Academy (TEA) up and running when the Life Long Learning System was closed, and again worked with them to allow the existing PWAC to fulfill the advisory role South of CR-466 rather than create another level of bureaucracy. We were also the organization that provided support to residents in the Historic area when they were isolated by flooding with no power and food, and raised and sent thousands of dollars to Texas and The Bahamas when they were devastated by Hurricanes. We have a proven record of cooperation that is beneficial to all.

Our new website at www.thevha.net is operational, and will provide a wealth of information to facilitate living here in The Villages. Our monthly newsletter "The Voice" will continue to be delivered with the Daily Sun on the first Wednesday of each month; look for it. Both will provide you with an opportunity to join with us.

I have been asked many times: Why should I join The VHA? Let's start with our **Value Proposition** which provides each member with the opportunity for:

- **Communication Opportunities**
(Providing Civil Discourse on Community Issues)

- **Social Opportunities**
(Enjoying Time Together)

- **Educational Opportunities**
(Learning new ideas and skills)

- **Volunteer Opportunities**
(Enhancing the Wellbeing of the Community)

- **Philanthropic Opportunities**
(Helping Those in Need)

Our Value Proposition contains numerous areas that make your membership valuable and a good investment. We currently have more than 16,000 members, and as I've said many times before, **"The Larger We Are, the Louder Our Voice Becomes."**

The three branches of our organization: The VHA, The VHA Community Foundation, and The VHA Helping Hands, are working diligently as a team to support our Value Propositions, and we strive to offer each member an opportunity to participate in those efforts. Join us. We welcome your ideas and your support, and hope you will be willing to be part of something larger than yourself while giving back to your community.

*Fred Briggs
Past President*

The VHA CONTACT FORM

Please use the form below to contact us. Mail it to:

**The VHA, 1104 Main St.,
The Villages, FL 32159
Or use the VHA Deposit
Box available at every
postal station.**



For Membership:

Make checks payable to

The Villages Homeowners Advocates.

You may also renew online
by credit card via our website

www.thevha.net

- ☐ **Membership:** ☐ New ☐ Renewal
- ☐ \$25/Household for 2 years
- ☐ \$100/Household for Lifetime
- ☐ **Town Hall Question**
- ☐ **I Would Like to Volunteer**
- ☐ **Other**

NAME/NAMES OF

ALL IN HOUSEHOLD: _____

ADDRESS: _____

NAME OF VILLAGE/VILLA: _____

E-MAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

MAILING ADDRESS

(IF DIFFERENT THAN THE VILLAGES): _____

QUESTION/COMMENT

(ATTACH TO ADDITIONAL PAPER IF NEEDED):



**MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS
REWARDS...JOIN TODAY**

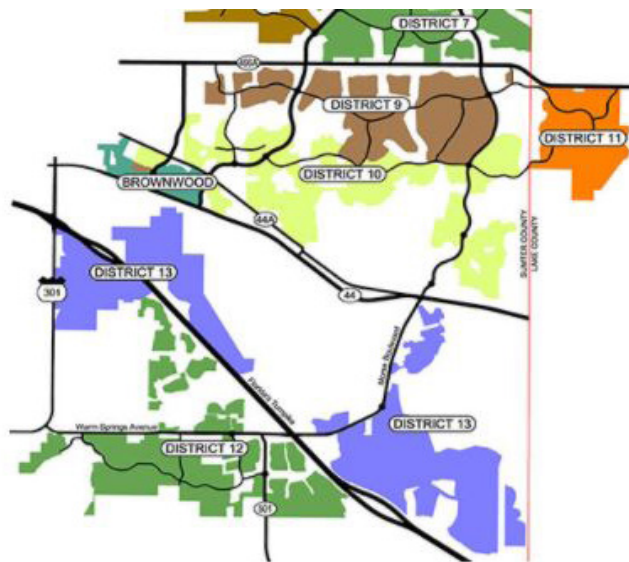
HAPPY NEW YEAR VILLAGERS!



District Manager

I hope you are kicking this Holiday Season and New Year off with a bang! Some of us may be looking to get that heart rate up through exercise, or looking to tone up or shed a few pounds. Given our robust recreation system of recreation centers, trails, and parks, it's easier than ever to keep that resolution or just to enjoy our central Florida weather.

With 99 pools, 17.5 miles of walking/nature trails, and 925 outdoor open play sports courts, you literally can play your heart out. And don't forget about all the golf you can play in The Villages. With 42 Executive Golf courses and 12 Championship Golf courses it is a golfer's paradise. Coming soon, the new Southern Oaks Championship Golf Course and the Clifton Cove Putting Course will be located in District 13.



It's hard to believe that Village residents will have 100 recreation centers with the opening of Aviary Recreation Center in District 13, Village of Bradford. This recreation center just opened and features a resort-style family pool, bocce, shuffleboard, pickleball, tennis, and corn toss. It has 10,609 square feet of meeting space. Another worthwhile trip to a recreation center would be to the Trillium Recreation Center in District 9. This new recreation center offers a resort-style pool as well as multiple outdoor grilling stations, a masonry shade structure, and multiple indoor meeting spaces with several fireplaces.

Further, this year will see the start of a new recreation center construction on the First Responders Recreation Center (near CR 42 in Marion County within District 4). Once open in 2022, this center will feature an 18 hole putt and play, outdoor fire pit (much like the one at the Fenney Recreation Center), almost a mile of walking trails, a resort-style pool, and nearly 11,000 square feet of air-conditioned recreation space. Development will also commence this year near Lake Miona along the west side of Buena Vista Blvd. with the design of a new 1.5-mile walking/nature trail along Black Lake preserve.

I hope everyone starts 2021 by enjoying all the activities The Villages has to offer. I wish you all a happy, healthy, and safe New Year!

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



Sign up for e-Notifications

NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM:



ALL POOLS ARE HEATED DURING THE COOLER MONTHS. WE STRIVE FOR WATER TEMPERATURES BETWEEN 81-84 DEGREES. TEMPERATURE WILL FLUCTUATE DEPENDING ON THE WEATHER.

District Board Meetings:

To comply with social distancing guidelines, all District Board meetings are being held at the Savannah Center, with the exception of District 12 and District 13. District 12 and District 13 meetings are being held at the Everglades Recreation Complex. Look for the meeting schedule on the Home Page of the District Gov website, pictured here:

Meeting Calendar

January ▼

2021 ▼

January 2021						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 (2)	7 (4)	8 (4)	9
10	11 (1)	12	13	14 (5)	15 (3)	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

[View all meetings for January 2021](#)

PICKLES

by Brian Crane



District Cancellations:

- CDD Orientation
- Resident Academy
- The Villages Public Safety Department
- Smoke detector changes
- CPR classes

A Note from the Finance Customer Service Team:

We recently changed our remittance address for the Utilities bills. If you are making payments via your bank's online bill payment service, please update the mailing address to which you submit your monthly payment for your utility and amenity billing:

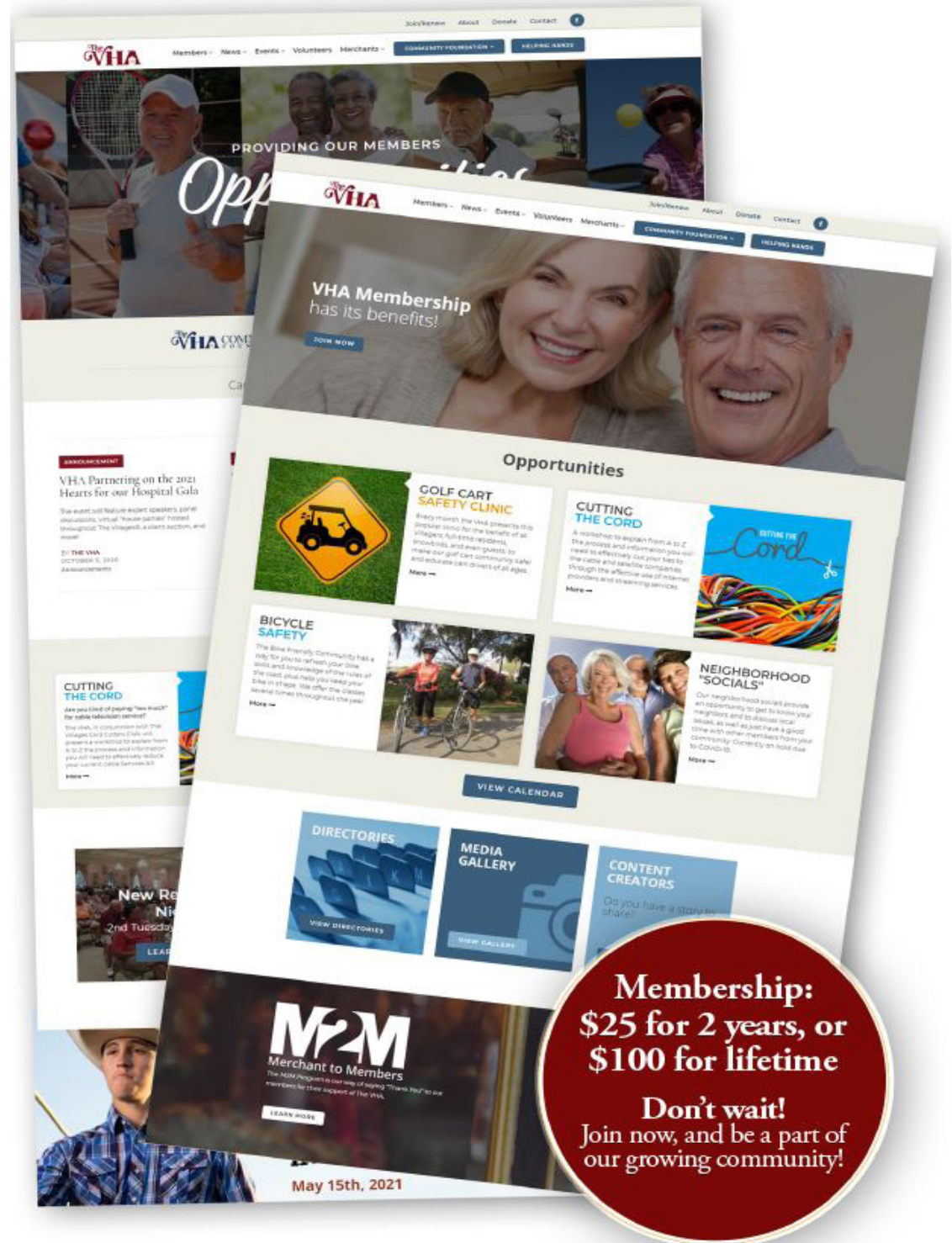
- **From:** 984 Old Mill Run, The Villages, FL 32162-1675 (This address remains for all other District correspondence.)
- **To:** P.O. Box 2230 The Villages, FL 32158-2230 (For payments only.)

Please ensure that your check is made payable to: VCSA, LSSA, NSU, CSU or SSU and that your account number is referenced in this format: A123-1234-12 Please correct this information on your bank's website to avoid delays in payment receipt and processing. If you have any questions, please contact the Finance Customer Service Department at Utilities@DistrictGov.org or at 352-750-0000

Editor's Note: If you are using the mailboxes at the postal station to make utility/amenity payments, please be sure to use the correct mailbox. The VHA mailboxes are not checked as often as the ones for payments which may result in your payment being late.

Outdoor Excursion to Re-open in January

Registration is now open for The Villages Recreation and Parks Department's Guided Fishing, Kayaking and Nature Tours on Lake Sumter. Experience Lake Sumter up-close and personal. The complete schedule is available at <https://www.districtgov.org/departments/Recreation/OutdoorExcursions.aspx>



LAKE SUMTER LINE

• EXCURSIONS •

SCENIC CRUISES*

AVAILABLE DAILY
1:00 PM – SUNSET



GUIDED TOURS

FISHING, KAYAKING
& NATURE PONTOON

Visit any Regional Recreation Complex or online at DistrictGov.org for available dates and to register!

Visit DistrictGov.org or call 352-751-7110 for additional information.

*Weather & lake conditions permitting.

The Villages
Recreation & Parks

THE VHA HELPING HANDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Gottschalk, President

Len Olen, Vice President

Ron McMahon, Secretary/Treasurer

John McDonald * Jeff Rattner * Phil Walker

For contact information
go to www.thevha.net

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

AREA AND REGION NEWS

HAPPY NEW YEAR

NORTH AREA

North of 466

Jan Palmer – Editor of The Voice



One of the things that impresses me the most about The Villages is the constant attention to aesthetics and upgrades. From the older areas in the north to the brand spanking new southern section, there is a consistency to the beauty and maintenance that we all enjoy. As an example of pro-active maintenance, the golf cart tunnel near Laurel Manor has recently been painted and cleaned to increase brightness and visibility. Other tunnels are scheduled to follow:

The multi-modal path tunnels located under Buena Vista Boulevard and El Camino Real are scheduled to be painted January 4, 2021 through January 17, 2021. These dates may be adjusted due to unforeseen circumstances, including weather.

All work is scheduled between 9:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. There will be short periods during the night where the tunnels will be closed and an alternate route must be taken.

- B1 - 16680 Buena Vista Blvd
(Buena Vista/Mulberry)
- B4 - 1700 Buena Vista Blvd
(Buena Vista/Belle Aire/Alhambra)
- B2 - 17200 Buena Vista Blvd
(Buena Vista/Legacy)
- B5 - 2890 El Camino Real
(El Camino/Alhambra/Savannah)
- B3 - 17700 Buena Vista Blvd
(Buena Vista/Belle Meade)
- B6 - 1530 Buena Vista Blvd
(Buena Vista/Savannah)

Everything possible will be done to minimize your inconvenience. For the SAFETY of the crews and all residents, we ask that you please use caution and pay attention to all signage.

Christmas Tree Collection Village Community Development Districts No. 1 - No. 11 in the Sumter County, Marion County or Fruitland Park portions of The Villages: Discarded live Christmas Trees can be placed at the curb and will be collected with your regular household trash on your designated day. The trees must follow the procedures for yard waste. Tree limbs and branches may not exceed four (4) feet in length, four (4) inches in diameter or exceed 40 pounds. Artificial trees should be taken apart and placed curb side in sections and will be collected with your regular

household trash on your designated day. If you live in the Lake County portion of The Villages (not including District No. 11), live trees can be placed at the curb on your assigned yard waste day and must be in 4' lengths and no more than 6" in diameter. To discard artificial trees, please call Lake County Solid Waste to schedule a bulk pick up at 352-343-3776. If you live in the Town of Lady Lake portion of The Villages, live and artificial trees can be placed at the curb and will be collected with your regular household trash on your designated day. If you have any questions, please contact Waste Management at 352-787-4416. (Information gathered from the District Gov website, where more details are available: www.districtgov.org)

*Wishing you all the best in 2021,
Jan Palmer
Editor, The VHA Voice*

CENTRAL AREA

Between 466 and 466A

John Dean, Vice President

vhajohndean@gmail.com – 207-557-0371



Greetings!

Well, here we are beginning a new year. This one has just got to be better than the last one.

But even as I write this, I must admit that, for the most part, 2020 has been more of a year of inconvenience for me than anything else. A couple of family travel events had to be cancelled, church services had to be watched as a streaming event with receiving communion as a drive-thru, we learned to have face masks readily available in the home, car, and golf cart, and we learned to be aware of social distancing. Folks who know me know that cooking is one of my greatest passions. Before the virus changed everything, I cooked at my church for our weekly Social Suppers. I looked forward to every Wednesday because, not only could I spend all day in a commercial kitchen cooking for 150 or more some weeks, but I got to work with a crew of devoted, talented, and just plain nice people. I should also mention that they are also obviously highly intelligent because they laughed at all my jokes. I am sure that it will be quite a while before we can return to being able to have these meals, but I certainly look forward to that day.

As a VHA officer, I certainly missed our New Resident Nights, our educational programs, and all the social interaction that these events bring. As the vaccine is rolled out and virus cases diminish, we all look forward

to resuming these programs and all the benefits that go along with them.

Thankfully, we did not have any COVID-19 related health issues in our house, we did not lose our jobs and income, we did not have to adjust to home schooling and/or alternative childcare issues. In fact, one friend remarked, as he watched so many families being affected, that he even felt a bit guilty for being retired and not having to worry about a job or his income.

I am sure we all hope that 2021 brings a return to normal or maybe even a new normal with better treatment for the virus, an effective immunization, the ability to travel, people safely returning to school and work, and resumption of social activities that bring us together to share interests, meals, and all of the other benefits that social interaction brings to our bodies, minds, and souls.

*Stay healthy and safe!
John*

SOUTH AREA

Between 466A and SR44

Mike Dollard, Vice President

mjdollard@hotmail.com – 585-315-8338



While this might be a bit late, I wanted to let you know that in filing your tax return for 2020 there is a new option for a deduction even if you are not itemizing. The majority of filers do not itemize anymore, but to generate help for charities, taxpayers can claim a deduction up to \$300.00 for cash (or check or credit card) donations to qualified charities. The

reason, per IRS, for this is that many charities are in trouble with donations dropping off due to Covid and they wanted to add an incentive to make contributions. Donations of property do not qualify for this deduction.

Word is that construction of the new hospital that UF Health is building will start in the first quarter of 2021. At the general meeting for December the CEO of UFHealth, Edward Jimenez, talked about the new hospital overall. Mr. Jimenez seemed very happy with the cooperation and assistance that they have received from The Villages. We were told that it will include, in addition to the hospital, one or two medical office buildings and an educational complex for training medical students and residents. The down side is that construction will take three to three and a half years.

Mr. Jimenez also talked about the current hospital and acknowledged that many are not happy with it. I had the distinct impression that he is very earnest in his

AREA AND REGION NEWS

HAPPY NEW YEAR

concerns and desire to make it better. He stated that the pandemic had derailed plans for 2020, but that change is happening, maybe just a little every day, but every day is better than yesterday.

Mike Dollard

FAR SOUTH AREA

South of SR44

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



By now you're aware that I'm writing this weeks before you're going to read it. Today is Saturday, December 12. For the past several weeks I've been collecting (begging for) money from residents in the Far South region to be donated to the Sumter Sheriff's "Kids, Cops and Christmas" program. You may have heard of the "Shop with a Cop" program that is popular in

other parts of the country; this is the same thing.

Local law enforcement officers take less fortunate children on a Christmas shopping trip. All money raised goes into the Sheriff's Benevolent Fund and is used for helping the needy in Sumter County. I managed to collect \$1,795 from 9 residents, including a \$200 donation from The VHA. One amazing couple donated \$750!!

Residents who are members of the Villages District 12 Facebook page (where I did most of my begging), will recall that the residents of St. James Village raised \$16,400 for the program. We raised \$1,795. There are 4,500 occupied homes south of SR44. We are the largest geographical area in The Villages. If every household gave \$5 we could have raised \$22,500.

Now, I can't put myself in everyone's wallet. I don't know what your financial situation is, but "Come on man!" 5 bucks!!! That's one Starbucks soy-caramel-mocha-frappe-latte-chino. If some of you who didn't donate are reading this and feel like I'm trying to shame you, it's because I am. We all have a good life here in The Villages. There are people who live around us, who are not as fortunate. Y'all need to step up your game, these are our neighbors.

Donations can be made year-round. Checks should be made payable to the Sumter Sheriff Benevolent Fund. You can mail them to the Sheriff's Office at 7361 Powell Rd. Wildwood, FL 34785 (Attention Ms. Beth Hunt) or I can pick them up from you. Please put "Kids, Cops and Christmas" on the check's note. I hope that everyone has (had) a great Holiday season!

Andrew Bilardello

LADY LAKE NEWS

Lynn Davis

Lynna527@aol.com – 352-250-7782

Wishing everyone a Very HAPPY and HEALTHY New Year!! So glad the year 2020 is now behind us.

Lady Lake Animal Control is working very hard to keep local animals safe. At this time they are helping a large number of cats & kittens and are in desperate need of donations - Fancy Feast kitten food (chicken), KMR kitten milk, cat litter and laundry detergent. Donations can be dropped off Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at Just Dandy Pet Parlour, 978 Bichara Blvd; and, Lady Lake Area Chamber, 106 US Hwy 441/27, Lady Lake. Thanking everyone in advance for all your donations.

*Submitted by,
Lynn Davis*



ORGANIZATIONAL NOTES AND NEWS



THE VHA LAUNCHES ITS NEW DECAL CAMPAIGN IN RECOGNITION OF 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE VILLAGES COMMUNITY

- Anyone who renews their membership, or becomes a new member, will receive a decal
- They are also being used as a fundraiser. They are 2 for \$5 and can be purchased on the website. Log on to the website, www.thevha.net, click on the DONATE tab at the top of the page, fill in the form with the information required, and 2 decals will be mailed to the address provided.

When New Resident Nights resume, new members will receive a decal that evening.

WHICH REMINDS ME....

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:
FEBRUARY 9, 2021**

**NEW RESIDENT
NIGHT WILL
RESUME
SOON**



Continued on next page

Continued from previous page



THE VHA NEEDS VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH THE "HEARTS FOR OUR HOSPITAL" VIRTUAL GALA! SIGN UP NOW FOR THIS ONE-TIME VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT OUR LOCAL PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS FUND.

It is simply hard to Believe how much life has changed for Americans during the last year ... and the changes continue. To adapt to these extraordinary times, the upcoming 15th Annual Hearts for Our Hospital Gala will be a virtual affair! Yes, on Saturday, February 13th, 2021, for the first time in the event's history, the gala will be streamed into the living rooms of virtually the entire world.

The Gala is hosted by both The Villages Homeowners Advocates (VHA) and UF Health The Villages® Hospital Auxiliary Foundation. All money raised by the auction will be assigned to The VHA initiatives and to the Pandemic Preparedness Fund used for personal protective equipment such as N95 respirator masks, isolation gowns, surgical masks and other much needed supplies for our courageous front line healthcare workers.

THE VHA HAS OVER 16,000 MEMBERS, BUT THE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES WE OFFER REQUIRE VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE WILLING TO DEVOTE A FEW HOURS OF THEIR TIME, ALONG WITH THEIR EXPERTISE AND TALENTS. WE ARE SO FORTUNATE TO HAVE WONDERFUL, DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS, BUT AS WE HEAD INTO THE NEW YEAR, WE WOULD LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO JUMP ON BOARD AND JOIN OUR RANKS. MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK. WE ARE IN NEED OF NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATIVES, BOARD MEMBERS, AN AUDITOR, MERCHANTS TO MEMBERS COORDINATOR, A WEBMASTER, AND "BOOTS ON THE GROUND" TO KEEP OUR HELPING HANDS AND SPECIAL EVENTS VIABLE.

CALL US AT 352-753-4650, OR CONTACT US THROUGH OUR WEBSITE AT: WWW.THEVHA.NET

The VHA has committed to a number of volunteers to serve as drivers and delivery. The task would include the delivery of food and auction items, pick up of auction items, and then the delivery of auction items to the winning bidder. The days volunteers are needed are:

- February 13, Saturday, 12:00 noon to approximately 6:00 p.m.
- February 14, Sunday, 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.; and 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- February 16, Tuesday 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. and 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

We Believe ... and we want you to be a believer, too. Volunteer now.

If you would like to volunteer for any of the time slot(s), please let me know via email - AKERSWROGER@GMAIL.COM or 859 552 7642. Some slots will fill up early, so get your choice in ASAP.

Do you consider yourself a writer, journalist, photographer, or story-teller?

The VHA is looking for a few good content contributors! If you are interested in providing occasional content for use on the new VHA Website and in our 'Voice' newsletter, we would like to hear from you!

Email us at information@thevha.net, or simply visit www.thevha.net/content-contributors and provide your info!



UFHealth
THE VILLAGES® HOSPITAL

Auxiliary Foundation
1501 N. US Highway 441, Suite 1829
The Villages, FL 32159-6808

**IT'S NOT TOO LATE...
Remember, under the new
provision in the CARES Act:**



- Individual taxpayers who don't itemize will receive a \$300 above-the-line individual charitable contribution allowance for tax years beginning in 2020.
- The limit on individual charitable deductions for taxpayers who itemize is unlimited for 2020 and limited to 60% of adjusted gross income through 2025.
- Now, more than ever is the best time to invest in healthcare philanthropy.

UF Health The Villages® Hospital Auxiliary Foundation has recently established a Pandemic Preparedness Fund to help ensure that the hospital is able to meet the needs of our frontline healthcare workers should we have to deal with another crisis in the future.

Donations from this fund will be used to acquire:
*Surgical & N95 Masks *Face Shields *Isolation gowns & gloves *Diagnostic Testing Supplies *ICU Equipment

Checks can be made payable to UF Health The Villages® Hospital Auxiliary Foundation and mailed to: 1501 N. Highway 441, Suite 1829, The Villages, FL 32159. Online donations can be made by visiting TVRHFOUNDATION.ORG and selecting DONATE NOW. Please designate your gift to the Pandemic Preparedness Fund. Questions? Call 352.751.8871.

Your Gift Matters!



BIKE • FRIENDLY • COMMUNITY • CORNER

HIT AND RUN LEGAL CONSEQUENCES



One of the many advantages of living in The Villages is the presumption of safety when residents are out walking or cycling. But in recent months the community has had a rash of bicyclists being struck and injured by hit-and-run drivers. Intentionally leaving the scene of a crash is a felony when the crash involves death or bodily injury. In some circumstances, doing so can risk the life of the victim when the only person with knowledge of their injury or injuries intentionally drives

off to selfishly protect their finances, employment, or reputation.

Florida Statute 316.062 requires the vehicle driver to stop at the scene, render reasonable assistance to the victim, provide personal identifying information, and call the police to report the incident if police have not been notified.

Florida Statute 316.027 was signed into law in 2014. Known as the Aaron Cohen Life Protection Act, it was named after a 31-year-old avid cyclist who was fatally struck by a drunk driver who fled the crash scene in 2012 in central Florida. The hit-and-run driver received only a two-year prison sentence, less than what he would have served under a DUI manslaughter charge. Among other things, the 2014 Act imposed a mandatory minimum of four years for a driver convicted of leaving the scene of a crash resulting in a fatality.

The statute further describes serious injury as: “Injury to a person...which consists of a physical condition that creates a substantial risk of death, serious personal disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member or organ.”

The driver of a vehicle involved in a crash with a vulnerable road user (e.g., pedestrians, bicyclists, electric bicyclists, motorcyclists, scooter and moped riders, and those using an electric personal assistive mobility device or wheelchair) is required to stop the vehicle, remain at the scene, and fulfill the requirements of Florida Statute 316.062. The law recognizes that leaving the scene of a serious injury is a morally bankrupt act that displays total disregard for the victim. It is also a crime with the following legal consequences.

- If minor injuries are involved in a hit-and-run accident, it is punishable with a sentence of up to five years.
- If there are serious injuries, it is considered a second-degree felony, punishable by up to fifteen years in prison. There are other penalties, including fines and suspension of driving privileges.

Having recently coped with unprecedented hardships related to the pandemic, it clearly behooves everyone—as a community—to consistently do what we can to take care of each other. That includes riding and driving responsibly, soberly, and undistracted for the safety of everyone.

Jim Dodson is an experienced bicycle accident lawyer, cyclist and bicycle safety advocate who has been representing accident victims for over 25 years. Although his primary office is in Clearwater, he represents injury victims throughout Florida. He is the author of the Florida Bicycle Accident Handbook which answers the most commonly asked questions by injured cyclists. If you have questions about a Florida cycling accident, this valuable resource is available to you absolutely free of charge at www.jimdodsonlaw.com.

**Legal information is not legal advice. Nothing in this article may be considered legal advice. If you have specific questions for Jim Dodson, simply call his office at 1-888-340-0840. There is never a charge to talk about your case.*



Women and Social Security

Social Security is complex...no question about that! And for women, this complexity is heightened by several basic factors; women tend to have a longer life expectancy than men, often have had quite different working histories than men, and are more often single in their retirement years. In addition, for unmarried women, Social Security represents roughly half of their total income in retirement.

In addition to its complexity, Social Security for women represents an area where considerable attention must be placed on making the best decisions for both the short and long-term. Knowing the implications of when to file, for example, and the consequences of this decision on spousal benefits and survivor benefits, is something that is often overlooked in the decision-making process. Disability issues, whether it's you or your spouse, are another area where careful planning is critical.

This webinar workshop will provide an overview of the Social Security System and how it serves all Americans, and will provide details on the issues that require close attention on the part of women as beneficiaries. **For this online Webinar format, the overall workshop will be**

delivered in four 1-hour sessions. The scheduled dates are:

- **Part 1 – Wednesday, January 20, 2021; 10:00 a.m.**
- **Part 2 – Wednesday, January 27, 2021; 10:00 a.m.**
- **Part 3 – Wednesday, February 3, 2021; 10:00 a.m.**
- **Part 4 – Wednesday, February 10, 2021; 10:00 a.m.**

Contact the Foundation office for registration details: 1-888-750-2622, or email us at info@amacfoundation.org



All AARP sponsored in-person events and activities are CANCELLED at this time, including AARP Driver Safety events. On-line classes are available.

Smart Driver On-Line Course Advantages: Not only is our course simple and hassle-free, it also offers many advantages.

- A self-paced format for flexible learning
- Unlimited 24/7 course access — learn when and where you want
- Customized to your state's traffic laws

For information and to register, go to:
<https://www.aarpdriversafety.org/>

Seniors VS. CRIME



Finding a mover can be tricky, which is why it's useful to compare moving companies before choosing one to help you relocate. And though moving is hard enough as it is, the moving industry is plagued by predatory businesses and scammers who take advantage of you.

These moving companies lure in unsuspecting customers with cut-rate prices that are hard to resist, and then hold your belongings hostage for more money.

Moving scams garner a lot of negative reviews that are bad for business. Because of this, moving scams aren't built to last. Scammers will usually only run their moving scam long enough to cash in on a few customers, then change the business' name and website to wipe the slate clean and start the process all over again.

Fortunately, there are a small handful of business practices that are dead giveaways for moving scams. Watch out for these types of companies to avoid getting scammed on moving day.

1. The unauthorized company. Legit moving companies have to get authorized for their operations with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, a government agency that keeps tabs on trucking companies. This process isn't easy and it involves some government scrutiny, so most moving scams skip this step.



If a company isn't authorized by the FMCSA, you shouldn't trust it.

To check on a company's authorization, search for the company using the FMCSA's Company Snapshot tool. On a moving company's snapshot page, you'll see a spreadsheet where you can check if the company is authorized in a field called "Operating Status."

If the company is authorized, you're good to go. If the company isn't authorized or you can't even find a page for it on the FMCSA website, hire a different company, even if it means paying a higher price.

2. The last-minute price gouge. This is the most common type of moving scam. It usually involves giving customers misleading quotes over the phone or online, then increasing the price when the moving crew shows up. These last-minute price increases can take the form of hidden fees for things like stairs and heavy items, both of which are things that legit companies charge for, but not without telling you before they show up.

Luckily, there's one foolproof place to check for this type of scam: customer reviews. If companies use dishonest pricing practices and hit their customers with hidden fees on moving day, you better believe that's

going to show up in their customer reviews. What if a company doesn't have any customer reviews? This is a huge red flag.

3. The unreviewed company. Scammy companies don't keep the same names or websites very long. This short lifespan means that most of these movers aren't around long enough to get reviewed by customers. If you find a company that has no reviews online, it's highly possible that it's a moving scam.

This isn't a hard and fast rule. An unreviewed company could always just be a nice little mom-and-pop moving company that recently set up shop. If that's the case, though, it will usually still have the proper authorization from the FMCSA.

4. The company that charges by the cubic foot. Most moving companies charge by weight. They might also add things like fuel surcharges, hourly rates and add-on service prices. Moving scams, on the other hand, sometimes charge by cubic foot. This means that instead of charging you per pound, they'll charge you for every cubic foot your stuff will take up in the moving truck.

While this practice isn't necessarily dishonest in itself, it is typical among scammy companies. You should take it as a signal to look deeper into the company's third-party reviews and authorization before hiring it.

5. The company that gives non-binding estimates. One of the most important parts of any moving estimate is the inspection that happens beforehand. Most legit companies will send someone to your house to conduct an in-home appraisal before asking you to sign anything. This guarantees that the company knows what you're hiring them to move, and it allows the company to give you the most accurate quote. After the in-home estimate, the company will ask you to sign a "binding estimate" that locks your price in as long as you don't add anything to your move, like an extra bed or an add-on service.

If a company asks you to sign something before doing

an appraisal, it might be a moving scam. Don't sign anything until you look into the company's history and customer reviews a little more, even if it means walking away from a stellar price.

There are exceptions to this rule, though. Some companies will send you binding estimates if you submit an online inventory or do a thorough estimate over the phone. If the estimate that the company asks you to sign doesn't say "binding estimate" on it, though, your price could change, even if you don't change anything about your move. Keep your eyes open.

There are a lot of scammy companies in the moving industry, but there are plenty of honest companies as well. It can be hard to tell the difference at first glance, but if you watch out for these signs of a moving scam, you can keep you and your belongings safe from companies that might try to take advantage of your situation.

If you need assistance with understanding any aspects of moving 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.

WANTED: MERCHANTS TO MEMBERS PROGRAM DIRECTOR

We currently have a position open to coordinate our Merchants to Members program which offers discounts at a variety of businesses to VHA members. Basic responsibilities include maintaining current and accurate listings in The Voice and on our website, trouble-shooting if there are any problems with members receiving a discount, and contacting and explaining the program to businesses interested in participating in the program. The M2M program director sits on, and reports monthly, to The VHA Advisory Board.

If you are interested in serving with us in this capacity, please contact Phil Walker at 4ianeknfl4@gmail.com or 352-753-8618. He will be happy to answer any questions and send you a more detailed job description.



You won't believe who we invited to this year's black-tie Gala. (Virtually everyone!)

Featuring:

- Expert Speakers
- Panel Discussions
- Music & Entertainment
- Online Silent Auction
- Remote "House Parties" throughout the community



**Join us for our 15th Annual
Hearts for Our Hospital Gala
Saturday, February 13, 2021 at 6:30pm - Live Stream**

**Can you still make a real difference, even with everything going on in the world today?
You better believe it!**

Expert Speakers and Panel Discussions



Michael Lauzardo, MD, MSc



Michael S. Okun, MD



Jennifer Hunt, M.D.



Dr. Maen Abdelkarim Hussein, MD

Entertainment



Clark Barrios, Master of Ceremonies
accompanied by the Clark Barrios Band.



Joe Beddia



Fine Tuned



Jon Saxx



Larry Rivelles



For more details visit: www.tvrhfoundation.org/believe

@ufvillageshospitalfoundation

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

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HELPING HANDS

M2M: THE VHA MERCHANTS TO MEMBERS DISCOUNT PROGRAM



THE VHA'S MERCHANTS-TO-MEMBERS PROGRAM WAS CREATED TO PROVIDE DISCOUNTS TO MEMBERS ON LOCAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES. IT ALSO RECOGNIZES THE NEED FOR US TO WATCH OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER, AND TRY TO PROTECT OUR NEIGHBORS FROM UNSCRUPULOUS SERVICE PROVIDERS. VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.THEVHA.NET FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF VENDORS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS WHO GENEROUSLY OFFER OUR MEMBERS SIGNIFICANT DISCOUNTS AND WHO HAVE HELD UP TO THE SCRUTINY OF CUSTOMERS (OUR MEMBERS) OVER TIME. BE SURE TO HAVE YOUR VHA MEMBERSHIP CARD WITH YOU TO RECEIVE THIS MEMBER BENEFIT.



GOLF CART SAFETY CLINIC



**JANUARY 20 @ 9:00 A.M.
RIVERBEND 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

VISIT WWW.THEVHA.NET FOR MORE DETAILS

JANUARY 2021 VHA TOWN HALL MEETING INFORMATION

The VHA is planning to hold its quarterly Town Hall meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 with representatives of The Villages management team and local law enforcement. We will be asking questions on your behalf which are submitted to us beforehand. Answers will be published in the February edition of The Voice. The deadline for us to receive your questions and concerns is January 13th. Submit them to us by:

- Contacting your VHA area representative
- Using the contact form in The Voice and depositing it in the VHA slot at your postal station
- Using our website email system
- Or sending a letter directly to: The VHA, 1104 Main Street, The Villages, FL 32159.

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.OFFICE@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.**