

# The VHA VOICE

THE VILLAGES HOMEOWNERS ADVOCATES: KEEPING THE DREAM ALIVE



**MISSION**

The Villages Homeowners Advocates (The VHA) is a lifestyle organization committed to championing the needs of Villagers through:

- Positive, constructive dialogue
- Problem solving • Education
- Philanthropic efforts

**VALUES**

- Integrity • Honesty • Accountability
- Independence

WHERE YOUR VOICE MATTERS.

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**The VHA GATE ARM REPORT**



On Monday, January 9th I addressed the Project Wide Advisory Committee (PWAC) regarding the visibility of gate arms. Gate arm concerns is a recurring issue that shows up often in our Town Hall questions. The discussion at PWAC centered around whether or not additional or different colored patterns would enhance gate arm visibility. The Board directed Mr. Blocker, District Manager, to look into gate arm use and knockdowns and determine what course of action should be taken.

At the Monday, February 13th meeting of PWAC, Bruce Brown, Assistant District Manager, reviewed the results of an extensive study of gate arms. His review covered a vast array of statistics, including:

- There are 98 million gate arm activations in our community yearly. That's correct, 98 million times a year the gate arms in The Villages® Community are activated.

- Sixteen hundred (1600) times yearly gate arms are struck and knocked down, which is .002%.

- Another interesting fact is that the vast majority of gate arm knockdowns happen between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. You read that right: 75% of the knockdowns happened during daylight hours.



Gate arms was also discussed with the Developer's design team. South of SR44 the knockdown percentage is significantly less. The gate alert signage south of SR44 is different than signage north of SR44. The District Government is going to begin the process of changing the gate alert signage north of SR44.

Once again, The District Government has understood the request, completed the necessary study, and presented the results. Changes are going to be made. Will this be a total fix of gate knockdowns? I doubt it. The underlying problem is that we travel at excessive speeds too frequently. We are usually in a hurry. Someone suggested the speed limit signs on highways are only suggestions. Captain Siemer, Sumter County Sheriff's Dept, might disagree. These signs are not suggestions, they are the law.

Let's all take a deep breath and slow down. Morse Boulevard is not the Long Island Expressway. Buena Vista Boulevard is not I-70 passing through Kansas. These are major thoroughfares in our community. Your safety, and the safety of others, regardless if you are in a car, golf cart, riding a bicycle, or walking, is a primary focus of all community agencies, including The Villages Homeowners Advocates.

I went to bat for you and now I expect a favor in return. SLOW DOWN! Leave five minutes earlier for your appointment and adhere to the posted speed limit. If we can all do this, and be respectful of our surroundings, we will all be less anxious, and more gate arms will be spared.

P.S. The VHA offers Golf Cart Safety monthly free of charge. We also have Round About Safety posted on our website [www.thevha.net](http://www.thevha.net). I urge you to take advantage of these opportunities.

*Peter Russell*  
President, The VHA

**The VHA HEALTH & WELLNESS**

**SAFETY: FIRST & FOREMOST**

by Jan Palmer

The VHA is promoting Health and Wellness for Residents of The Villages® Community as its theme for 2023, dove-tailing with The Daily Sun's "The Healthiest Home Town". Safety does indeed come first on any health-wise checklist, so we are offering a few tips on safe practices that inevitably lead to a healthier, more fulfilling life.

Here in The Villages®, there are risk factors to avoid which disproportionately affect our senior population. One major area of concern is falls. According to geriatrician Mary Elizabeth Tinetti, MD, Yale Medical Group, "falls are not only associated with significant injury and death in the older population, but are also linked to reduced independence and early admission to long-term-care facilities." Fall prevention strategies and safety measures may reduce fall-related injuries, emergency room visits, hospitalizations and nursing home placements.

Hundreds of people die from workplace accidents every day, but for most of us here in The Villages®, our home, or where we volunteer, has become our "workplace" where chances of falling exist. Stories abound of unique ways people have fallen, including a recent incident where a woman woke up to a palmetto bug on her ceiling, so she grabbed a shoe, stood up on her mattress, lost her balance, and ended up with a broken leg and months of rehab. Funny to hear, but the results of any fall are definitely no fun.

**NEVER OVERESTIMATE YOUR ABILITY TO "DO IT YOURSELF".**

Wayne had spent years trimming trees for a profession. He was retired, but still thought he could do the work of removing a large tree from his yard himself. Although he no longer had his own equipment, a friend loaned him an aerial bucket, and while his wife sipped iced tea on the front porch so she could watch his progress, he went to work. He was 25-feet up when the bucket somehow got hung up on the trunk, broke loose, and propelled him out of the bucket to the ground. He did not survive. **Maybe it's time to swallow your pride and hire out some of those jobs that were easy to do when you were younger, but are risky now.**

**HAVE A BUDDY SYSTEM WHEN DOING WORK THAT INVOLVES THE POTENTIAL FOR FALLING.**

Dick was volunteering at a local church working on outdoor lighting for a Christmas program, by himself. He took an unexpected tumble off the outdoor stage and laid on the ground, shivering, for quite a while before someone just happened to see him lying there. Luckily, he escaped with some broken ribs and a fractured back that will heal. Need to take a trip up the stairs in the garage to get to the attic? Do it while someone is there. Need to change your fire detector? Ask for help if need be. **Don't take unnecessary chances when you are alone.**

P.S. Did you know The Villages Public Safety Department offers smoke detector assistance to residents of The Villages as part of the



Fall Prevention Program? The Smoke Detector Program is designed for residents who are disabled or unable to climb ladders and install a smoke detector or change the batteries in their smoke detector. Check it out on the District website: [www.districtgov.org](http://www.districtgov.org) under Departments, Public Safety, Smoke Detector Program.

**BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS BEFORE TAKING A STEP.**

Linda was doing some organizing around the house and using a long-handled Swiffer to dust the top of the cupboards in her laundry room. When the phone rang, she put the duster down, and promptly tripped over it. Nothing was broken, but she learned a valuable lesson about being aware of her surroundings. Something as simple as a throw rug, a pair of shoes, or a dog toy are potential trip and fall hazards. **Look before you take a step!**

**BE PROACTIVE IN DOING WHATEVER YOU CAN TO MINIMIZE DAMAGE.**

Accidents happen even when we do our best to prevent them, but there are things we can do to minimize the damage if and when they do occur. According to the National Institutes on Aging, having healthy bones may help prevent serious injury. Staying active and getting enough calcium and vitamin D can help keep your bones strong. Try to get at least 150 minutes per week of physical activity.

Quitting smoking and avoiding or limiting alcohol use also helps with bone health, as does maintaining a healthy weight. A healthy weight is not always what we think it is, since being underweight increases the risk of bone loss and broken bones.

P.S. The Villages Recreation and Parks offers a variety of programs that are designed to help with balance and building strong bones. One such program is Bone Builders, which meets multiple times at various rec centers throughout The Villages®.

**ESTABLISH A ROUTINE THAT ALERTS OTHERS TO YOUR SAFETY AND WELFARE.**

Falls are not the only concern for staying safe at home, but it is a major one. That is why we recommend having a network of neighbors, friends and acquaintances that watch out for one another. Get to know your neighbors and their routines. If you see something out of sorts, stop by and check on them. If you live alone, having a friend or relative that you call daily to check in is also a good idea.

P.S. Community Watch looks for simple things that are "not quite right" when they do their rounds to determine if they need to do a house check. If your garage door is open in the middle of the night, they will give you a call. If they notice you haven't picked up your newspaper for a couple days, it is a sign that something is not right and they will knock on your door. They have The Adult Watch Program, a service provided to residents who live alone for a well-being check. To find out more visit the District website: [www.districtgov.org](http://www.districtgov.org), Departments, Community Watch, Community Watch Programs.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**The VHA YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND THE VHA ANNUAL AWARDS NIGHT**  
**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2023 - 7:00 p.m.**  
 @ Lake Miona Regional Recreation Center  
 1526 Buena Vista Blvd. at Odell Circle  
 All Villagers welcome!

**The VHA GOLF CART SAFETY CLINIC**  
**WED, MARCH 15 9:00 a.m.**  
 COLONY COTTAGE REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER  
 510 Colony Blvd., Morse/466A  
**NO PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED**  
 Visit [www.thevha.net](http://www.thevha.net) for more details

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

[WWW.THEVHA.NET](http://WWW.THEVHA.NET)

- WHO WE ARE/ WHAT WE DO
- PROGRAM GUIDE
- MEMBER BENEFITS
- LEADERSHIP BIOS
- FIND YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATIVE
- MERCHANT TO MEMBERS DISCOUNTS
- CURRENT NEWS & NOTES
- USEFUL LINKS
- TOWN HALL REPORTS
- UPCOMING EVENTS
- VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**The VHA NEW RESIDENT NIGHT**  
**TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023 7:00 p.m.**  
 LA HACIENDA REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER  
 1200 Avenida Central, Lady Lake/The Villages 32159  
**Presenters may include, & information will be available from:**

• Honorable Paul Miltello, Sumter Co Judge	• UF Health The Villages Regional Hospital Auxiliary
• Sumter County Sheriff's Office & other local law enforcement	• SECO
• Sumter County Property Appraiser	• Bicycle Friendly Advocacy Council
• Sumter County Tax Collector	• Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
• Sumter County Clerk	• Friends of the Library
• District Government	• The Enrichment Academy
• Serving Health Ins. Needs of Elders (SHINE)	• Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranches
• Veteran Services	• The VHA - The Villages Homeowners Advocates
• Seniors vs. Crime	• The VHA Helping Hands

**NEXT NEW RESIDENT NIGHT WILL BE: APRIL 11 at COLONY COTTAGE**

**The VHA BINGO!**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 2023 6:30 p.m.**  
 Doors Open at 6:00 p.m.  
 ROHAN REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER  
 850 Kristine Way, Wildwood/The Villages® 34785  
 \$10 for 2 Boards (VHA Members/3 Boards)  
 \$1/Extra Boards; **NO SPLIT POTS**  
 50/50 + Buy a LAST GAME Sheet with a \$100 Pot  
 BYOB & Snacks • **Villager ID Required!**  
**NEXT MONTH: APRIL 27 @ EISENHOWER**  
 For a Complete List of Dates & Locations Visit: [www.thevha.net](http://www.thevha.net)

**The Villages Community Development Districts Recreation & Parks**  
**March 27, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.**  
 Doors open at 5:30 p.m.  
**Ezell Regional Recreation Center**  
 769 Marilee Pl, Wildwood/The Villages 32163

This program will feature an overview by members of The Villages Recreation & Parks staff of the many recreational opportunities available and how best to take advantage of them. It will also include how to sign up for programs and reserve rooms. This event will be live-streamed on The VHA's Facebook page, [thevha4you](http://thevha4you).

**This is a VHA Members-Only Event, with an Opportunity to Join at the Door**

**YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

**THE VHA TOWN HALL MEETING TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2023**

The VHA will hold its quarterly Town Hall meeting with representatives of The Villages management team and local law enforcement. Questions will be asked on your behalf which are submitted to us beforehand. **The deadline for questions is APRIL 3rd. Submit questions to us by:** • Contacting your VHA area representative • Using our website email system • Or sending a letter directly to: The VHA, 1104 Main St, The Villages, FL 32159



**The VHA PROGRAMS**

**M2M: THE VHA MERCHANTS TO MEMBERS DISCOUNT PROGRAM**

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



**The VHA HELPING HANDS DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM**

Visit our website at [www.thevha.net](http://www.thevha.net) to view our current inventory, then call us at 352-973-2284.

We will schedule your pick-up from: THE VHA OFFICE, 1104 Main St Spanish Springs™/The Villages® • Monday - Friday: 11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.



**The VHA Needs Some Great Neighborhood Representatives:**

For more information on becoming a valuable VHA representative for YOUR neighborhood, contact your Area Vice President:

- North - Karl Arps [karl.arps@gmail.com](mailto:karl.arps@gmail.com) - 920-285-1382
- Central - Tweet Coleman [VHATweetColeman@gmail.com](mailto:VHATweetColeman@gmail.com) - 808-600-1010
- South - Dave Fountaine [dfountaine4760@gmail.com](mailto:dfountaine4760@gmail.com) - 716-816-8500

**THE VHA HAS A FACEBOOK PAGE**

Follow and "Like" us so you can be notified about what is going on with The VHA – and The Villages®. The VHA is here for you!



**thevha4you**