

The VHA VOICE

THE VILLAGES HOMEOWNERS ADVOCATES: KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE

December 2021 • Vol. 27 No. 12



CONTINUING THE DREAM BY KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE



The leadership teams of THE VHA met recently for brainstorming and strategic planning as it looks to the future in terms of its vision and mission to advocate for The Villages residents. Discussions focused on several fronts and how best to accomplish key goals. After the uncertainty of the past two years, it was time to take this vital step.

Since its inception in 1991, The VHA has had a history of being an organization that proactively works with community leaders by partnering with them to ensure that the quality lifestyle we enjoy and expect here is maintained and protected for current and future residents. That, in a nutshell, continues to be our overarching goal and modus operandi. With the rapid expansion and need for new paradigms, we hope to maintain our function and usefulness as we move forward.

The VHA is an open organization that relies on a host of volunteers and believes in working with partners, such as the District government and the Developer, to promote cooperation and problem solving at the direction of our members and residents. Rather than take an adversarial stance, The VHA has worked to identify needs and concerns and address them with the appropriate authority to find solutions.

Over the years we have championed philanthropic, informational, safety, and health causes that have benefited the community at large. However, people who are new to The Villages may not be aware of our efforts, so we want to refresh memories and introduce ourselves to our current population.

The “Dream” symbolism is seen throughout The Villages, and in the newest area south of CR 44, it is boldly a part of the new growth there as signs prominently declare that we are “Continuing the Dream”. The motto of The VHA is “Keeping the Dream Alive”. What exactly does that mean, and practically speaking, what can be done to accomplish that goal?

Did you ever “dream” when you were younger, that you would ever be able to retire to a place like this? A place where we are surrounded by beauty, and any and all services we could ever want in order to have a meaningful and active retirement is available to us? Where we have recreational and volunteer activities to both enjoy and also give back meaningfully to our community? Where health and

safety are encouraged and supported, with the needs and wants of an aging population uppermost in every detail of planning and development? And where quality and excellence are expected and respected? These reasons and more are why The VHA exists; to make sure that what drew us here continues to be the standard for what is the number one master-planned community in America.

We realize, as an organization, that we have work to do to reestablish the reputation we had when this place was a lot smaller and membership was more personally impacted and involved. We can’t rest on our laurels; we want to move ahead and beyond to build upon the successes we have had, and continue to have, to become an even more effective advocate for ensuring the future of The Villages. We want to speak up for you on matters of impor-

Continued on page 7

In This Issue:

Helping Hands President’s Message...	Page 2
VHA Board Listings	Page 2
Upcoming Events.....	Page 3
Contact/Membership Form	Page 3
VHA News and Notes	Pages 4,5
M2M Spotlight.....	Page 5
Social Security COLA.....	Page 5
District Manager	Page 6
AMAC	Page 7
Bike Friendly Community	Page 7
Seniors vs. Crime.....	Page 7
VHA Program Info.....	Page 8



THE VHA QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING WILL FEATURE UF HEALTH THE VILLAGES/LEESBURG HOSPITAL’S NEW CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, HEATHER LONG



**DECEMBER 8, 2021 AT
7:00 P.M.**

**Lake Miona Regional Recreation
Center, 1526 Buena Vista Blvd, The
Villages
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.**

**MEMBERS-ONLY EVENT WITH AN OPPORTUNITY
TO JOIN AT THE DOOR.**

Special guest speaker, Heather Long, is the chief operating officer for UF Health Central Florida, including UF Health The Villages® Hospital and UF Health Leesburg Hospital.

She will share her exciting vision for transforming health care delivery in The Villages® — including significantly improving the quality of local inpatient and emergency care. Heather, who joined UF Health in June 2021, has a strong record of accomplishment in moving integrated health care delivery systems from good to great, especially with regard to achieving 5-star ratings.

In her role, Heather oversees the day-to-day administrative and operational functions of UF Health’s Central Florida division. She also provides direct management oversight for all quality improvement initiatives, including the development of cost effective and integrated clinical programs.

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.THEVHA.NET

THE VHA SENIOR STAFF

Phil Walker, President
4ianeknfl4@gmail.com ----- 352-753-8618
Peter Russell, Executive Vice President
pmrhop@aol.com ----- 603-344-6913
Karl Arps, North Vice President
karl.arps@gmail.com ----- 920-285-1382
John Dean, Central Vice President
vhajohndean@gmail.com ----- 207-557-0371
Mike Dollard, South Vice President
mjdollard@hotmail.com ----- 585-315-8338
Roger Kass, Interim Far South Vice President
RogerK@KNG-Marketing.com ----- 352-408-7721
Joan Sullivan, Secretary, joanstrek@aol.com-- 352-430-0755
John Conboy, Treasurer, Treasurer@thevha.net 352-750-8039

THE VHA ADVISORY BOARD

PAST PRESIDENT

Fred Briggs ----- 717-805-8500

FAR SOUTH ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT

Dave Fountaine, dfountaine4760@gmail.com --- 716-816-9581

REGION 5 DIRECTOR

Nicolas Hemes, Nicolashemes@icloud.com ----- 386-984-7979

REGION 6 ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Bob Griffin, bochargrif@aol.com----- 352-391-1105

REGION 7 DIRECTOR

Roy Thacker, Rthackers@msn.com----- 352-561-4985

APPOINTED DIRECTORS

Walter Martin, waltermartin41@aol.com ----- 352-205-7099

Sandy Mott, mottp@embarqmail.com ----- 352-753-7856

VHA PROGRAM DIRECTORS

The Voice EDITOR

Jan Palmer, mjpalm2@comcast.net ----- 352-775-4325

PHOTOGRAPHER

Mark Palmer, marko.palmer@gmail.com_ ----- 586-610-6511

GOLF CART SAFETY INSTRUCTORS

Stan Heist, stanhjr@yahoo.com ----- 352-751-5421

Mike Cullipher, cartsafe@cullipher.us

HELPING HANDS

Al Arnold,
vha.helpinghands.officemail@gmail.com----- 352-973-2284

MEMBERSHIP

Kathy Porter, kathymporter@comcast.net ----- 352-259-8196

MERCHANTS TO MEMBERS

Barbara Gudgel, barbarajm1@hotmail.com---- 850 867-7386

COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

David Bedard, dbedard007@live.com ----- 508-981-8907

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Contact The VHA Office----- 352-753-4650

PROGRAM COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Mike Burke, mikeandjaneburke@gmail.com ---- 352-205-7031

WEBSITE CONTENT EDITOR

Beth Musser, bmusser9297@aol.com ----- 618-806-0754

VHA OFFICE

1104 Main St., Spanish Springs

VHA MAIN PHONE: 352-753-4650

VHA WEBSITE: www.thevha.net



President's Message

We at Helping Hands hope you had a great Thanksgiving!! And our sincere best wishes for a fantastic holiday season!!

The last couple months have been very successful for Helping Hands. Not only did we have over 1000 resident contacts during October and November, but we've had two significant events.

First, we were fortunate to have been able to help Villages Honor Flight complete their 50th mission by loaning them 16 wheelchairs on October 20th. Our crack maintenance crew ensured they were in tip top shape, only befitting what is required to show the appropriate respect for what our veterans sacrificed for all of us.

Second, on November 4th, we held a Helping Hands volunteer appreciation night at Sea Breeze Recreation Center. The dinner was catered by Giovanni's restaurant with candy favors from Kilwins. Just like all other volunteer organizations, it's our volunteers that make the difference and enable us to succeed. Hence, the Board of Directors wanted to show them how much they are appreciated. Over 45 folks attended, including volunteers, spouses and significant others. We even had seven door prizes to give out!! Because many of our volunteers work on the same days, they may never meet the other volunteers. This event gave everyone a chance to meet each other and exchange

stories. A HUGE thank you to all our volunteers.

Speaking of volunteers, if you have a couple hours per month to spare, we can use your help. Working in the office, driving our van to move equipment to/from a storage unit, or being a telephone coordinator are just three ways you could help. We'll provide all the training you need. None of the positions are very demanding but we are anticipating an increase in resident contacts as our friendly, seasonal residents return. So, **WE REALLY NEED YOUR HELP.** If you're interested in volunteering, please contact us at 352-973-2284.

On another positive note, we recently received a large monetary donation (\$900.00). While this may not be large compared to other Villages' volunteer organizations, it was huge for us. The donor was very appreciative of what Helping Hands did for him and wanted to show his thanks. If you or your organization would like to donate, please go to our website (www.thevha.net), hover over Helping Hands in the banner and select "donation" for a credit card donation or stop by our office (1104 Main Street, The Villages, FL 32159) in Spanish Springs or mail a cash or check donation.

If you or your organization would like someone from Helping Hands to make a short presentation to your group/social club, just give us a call. We'd be happy to tell our story and provide our information.

As always, we're Neighbors Helping Neighbors by providing free loans of purchased and donated durable medical equipment. Visit our website at www.thevha.net to view our current inventory, then call us at 352-973-2284 to request your equipment. Or you can email us at vha.helpinghands.officemail@gmail.com.

*Serving with you,
Al Arnold
Interim HH President*



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Karl Arps * Russ D'Emidio
Peter Moeller * Greg Panjian
Peter Russell * Vivian Stephens
Chuck Wildzunas

For contact information go to
www.thevha.net



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Al Arnold, Interim President
Len Olen, Vice President
Jeff Rattner, Secretary/Treasurer

Mary Inwood * John McDonald
Deborah Hagey * Phil Walker

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

Upcoming EVENTS

DECEMBER 2021 & JANUARY 2022

NEW RESIDENT NIGHT:

TUESDAYS: December 14 and January 11 at 7:00 p.m. at COLONY COTTAGE REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER, 510 Colony Blvd.

GOLF CART SAFETY CLINIC:

WEDNESDAYS: 9:00 a.m. December 15 at COLONY REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER, 510 Colony Blvd. and January 19 at WATER LILY RECREATION CENTER, 4710 Marsh Bend Trl.

Note: No Pre-Registration is Required.
See Back Page for More Details on These and Other Regular VHA Programs.

THE VHA QUARTERLY GENERAL MEETING:

December 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at Lake Miona Regional Recreation Center, 1526 Buena Vista Blvd.
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

MEMBERS-ONLY EVENT WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN AT THE DOOR.

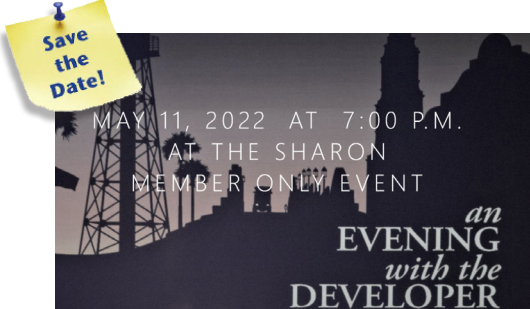
GUEST SPEAKER: Heather Long, Senior Vice President and UF Health Central Florida Chief Operations Officer

QUARTERLY TOWN HALL MEETING:

Tuesday, January 18, 2022 with representatives of The Villages management team and local law enforcement. The deadline for us to receive your questions and concerns is January 5th.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

TUESDAY, January 18 at 7:00 p.m. at EVERGLADES REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER.
ALL VILLAGES RESIDENTS WELCOME!



THE VHA BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

ADVISORY BOARD:

December 8, 12:30 p.m. @ Laurel Manor

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

December 15, 1:00 p.m. @ Lake Miona

LAKE REGIONS 1-4:

December 20, 5:00 p.m. @ LaHacienda

REGIONS 9-11:

December 13, 7:00 p.m @ Bradenton

VHA HELPING HANDS BOARD:

December 14, 9:00 a.m. at Wildwood/Pinellas Library



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)*

Street Address:

Zip:

Name of Village/Villa:

Mailing Address: *(if different than The Villages)*

Phone:

Email:

- ☐ I would like to volunteer





NORTH AREA

North of 466

Karl Arps, Vice President

karl.arps@gmail.com - (920) 285-1382



This is my first News & Notes column as the North Area Vice-President. I've been on the VHA Board of Directors for the past two years, and have learned a lot, but there is no substitute for hands-on work in a volunteer organization. So, I took the plunge and told President Phil Walker that I was willing to do it.

The first order of business is to say a mighty "Thank You!!!" to Joan Testa, who served in this role for many years and did a fantastic, energetic job. I will have a hard time trying to match her performance. And I would be remiss if I didn't also thank all the volunteers, and especially the Neighborhood Representatives, who have made the North Area the most active in The VHA.

The second order of business is for me to introduce myself. My wife Betty and I moved to our home in the Village of Woodbury in the fall of 2017. We have found a true home in The Villages. Betty has discovered golf, and I have rediscovered it after a 45-year hiatus. We're not ready for the Tour (or even the Senior Tour). But we have fun, since every day is beautiful in The Villages.

Today, I have a topic that really means something: Volunteerism. This nation was built on it. The militias that protected the early American settlers and formed the backbone of the American Revolution were all volunteers. Most small-town fire departments are made up of 90% volunteers. Many rural EMT's and Paramedics are on-call volunteers. Service clubs and advocacy activities are run by volunteers.

would like to join one of The VHA's committees or serve on The VHA Board of Directors.

And maybe you are attracted to the greatest calling of volunteerism here in The Villages: serving as a VHA Neighborhood Representative to act as the eyes and ears of The VHA, to provide knowledge and assistance to your neighbors, and to help attract and retain VHA members. If any of these possibilities calls out to you, please sign up at <https://www.thevha.net/volunteers/>, or contact the Vice President for your area of The Villages. We would love to have your help.

Karl Arps

CENTRAL AREA

Between 466 and 466A

John Dean, Vice President

vhajohndean@gmail.com – 207-557-0371



Season's Greetings,

As we head for the holidays, naturally our thoughts turn to what we are grateful for. Some things I am thankful for may not affect me directly, but they do affect our community.

Villages Honor Flight sends veterans to visit the monuments in

Washington, DC at no cost to the veteran.

I have been a member of Villages Honor Flight for a number of years and have served as a guardian and serve as a member of the Medical Team. As a guardian I accompanied a veteran to DC and spent time with him and his wife before and after the flight. We developed a nice relationship, and that is how Villages Honor Flight works.

Before the flight, the Medical Team evaluates all the people going on a flight – veterans, guardians, and staff, to make sure all can endure the long day. Most recently, we sent out Mission 50 with sixty-six veterans, sixty-six guardians, plus staff, including nine Medical Team members to deal with any emergencies. The trip is about 24 hours, but everyone had an enjoyable time and there were no medical emergencies. I was fortunate and proud to be selected to be the lead person on this Medical Team.

A special thanks to **The VHA Helping Hands** program which provides durable medical equipment to anyone in need in The Villages. They manage over six thousand transactions each year and it is all done with volunteers. While preparing for the last Honor Flight mission, it was discovered that the long delay in flights due to COVID

resulted in some mechanical issues with a number of wheelchairs used on the flights and not enough time to get the needed parts and make the repairs. Fortunately, The VHA Helping Hands came to the rescue by loaning us sixteen wheelchairs for Mission 50.



They provided for the needs of our community in a way they had never considered.

Now that I have shared with you my appreciation for these two organizations, you may realize that you have an interest in being a part of one or both groups. To find out more about The VHA Helping Hands, go to www.thevha.net where you will find a link to Helping Hands as well as other VHA programs that may be of interest to you.

To find out more about Villages Honor Flight go to www.villageshonorflight.org. There you will find information on getting a veteran signed up to go, becoming a guardian, or helping in numerous ways needed to organize a flight. It is also important to note that veterans who cannot do the flight may be eligible for the "flightless" Honor Flight trip. It is virtually the same as a full flight except that there is no long bus trips and no actual flying. For some of you, being a guardian on a "flightless" mission may fit your wants and needs.

During this holiday season, I hope you will all join me in a feeling of appreciation for these organizations and the many others who contribute to the quality of life here in our community.

*Stay safe and healthy,
John*

SOUTH AREA

Between 466A and SR44

Mike Dollard, Vice President

mjdollard@hotmail.com – 585-315-8338



Previously, I volunteered in the ER at The Villages® hospital, until Covid restrictions forced us out. Many very nice people work and volunteer there.

In The Villages, if you read the blogs and in some news stories, you get the impression that the The Villages® hospital is terrible. It

is not. On the floors, the care and staff are great, they are skilled and caring. That is because the number of patients is controlled by the number of beds. That fact doesn't apply in the ER; there the number of patients is a variable.

Is there a problem? To a degree, yes. Some facts: The ER is small, about 35 beds. The hospital opened in 2002 with 60 beds plus 14 ER beds, one being a trauma bay in the ER. Today the hospital has 300+ beds and the ER has been expanded twice and is now about 35 beds. The hospital overall has run out of room to expand its footprint unless it deletes parking, which is in short supply to start.

The staff work very hard. At times they would eat meals standing up to save time. They are overwhelmed. At most times the ER is a scene of constant motion. Yet on more than one occasion I saw patients come in on ambulance gurneys and they, the patient, were live streaming everything. They did not need an ambulance, or a hospital, but "here we are". Does the staff know



The VHA is all volunteers. Our officers and directors are not paid – they participate in our work out of a love of The Villages and the lifestyle it provides us in a 55+ community. We need and want our members to join in. Maybe door greeting for occasional VHA Bingo nights or The VHA Golf Cart Safety clinics sounds like fun. Or you might really get satisfaction from issuing and/or receiving durable medical equipment for The VHA Helping Hands. Perhaps you



what is in the waiting room? Oh yes, there are constant updates, but if they don't have room there is nothing they can do.

There is a second problem. The consumer has gotten too much information about hospitals from watching television. Every hospital, at times, has a packed waiting room.



What can you do? On 44 at Meggison is the UFHealth/The Villages® Hospital ER. On 446A just west of Buena Vista is an Ocala hospital ER. They will see you quickly, and get you on your way. If you need surgery or in-hospital care they send you to the appropriate facility and staff there will know you are coming. Or, you can park yourself in the hospital waiting room. Your call.

Mike Dollard

FAR SOUTH AREA

South of SR44

Roger Kass, Interim Vice President
RogerK@KNG-Marketing.com



I hope you all had a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving Holiday and are ready to start getting prepared for the Christmas Holiday Season. It's a busy time of the year!

The VHA Leadership has been busy updating our Strategic Plans. I am excited about some of the things we are planning for 2022. To kick off the New Year I am pleased to announce that Kenny Blocker, Assistant Director of the Villages Center Community Development District (VCCDD) will be presenting **"WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?"** This very popular and informative program will focus on how our amenity fees are spent, what they pay for and what they don't pay for, plus explain the non-ad valorem individual CDD maintenance fee on our tax bill. In short, what are the responsibilities of the The Villages Community Center District (The Villages CCDD) and how is this different from the individual Community Development Districts. This meeting, that will be open to ALL Village Residents, will be held on January 18th at 7:00 p.m. at the Everglades Regional Recreation Center. In addition to our longtime residents, I hope to see many of our newer VHA members and residents.

We are still finalizing the plans for our next Regional Meeting that was originally planned for January. I expect to have more details available in the next issue of The Voice. Meanwhile, if you have ANY questions or concerns, please let me know.

Our executive Board is also working to schedule more of our educational programs and General Meetings at either Everglades or Ezell. Believe it or not, these facilities are already heavily booked and it is sometimes difficult to get suitable rooms for the dates we want.

LADY LAKE NEWS

Lynn Davis

Lynna527@aol.com – 352-250-7782

With the traffic picking up on Hwy 27/441 and the ongoing construction to replace the bridge PLEASE, PLEASE, be careful. We want everyone to have a Wonderful Holiday and a Very Happy and Healthy New Year!!

The Lady Lake Chamber of Commerce is hosting two upcoming events.

- **16TH ANNUAL ART IN THE PARK FESTIVAL**, January 22, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and January 23, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Log Cabin Park. just one block south of CR466 on US Hwy 27/441. There will be arts and crafts, food vendors, live music by Bobby Blackmon and a student art show.

ADMISSION IS FREE and you can enter to win FREE door prizes.

- **MAC N CHEESE FESTIVAL** March 19, 2022 at the Log Cabin Park. More details will follow.

If you need more information on either of these events contact the Chamber of Commerce at 352-753-6029.

Lynn Davis



MERCHANTS TO MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT: *The Spice and Tea Exchange*

Stefannie Krueger has been the manager for five of the six years that The Spice and Tea Exchange has been open in Brownwood Paddock Square. She knows Villagers love the fact they can buy spices and teas in small quantities. They make cooking easy by providing recipe cards with all the spices needed whether it is a pinch, a tablespoon or two, whole cloves, or one bay leaf.



For the most part all spice blends are blended in the store and they can customize whatever spice blend the customer wants without salt. All spices and teas are mixed and bagged in-store.

For the holidays they are offering "make your own gifts" starting at \$5.00.

VHA members: Show your VHA card for a 10% discount.

Social Security's 2022 COLA: A Tale of Good and Bad

Social Security beneficiaries are looking forward to January and the added 5.9% cost of living adjustment (COLA) in their monthly payments, undoubtedly a welcomed boost to millions of older Americans. It's an uncommonly large increase. In fact, since the turn of the century, annual COLA adjustments have averaged about a third of that, with three years seeing no increase at all. To put the size of this adjustment in historical perspective, almost none of today's Social Security beneficiaries have ever seen an increase this large.

So yes, many were joyful to learn of the more than four-fold increase over last year's COLA, especially the millions of older Americans dependent on Social Security for over 90% of their total income. The extra income will offer Seniors a bit of breathing room in dealing with the alarming price increases we've seen this year. That's clearly the upside to this impressive COLA increase. Unfortunately, though, this upside is overshadowed by a downside that has some unpleasant aspects.

First, remember that the COLA calculation process is nothing more than a measurement of how costs are trending for Americans. As costs rise, the COLA process increases Social Security benefits so that Seniors can cope—at least to some degree—with higher living costs. A generous COLA, unfortunately, obscures something potentially catastrophic for Seniors...inflation. It's simply a fact that the annual COLA is merely a way to keep beneficiaries from losing too much ground in their economic struggle. Indeed, they've already lost considerable ground because next year's COLA reflects already inflated prices now in effect. Far from helping seniors catch up, COLA only partially offsets inflated prices they will continue to pay in the future.

An even more subtle downside to the high COLA is the impact on Social Security's long-term solvency problem. Social Security's Trustees projected in their 2021 annual report to Congress that the program's trust fund reserves would be exhausted by 2033, forcing an across-the-board cut in benefits of about 24%. That was before the COLA projection was known, and now it looks like that projection was optimistic. In fact, some sources suggest that this point of exhaustion may be reached a year earlier...potentially about a decade from now. And, if the inflation trend continues at a rate higher than assumed by the Trustees in their projections, the pace toward trust fund depletion will just keep dragging the endpoint closer.

None of this is really news...the solvency issue has been kicked around in the media and in Congress for many years. All that's needed is our political leaders to demonstrate the will to take corrective action before it's too late...and before the alternatives become intolerable.

GerryHafer

AMAC Foundation Social Security Advisor

The Villages Community Development Districts

A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT



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

The Holidays have officially started, and as we rapidly approach the end of 2021, I reflect on all I am grateful for and how fortunate I am to work with such a dedicated and talented group of individuals within The Villages District Government. The team and I have had many accomplishments this year as we focused on Efficiency and Effectiveness, Customer Service and Community, Utilities and Growth, Technology, Recreation, and Executive Golf just to name a few.

Some of the biggest accomplishments were in the Utility sector. The North Sumter County Dependent District (NSCUDD) Board of Directors purchased property to relocate Sumter Sanitation to a permanent site. NSCUDD refunded Sumter Sanitation Series Bonds 2012 with a forward delivery agreement to be funded October 2022 representing a Net Present Value (NPV) savings of ~24% or ~\$15MM. Also, NSCUDD entered into an agreement to purchase Sumter Water Conservation Authority (SWCA). The Village Center Community Development District (VCCDD) Board of Supervisors has purchased a fueling station to allow fuel to be purchased in bulk through a procurement process for use by the white fleet, public safety fleet, and sanitation fleet. The direct bulk purchase of fuel will allow for savings by purchasing direct from vendors providing fuel from the port or utilizing state contracts. Also, the fuel station will allow the District to always be prepared during times of emergency and have fuel available to provide critical and crucial services to residents.

The District added to its portfolio, The Wildwood Utility Dependent District (WUDD) in March 2021 of this year. The City of Wildwood approved Ordinance Number O2021-16 on March 22, 2021, to create the Wildwood Utility Dependent District (WUDD). This newly created district held its organizational meeting on March 23, 2021, and elected a Chair and Vice-Chair to serve. This new Dependent District will be similar to North Sumter County Utility Dependent District (NSCUDD) in that it will purchase and operate utilities south of SR 44. WUDD is purchasing South Sumter Utilities (SSU).

Additionally, the District Clerk and her team coordinated the organizational meetings for the Wildwood Community Development District (WUDD) and Village Community Development District No. 14, resulting in the addition of ten (10) new Board Members. Over the course of the fiscal year, the Clerk's Office effectively published agendas, provided staff support, and prepared minutes for 243 Board and Committee Meetings, totaling more than 230 hours. In an effort to increase resident participation at meetings and gain efficiencies in reserving rooms at the recreation centers, beginning in October 2021, the Board and Committee meeting locations have been regionalized to include the Savannah Regional Recreation Center, SeaBreeze Regional Recreation Center, and the Everglades Regional Recreation Complex.

The Customer Service Department strategically

implemented a cross-departmental customer service experience with the inclusion of recreation customer service team members; and unified our community's customer service needs into one location. As The Villages continues to grow and expand, we will re-examine how customer service is provided in order to meet our community's needs.

Community Standards made changes to their department structure as well, aligning the department for future growth of The Villages. A deed compliance Administrative Coordinator was hired to support department operations and provide support to the Deed Compliance Manager; attending deed compliance public hearings at VCCDD, Districts 1 – 4, and Lady Lake / Lake County portion of The Villages.

Deed Compliance implementation and architectural review for Village Community Development District No. 12, was effective October 1, 2021; as well as the adoption of policies and procedures for unauthorized home improvements on District-owned rights of way within the boundaries of Village Community Development District No. 4.

The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) continued to meet weekly, processing 5,000 applications from Lady Lake/Lake County and Districts 1 – 10 portions of The Villages from March 2021 to mid-September 2021.

The Community Watch Dispatch division has officially become the State of Florida's first non-911 Call Center to earn accreditation status from the Florida Telecommunications Accreditation Commission. Chief Wolfe and Assistant District Director Carrie Duckett went before the Commission in Orlando on June 23rd, 2021. The Assessment Team Leader Emily Merritt presented the report to the Commission. The Commission Chair Murette Sims stated that The Villages Community Watch was required to meet 100% of all applicable standards, instead of the normal 90%, due to the stipulation that it is not a 911 Call Center. The Commission voted unanimously that they had successfully completed this task.

The accreditation changes have made several enhancements and efficiencies in Community Watch Dispatch. Policy and Procedures were updated to meet the same requirements of the six local law enforcement agencies that Dispatch communicates with every day. Documentation has been improved to help secure statistical data and informational purposes.

In August 2021, the Aviary Recreation Center (est. December 2020) was one of the few recreation centers in the state selected for the 2021 Facility



Showcase by the Florida Recreation and Park Association. Aviary Recreation Center is in The Village of Hawkins, set amongst an eagle preserve, and features a theme focused on birds. This Showcase is The Villages Recreation & Parks twelfth recognized facility in the last ten years!

In a joint venture, Recreation & Parks and District Property Management have been working on the First Responders Recreation Center, a major capital improvement project scheduled to open in 2022. The Recreation & Parks Department is developing a formal plan to advertise, promote, and receive memorabilia donations for this new recreation facility. A few of the outdoor amenities planned are a Resort Style Pool, 18 Hole Putt & Play, Croquet/Lawn Bowling Court, Beach Tennis/Sand Volleyball Court, Outdoor Exercise Equipment, Basketball Court, Tennis Courts, Pickleball Courts, Fire Pit, and Picnic Pavilions.

Executive Golf saw three major golf course renovations completed. A comprehensive renovation of the Silver Lake Executive Course occurred in the historic side of The Villages which included new greens, tees, complete re-grassing, and landscape enhancements. This project came in under budget for a **\$170,765.88 cost savings**. Additionally, two course greens renovations took place at the Sweetgum and Sandhill Executive Golf Courses, which utilized new turf varieties developed for drought resistance and shade tolerance. These capital infrastructure improvement projects will bring continued enjoyment to our residents and guests.

Following the completion of a project to map all District-owned golf courses in 2020, the Executive Golf department has developed a detailed mapping of all the Executive Golf Maintenance building complexes and fueling stations, including an extensive asset inventory, and cataloging. This will benefit future contract procurements, lease agreements, contractor accountability efforts, and continued environmental initiatives with Audubon International on District-owned facilities.

The Villages Public Safety Department (VPSD) has grown to nine Fire Stations, with **150** Firefighters and six Battalion Chiefs. The current makeup of the department is **61%** Paramedics and **39%** EMTs.

The Neighbors Helping Neighbors® AED program continues to be a huge success and has grown to over **247 AED groups** throughout The Villages with over **5,000** trained responders and a total of **651 AEDs** in service. The Cardiac Save rate in The Villages is at **15%** which is above the National Average of **10%**.

VPSD firefighters have saved a total of over **\$17 million dollars** in property and contents this fiscal year. This is due to strategic station locations, enhanced staffing, and efficient fire-scene operations.

These are just a few of the accomplishments and projects we have completed. Every decision that is made by the District is carefully reviewed by management, staff, and the Board Supervisors of which they pertain and is made to enhance the quality of life for the residents of The Villages.

You can find more information at www.Districtgov.org. On the main page click on "Keeping Score-Balanced Scorecard".



BIKE • FRIENDLY • COMMUNITY • CORNER

THREE GIFTS OF KINDNESS

Katheryn Rogers begins her famous poem with the following:

**'Tis the season to be jolly?
To be kinder than yesterday
For that jolly ole St Nick
Is surely coming our way?
Why is it only once a year
People think to be kind
Why can it not always be
For the better of mankind?**

We answer her question with the fact that people in The Villages are kind all year round. Here are three short vignettes to support my view.

First, the residents of the Pennecamp Lakesiders raised over \$4,000 throughout 2021 to purchase bicycles for children. They combined this money with a \$3,000 donation from the Sean McGee Charitable Foundation that Connie and Bob McGee established to memorialize their son who died in a car crash. The Sumter County Sheriff donated \$2,000 from the 501c (3) it established

Second, the Sumter Landing Bicycle Club cooperates with the Sumter County Sheriff to clean, repair, and adjust bikes that it collected all year. This is the result of the exceptional relationship that Dave Lawrence began with Lt. Nehemiah Wolfe and continues with Lt. Bob Siemer. This year, approximately fifty volunteers showed up at the Lake Miona Regional Recreation Center to work on the bikes that the Sheriff's Deputies delivered. Quite a few bikes were brand new or nearly new. Department stores, such as Target and Walmart, regularly accept bikes that customers return, for whatever reason, and donate them to the Sheriff. We inspect and repair them. Usually, a few dollars for parts and a little knowledge of how to adjust a bike result in a "new" bike. We recycle other bikes that might have slight blemishes or need adjusting to make them suitable gifts. People like new things, but sometimes nearly new will be OK.

Third, we have collected and distributed seventy-five used bikes during this COVID calamity, which seems to drag on. People give us used bikes, some in excellent condition, others that require some creative effort. Regardless, we make repairs, touch them up cosmetically and turn them over to residents, children, and folks who need basic transportation for work. It is joyful work. Besides, what else would a retiree do with all the time we have on our hands?

So, we contend that people in The Villages are kind and generous all year long, not just at special times.

*by Bob and Rose Jordan
Bicycle Friendly Advocacy Council*



this year to make gifts tax deductible. With these donations, we have been able to purchase 101 new kid-sized bicycles for Christmas gifts this year. Dave Lawrence really scoured bike sources to get the best deals. Thanks, Dave.



HOW TO REDUCE SPAM EMAILS

Are you getting bombarded with spam in your inbox? If so, the FTC recently provided some tips on how to get fewer spam emails.

USE AN EMAIL SPAM FILTER: Check your email account to see if it provides a tool to filter out potential spam or to funnel it into a junk email folder. Many popular providers (like Gmail, Hotmail and Yahoo) have strong filters on by default, but you can actually make them work better. If you see a spam message in your inbox, mark it as Spam or Junk. You can usually also block specific email addresses or domains (the part after the @). Remember that the filter isn't perfect so occasionally check your Spam or Junk folder to make sure any legit, non-spam email didn't end up there.

LIMIT YOUR EXPOSURE: You can do this by setting up two email addresses – one for personal messages and one for shopping, newsletters, and coupons, etc. If you want to see all your emails in one place, you can set up email forwarding to your primary email account. Then, if the second email account starts getting spam, you can shut off email forwarding without affecting your primary email. Also, try not to

display your primary email address in public, including on social media or in online membership directories – spammers scan websites to harvest email addresses.

BE CAREFUL ABOUT SHARING YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS: When a website asks for your email address, consider whether you want to share this information. Different websites handle your privacy differently – some will share or sell your email address while others will only use it for limited reasons. Check the privacy policy to see how the company may share your contact information, but it may be hard to tell exactly how it is shared.

UNSUBSCRIBE FROM UNWANTED EMAILS: Many popular email providers have features that help you unsubscribe from email lists. They may show up as a banner or button when you open the email. Many emails will have the unsubscribe option shown at the very bottom of the email.

If you need assistance with this topic or any other concern, contact information for Seniors vs. Crime is available on our website at: <http://seniorsvocrime.com/>

Continued from page 1

tance, provide programs that are valuable and interesting, and strengthen our position of influence with the decision-making leadership by being a united front for the many voices of our membership. There is, indeed, strength in numbers; and with over 16,000 members, our voice is an important one.

The VHA was established to be a cordial and solution-oriented organization. This approach of working with key community leaders to come up with mutually beneficial ways to address problems, has worked well and been a proactive tool for success.

Are we perfect? Not by a long shot, but we are a valuable part of the community and welcome your involvement and input for ideas, comments, and general observations that will make our goal, to advocate for The Villages residents and "Keeping the Dream Alive", a reality.

Let's look forward to 2022 as a time to reignite the enthusiasm and energy we lost over the past two years as we struggled to stay afloat during the pandemic. Not only did we lose momentum, we lost some key leaders who we need to replace with equally strong and capable ones. We hope you will consider stepping up to the plate to help lead us into the New Year.

by Jan Palmer, Editor



DECEMBER & JANUARY SEMINARS

Coping With Loss During the Holidays
Wednesday, December 15, 2021,
10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

A webinar focused on the dynamics, reactions, and strategies of loss and grief and understanding how these dynamics are especially difficult and depressing during the holidays.

Our featured speaker will be Jessica McClure, LCSW Bereavement Manager for VITAS Healthcare Lake and Sumter Counties.


Sudden Death: Are You Prepared?
Wednesdays, January 12, 19, 26
from 10:00 a.m. – Noon


Lady Lake Library, 225 West Guava St., Lady Lake

This **3-part seminar** has been structured to guide you through the process of creating your "Survivor Notebook," the repository that will help your loved ones cope after your passing.

Check the AMAC Foundation website
(www.AmacFoundation.org)
for details, and contact the Foundation office
at 888-750-2622 or via email at info@amacfoundation.org to register.

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



Home Join/Renew About Donate Contact Login 

Members ▾ The Voice ▾ Events Volunteers Helping Hands ▾ [COMMUNITY FOUNDATION ▾](#)




NEW RESIDENT NIGHT
DECEMBER 14 AT 7:00 P.M.
COLONY COTTAGE REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER
510 COLONY BLVD. NEAR MORSE BLVD/466A

- 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)
- Veteran Services
- Seniors vs. Crime

- UF HealthThe Villages Regional Hospital Auxiliary
- SECO
- Sumter Landing Bicycle Club
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Friends of the Library
- The Enrichment Academy
- Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches
- The VHA – The Villages Homeowners Advocates
- The VHA Helping Hands

NEXT NEW RESIDENT NIGHT WILL BE JANUARY 11, 2022
AT COLONY COTTAGE REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER
510 COLONY BLVD. NEAR MORSE BLVD/466A



GOLF CART SAFETY CLINIC
FAR SOUTH AREA



DECEMBER 15 @ 9:00 A.M.
COLONY COTTAGE REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER
510 Colony Blvd. near Morse/466A
No Pre-Registration Required

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: JANUARY 19 @ 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.

MERCHANTS TO MEMBERS



VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
www.thevha.net FOR
A COMPLETE LISTING
OF VENDORS AND
SERVICE PROVIDERS.

YOUR MUST PRESENT
YOUR VHA MEMBERSHIP
CARD TO RECEIVE
YOUR DISCOUNT.