

Practice patience this time of year and help out those who are lost

How many of us have taken time out of our busy schedules to call those relatives and friends who still live up North, to check on them and nonchalantly (or not) let them know that while they are dealing with freezing temperatures, snow and sleet, we are lucky enough to be enjoying temperatures in the upper 70s? Not to mention we're only two weeks from Christmas!

As long as you live in The Villages with our beautiful weather and surroundings, those phone calls never get old ... to us!

But because of this beautiful weather, sometimes when you live in The Villages the only way you know the holidays are approaching is when the holiday decorations appear at the village entrances, recreation centers and town squares.

While we can't give you snow, The Villages is truly one of the most beautiful places to be around the holidays (and all of the other days, too). I'd much rather see the beautiful green landscape and flowers compared to the white, slushy stuff any day!

I hope each of you enjoyed your Thanksgiving holiday and have begun to make holiday memories here in The Villages, whether it was shopping on Black Friday or attending the Christmas tree lightings at one or all three of the town squares.

No matter what background or faith you come from, the holidays are a very special time to enjoy family and friends and to remember all the special gifts in our lives.

Residents of The Villages also know that the holidays



JENNIFER
MCQUARY
COLUMNIST

mean increased traffic and an increased number of guests traveling throughout the community. It's during this time of the year that we like to remind everyone to dig deep for their holiday cheer, and that patience is definitely a virtue. It will keep you on Santa's "nice" list, and it's also the best way to maintain your sanity!

Whether you are traveling along the roadways and roundabouts or along the multimodal paths on your golf cart, you inevitably will come across someone who may not know exactly where they are, or where the road is that they are looking for. Please remember the season and provide a helpful hand and a smile!

If you haven't already done so, and you and your neighbors are interested in decorating your village sign walls, please be sure to review the Holiday Decoration Policy on our website, districtgov.org.

In case you were thinking of attending a District board meeting, as I write this article, none of the boards have officially canceled their December board meetings. But please make sure to double check the districtgov.org website before you head to the meeting to make sure it still is being held.

This is also the location where you would review the electronic agenda for all upcoming board meetings.

The electronic agenda that is included on the website is exactly the same as what is provided to our board members.

In a time when people are looking for transparency in their government, look no further. The Village Community Development Districts are truly an open book.

While I'm not sure where each of you are originally from, the State of Florida is renowned for putting a high priority on the public's right of access to governmental meetings and records. These principles not only are embodied in the Florida Statutes but also are guaranteed in the State of Florida Constitution. I'm originally from Chicago – enough said.

Have you taken the opportunity to attend Welcome Wednesday yet? If you're not already aware, Welcome Wednesday is held at 11 a.m. every Wednesday in the District Office at 984 Old Mill Run in Lake Sumter Landing.

Each week you have the opportunity to spend "quality time" with staff and District supervisors, learn about ongoing projects and get all of your questions answered firsthand by the District departments.

I know not all of you will be shocked by this, but not everything you hear at the pool or on the golf course is the whole story. Stop by our office on Wednesday morning and you can receive the rest of the story. We'd love to see you.

Now that I've provided you with that open invitation, please keep in mind that

we have canceled the Dec. 23 and Dec. 30 Welcome Wednesdays.

I would like to take this

opportunity to wish all of the residents a very happy and healthy holiday season and let you know how very blessed each of us feel to be able to work in this wonderful community.

On a personal note, I would

like to wish a very Merry Christmas to our family here in The Villages, especially my parents, Tom and Kathy Farlow (Lime Grove Villas), my in-laws, Karen and Chuck Smith (Village of St. James), and to our close family

friends the Sealys (Village of St. James) and the Stoefflers (Village of Buttonwood).

Here's to a very happy, healthy and wonderful 2016!

Thank you for joining me this week and I hope you'll come back again next week

to Our Place.

Jennifer McQueary is the district clerk for the Village Community Development District. She can be reached at jennifer.mcqueary@districtgov.org or 751-6700.