

Inside The Bubble

The Villages, May 31, 2014

Dear Reader,

One of the biggest events of the past month was Mark Morse's annual "State of The Villages" address to The Villages Homeowners Association. This year, perhaps the biggest news was that they expect new home sales to be 100% complete in just 2 years.

The developer also announced that new home prices are up to an average of \$292,000 from an average of \$260,000 just last year. Average prices of resales have jumped from \$199,000 last year to \$253,000 so far this year.

Expect those price trends to continue and possibly even accelerate as the buying frenzy heats up.

Mr. Morse announced that the Church on the Square in Spanish Springs Town Square, which is currently under renovation, will be renamed The Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center, after his mother.

When construction is complete, the building will appear quite similar from the outside, but will be much larger on the inside. The new venue will have seating for a total of 1,1018 people.

It was also announced that a future recreation center will be named after Recreation Director John Rohan, who was on stage and completely surprised by the announcement.

Other topics that were covered included the success of the Charter School, the expansion of the hospital under the new Villages Health System, the development of The Villages of Fruitland Park, and a new family homes development in Oxford Oaks for employees of The Villages.

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Former State Senator Steve Oelrich has officially joined the fight against restricting golf cart access to The Villages from Paradise Drive near Wal-Mart and Lowes.

Long-time readers will remember the uproar that was created last year when The Villages suddenly put up a large wall blocking this popular golf cart path. Since that protest, the wall was taken down and replaced with a card-access gate that only allows passage to residents of The Villages.

While Villagers have no problem coming and going now, nearby residents of Stonecrest (a neighborhood outside of The Villages) are still complaining that they are not able to enter The Villages in order to shop, eat, or attend medical appointments.

Executives at The Villages have been quoted as saying that they have no intention of making it convenient for non-residents to access the amenities available in The Villages.

Former Senator Oelrich feels that veterans living in Stonecrest should have easy access to the VA Outpatient Clinic on Country Road 42 in The Villages. He also said that he does not understand why The Villages would not want Stonecrest residents spending money eating and shopping in The Villages.

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One resident got quite a scare one morning earlier this month when he spotted a 7-foot alligator walking up his driveway in the Village of Pennecamp.

The Villager immediately notified the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and also emailed his neighbors to be on the lookout. The alligator spent about 45 minutes in the area before moving along.

Because this is mating season for alligators, they are likely to be much more active, so be on the lookout and make sure to keep pets and small children safe!

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Continuing a recent string of politicians and celebrities making appearances around The Villages, conservative author Ben Carson created quite a buzz at his scheduled book signing at the Barnes & Noble in Lake Sumter Landing.

Carson drew so many eager Villagers out to see him that the bookstore actually ran out of copies of his book and had to get more from Carson's tour bus.

Many of the people in attendance believe that Carson would make an excellent Republican presidential candidate in 2016. There were signs urging him to run, as well as petitions being signed in support of his candidacy.

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There will be yet another celebrity appearance at the Lake Sumter Landing Barnes & Noble in the coming month when author Oliver North makes an appearance on June 17.

North will be coming to The Villages to promote and sign copies of his new book, *Counterfeit Lies*.

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One of the most talked about stories of the past month was the decision to implement bigger holes on two of the executive golf courses on specific days in June.

Larger holes that are six inches in diameter will be used on two specific days each in June on the El Santiago and Turtle Mound courses.

The idea of larger holes was originally suggested by Jack Nicklaus as a way to encourage less-skilled players to keep playing. However, many Villagers are not thrilled about the idea of the changes suggesting that larger holes would ruin the integrity of the game.

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Somber services were held at Lady Lake Cemetery and Veterans Memorial Park in observance of Memorial Day.

The Veterans Memorial Park service allowed retired United States Air Force Captain Dale Barsness to remind everyone in attendance that the reason we are free to celebrate Memorial Day with backyard cookouts is because of the men and women who have given their lives for that freedom.

Retired United States Air Force Brigadier General John Sievertson expressed similar thoughts at the Lady Lake Cemetery service.

Editor's Note: Here's a great article about Mr. Sievertson, who was in charge of Air Force One during the Reagan years:

http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-06-24/news/os-lk-general-airlift-president-20120624_1_first-flight-nancy-reagan-vice-commander

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The McDonald's in Colony Plaza was temporarily closed this month for multiple health violations. A health inspection found both live and dead cockroaches throughout the restaurant's utility, storage, and kitchen areas. Other inspections included live flies and issues with employee hand washing and holding times for prepared food.

Follow-up inspections reported that the restaurant has brought its operation up to meet state standards and the restaurant is currently open for business.

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A recent report from the Leapfrog Group that issues letter grades to thousands of hospitals across the country showed that our local hospitals are making an effort to step up their game. Both The Villages Regional Hospital and the Leesburg Regional Medical Center received higher grades this year than they received last year.

The Villages Regional Hospital improved to an A rating this year after receiving a B rating last year, and the Leesburg Regional Medical Center improved to a B rating after receiving a C rating last year.

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Finally, a 68-year-old woman and a man 19 years her junior were arrested for indecent exposure and taken to Sumter County Jail recently after a deputy caught them having sex at the pavilion at Lake Sumter Landing Market Square.

The incident has spawned a string of funny one-liners, and even a new drink at Lake Sumter Landing restaurant Red Sauce aptly named "Sex on the Square".

Until next time...

Inside The Bubble Editors

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