Due to our Hurricane Disaster Preparedness Guide, inside this issue, many of your favorite monthly articles could not fit into this issue. They’ll return next month!

We also bid farewell to Elder Update editor Kit Bauman, who left us in April to pursue other interests. Good luck, Kit! Please welcome new editor David Lee Simmons, who joins Elder Update after 11 1/2 years with the Tallahassee Democrat newspaper.

Florida residents can now learn if their doctor has been disciplined in the past five years by one of the state’s two medical boards, or has been the target of three or more malpractice complaints.

Copies of the 194-page Florida Report on Physician Discipline and Malpractice can be viewed at public libraries or health councils, and can be obtained by sending $10 by check or money to the Agency for Health Care Administration, Consumer Services Unit, P.O. Box 14000, Tallahassee, FL 32317-4000.

Residents can view the information on the agency’s website at http://www.state.fl.us/dfhc. Or, call toll-free at 888/419-3456.

The American Psychiatric Association has recommended that doctors tell Alzheimer’s patients to give up their car keys because victims may cause car accidents even when suffering from early effects of the disease.

The association went on to even suggest that doctors consider breaching patient confidentiality to report dangerous Alzheimer’s drivers to state authorities.

Florida elders scored major breakthroughs on key issues in the 1997 legislative session, according to Elder Affairs Secretary Bentley Lipscomb.

“This Legislature is committed to helping elders stay in their homes and communities, empowering them to take personal responsibility for the challenges of aging and giving taxpayers the most value possible for their money,” said Lipscomb in the wake of the 1997 session.

“Clearly, Florida Legislators are showing their concern for the needs of Florida elders.”

In a year when money was scarce, the Legislature approved an additional $30 million in funding for elder-related programs.

Gov. Lawton Chiles is studying major legislation for approval or veto. But here is a thumbnail outline of elder-oriented bills and issues that passed this legislative session:

**Managed Long-Term Care**

- Concluding a two-year legislative initiative, Florida became the pioneer in managed long-term care with the passage of a bill co-sponsored by Rep. Carl Littlefield of Dade City and Sen. Bill Bankhead of Jacksonville. The bill provides $22.5 million worth of Medicaid spending to expand a nationally recognized pilot project to support elders in their homes and communities.

- Lawmakers approved the Managed Long Term Care Community Pilot Project last year, and this year voted to nearly double the pilot project’s size. Sen. “Doc” Myers of Stuart and Rep. Debby Sanderson of Fort Lauderdale, who chair their respective Senate and House fiscal committees, led the way in securing the appropriations for all of these listed initiatives.

**Assisted Living Facilities Mental Health License**

- Lawmakers approved a bill to help care for mentally ill residents of assisted-living facilities.

- In 1995, lawmakers required training and mental-health treatment for such ALF residents — but assisted-living home operators claimed that some of the law’s provisions were so strict that they would discharge hundreds of mentally ill people rather than try to comply.

- Earlier this year, a state policy-analysis group raised concerns that the law might lead to homelessness for up to 2,000 mentally-ill people.

- Sen. Tom Rossin of West Palm Beach and Rep. Lars Hafner of St. Petersburg co-sponsored a bill that rewrote a law that will allow mentally ill patients to receive needed mental-health services while in assisted-living facilities.

- Lawmakers previously required assisted-living facilities that specialize in treating Alzheimer’s patients to meet higher standards.

- The increase for DOEA’s Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative is $1.6 million, making the program’s annual budget $9.4 million per year. The new funding will help shorten waiting lists for Alzheimer’s respite services and provide $600,000 to expand an award-winning Alzheimer’s program in Palm Beach.

**RELIEF (Respite for Elders Living in Everyday Families)**

- On a related issue, Rep. Willye Dennis and Sen. Betty Holzendorf, both of Jacksonville, gained passage for $800,000 in funding for a program to use volunteers to provide respite for caregivers of frail elders.

**Guardianship**

- In a move that should help decrease fraud and abuse, this legislation - developed with Attorney General Bob Butterworth’s help - requires more training for court-appointed guardians of elder and disabled Floridians. Guardians also would be required to post bonds to protect elders’ interests.

- The American Psychiatric Association has recommended that doctors tell Alzheimer’s patients to give up their car keys because victims may cause car accidents even when suffering from early effects of the disease.

- The association went on to even suggest that doctors consider breaching patient confidentiality to report dangerous Alzheimer’s drivers to state authorities.
I don’t do windows... and with good reason, too

By Lois Erisey Poole

Windows hate me!
They always have!

I know it sounds paranoid to
even suggest that an inanimate
object can exhibit the emotion of
hate; however, every window I
have ever owned has come with a
built-in ability to sneer (and
smear). I’m the only woman I
know whose windows look better
dirty than clean.

I’ve tried it all. I’ve made my
own cleaners, used pink wax
cleaners, blue bottled sprays,
green bottled sprays, bar cleaners,
and cleaners from a can. All of
them seem to work fine. After I
wash and dry the windows they
look deceptively sparkling. And all
the overblown propaganda that the
manufacturers advertise seems, for
once, to have come true. The glass
truly has disappeared! Then, the
next day, when the morning sun
flows through the window panes
they have reappeared, covered
with streaks the size of the stretch
marks on my belly.

Over the years I have followed
every minute piece of advice that
wiser women have shared. I’ve
dried with newspaper, paper
towels, soft cloths, and cheese-
cloth. I’ve bought prepared
towelettes that have been guaran-
teed to leave my windows streak-
free. And sure that Heloise would
recommend white vinegar, ammo-
nia or alcohol, I tried those. And
the windows still greet the day
with streaks!

Many of my windows are
permanently etched in lime spots.
I finally discovered that scouring
powder will remove a few of them;
however, they still retain a gray
film that makes one feel like they
are living in a long-deserted cabin.

And even though a steel-wool
pad will remove the remaining
film the next time the sprinklers
come on in a high wind and a hot
sun, the haze, like an unwanted
guest, returns.

If I ever have to clean houses
for a living, I will definitely be one
of those women who will say, “I
don’t do windows.” But it’s nice to
know that Windows are now in
Cyberspace, because that’s exactly
where all windows belong!

You can write to Lois Erisey
Poole at: P.O. Box 3402, Quartz
Hill, CA 93586.
Dear Editor:

In the April edition of Elder Update, Charlotte Brayer wrote about United Seniors Association, Inc. (USA). The article is misleading and contains poorly researched “information” to which we must respond. It implies USA is not a legitimate organization. Nothing could be further from the truth.

United Seniors Association was founded in 1991 by conservative U.S. Sen. George Murphy (R-Calif.) as an alternative to liberal seniors organizations. USA is a non-profit, non-partisan group organized under section 501 c (4) of the U.S. tax code. Because we lobby Congress on behalf of our 465,000 members nationwide, USA dues and additional donations are not tax deductible. Our $5 annual membership dues entitle members to participate in lobbying programs, to receive our bimonthly newsletter The Senior American, and to financial benefits and senior discounts.

USA has never had satellite offices in Tampa, or anywhere else. USA is headquartered in Fairfax, Va. Our address is 3900 Jermantown Road, Suite 450, Fairfax, Va. Both phone numbers are listed in directory assistance: (703) 359-6500; or toll free 1-800-887-2872. Our address on the World Wide Web is www.unitedseniors.org.

In preparing the article, if Ms. Brayer had called our offices in Fairfax and properly identified herself, she would have been transferred to the Public Affairs Department and could have made a request to interview a USA spokesperson. We do as many interviews as possible - we are a relatively new organization and we WANT to tell anyone who will listen about United Seniors Association and our accomplishments.

USA lobbyists work on Capitol Hill to represent our members; we publish papers on issues like Social Security, Medicare and taxes from a senior perspective; we produce and distribute a weekly radio program to 35 stations across the country. Just last year, two USA members from Bradenton, Came to Washington, D.C. to participate in a major press conference on Medicare reform covered by CBS, CNN, NBC, ABC and many other Washington news media.

For the record, USA immediately removes names from our mailing list when asked to do so. USA also has a money back guarantee. We promptly refund donations to those few supporters who ask for their money back, and even return donations from people we suspect may not be able to afford their gift to us. Anyone with further questions should feel free to call our offices at the numbers listed above.

Sincerely,
Sandra L. Butler
President, USA, Inc.

Editor’s note: Cindy Snowden, who co-authored the article with Charlotte Brayer, says that USA’s number was not listed in Fairfax’s directory assistance at the time the article was prepared. Also, Ms. Snowden says that she made “repeated requests” to have a name removed from USA’s mailing list.

Life would be much easier if we could look into a crystal ball, see the twists and turns the years have in store for us, and plan accordingly. With no crystal balls in sight, each of us needs to identify the challenges we may face during our retirement years and create our own safety nets. One area of concern is the possible need for long-term care retirement years and create our own safety nets. One area of concern is the possible need for long-term care rendered in a nursing home, in an assisted living facility, or at home. The prospect of paying for long-term health care can be as worrisome as the prospect of needing such care.

Many variables come into play when considering long-term care. First, the cost and availability of these services vary from community to community. Second, everyone’s situation is different for a reasons including your health, your family’s health history, and your financial well-being. Some people have spouses or an extended family, while others do not have a support system nearby. As Also keep in mind the fact that many people live their lives without ever requiring long-term care.

After taking these and other variables into account, how can you protect yourself from the possible financial strain of long-term care? Your answer will have a significant impact on your overall financial plan. Following are some of the options you may consider.

Insurance Coverage

The best long-term care insurance policies offer broad coverage and an inflation rider. Long-term care policies can offer financial peace of mind and comprehensive coverage, making them the best safeguard for some people. When you consider purchasing a long-term care insurance policy, take time to understand the many features that policies may include and what these features mean to you:

Savings/investment option

One alternative to insurance is the savings/investment option, especially for people who have accumulated substantial wealth. First of all, if you never require the services of a nursing home or long-term home health care, the money you would have paid in premiums over the years would be yours, rather than the insurer’s. If you have saved and invested wisely for long-term growth, you may be able to set aside enough money to pay up to $50,000 per year if you should require long-term care. To determine the best investment strategy, you may want to seek the advice of a professional who understands the issues involved in meeting the costs of long-term care.

A second alternative is to purchase a single premium life insurance policy which will entitle you to withdraw from the policy death benefit if you need to pay for long-term care. Under a new tax law, this withdrawal is not subject to income tax. Because the death benefit substantially exceeds the premium, these policies can leverage savings, if needed for long-term care, without loss of principal.

What’s the bottom line on long-term care? First, keep in mind that everyone’s situation is different. Whether you choose the insurance option or accumulate the resources to pay for long-term care, carefully consider your options and plan the best safety net for your retirement years.
Columbia Institute for Orthopaedics

Whether you prefer golf, tennis, bike-riding, square-dancing or spending quality time with your grandchildren, joint and muscle pain shouldn’t prevent you from enjoying a healthy active lifestyle. A wide variety of surgical and non-surgical treatment options are available to help senior adults make the most of their retirement years.

From pain management and arthritis relief to joint replacement and arthroscopic surgery, the multidisciplinary team of health care professionals at Columbia Institute for Orthopaedics is dedicated to the diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of patients with orthopaedic needs.

For information on our orthopaedic programs, educational classes and community lectures,

please call (800) 56-JOINT.

p.u. logo february issue page 8.

Institute for Orthopaedics

7201 North University Drive
Tamarac, Florida 33321

Columbia-University Hospital & Medical Center is a corporate member of the Elder Floridians Foundation, which partially underwrites Elder Update.

Directory

SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Elders) is a free insurance counseling program designed for elders and their caregivers. Highly trained volunteers assist elders with their health insurance questions. If you need assistance with Medicare, Medicaid, or health-related insurance, a SHINE volunteer counselor can help. Call 800-963-5337 for the SHINE site nearest you.

SHINE has counselors in the following counties:

ALACHUA  BAY  BRADFORD  BREVARD  BROWARD  CHARLOTTE  CITRUS  DADE  DESOTO  DUVAL  ESCAMBIA  FLAGLER  HERNANDO  HIGHLANDS  HILLSBOROUGH  HOLMES  JACKSON  LAFAYETTE  LAKE  LEE  LEON  MANATEE  MARION  MARTIN  MONROE  NASSAU  OKALOOSA  ORANGE  OSCEOLA  PALM BEACH  PASCO  PINELLAS  POLK  PUTNAM  SANTA ROSA  SARASOTA  SEMINOLE  ST. JOHNS  ST. LUCIE  SUMTER  VOLUSIA  WASHINGTON

Wyeth Ayerst Ad
pick-up from february issue page 5
Resuscitate continued from page 8

shouldn’t have called 911, Beatson recalled.

Today, the standardized Do Not Resuscitate form is available to tell paramedics not to revive people who are terminally ill. But many families don’t realize the order is needed and become angry and upset about unwanted resuscitation. Officials say the order is needed because paramedics need to act quickly and don’t have the time or legal expertise to read through a living will. Nor are they accompanied by a physician who can evaluate the patient.

“The Do Not Resuscitate Order meets a test that the living will does not meet - a physician has made the determination that the person is terminal,” said Freida Travis, program administrator for the Bureau of EMS in the Florida Department of Health.

There’s another group that gets angry about Do Not Resuscitate Orders.

“It leaves out the people who say, I’m not terminally ill. I’m terminally old,” Travis said.

“These people are furious because they will call us and say, ‘I want one of these DNR forms.’ and we say, ‘No, these forms are for people previously diagnosed as terminally ill.’

The Bureau of EMS plans to ask rescue agencies to comment on how well the forms are working, but Travis predicts it will be another five years before people really know that such forms are available. Even then, education will continue to be necessary because people are always moving into the state.

There are other barriers. The form isn’t any good unless it’s signed by the patient or a patient representative, two witnesses and a doctor. The terminally ill patient may not be capable of completing the form, meaning it’s up to the family.

“You can know about the form, but you put it off,” Travis said. “There’s something about making this so final, so clinical. I guess that some people are just never going to do it... There’s still some stigma involved.”

Resuscitate is a corporate member of the Elder Floridians Foundation, which partially underwrites Elder Update.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONDAY

Palm Coast - Caregiver support group (fourth Monday only), with the Rev. Bob Bedell. 1:30 p.m. Flagler County Senior Center, 1000 Belle Terre Blvd. Call: 904/437-7300.

TUESDAY

Largo - Bereavement support group. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Hospice’s Main Service Center, 300 East Bay Drive. Call: 813/586-4432.


Palm Coast — Alzheimer’s support group (second Tuesday only). 2 p.m. Flagler County Senior Center, 1000 Belle Terre Blvd. Call: 904/437-7300.

Seminole - Bereavement support group. 10 a.m.-noon.


WEDNESDAY

Atlantis — Leukemia, lymphoma and multiple myeloma support group (second Wednesday only). 7 p.m. JFK Medical Center, 170 JFK Drive. For reservations, call: 407/642-3900.


West Palm Beach — Depression Support Group for elders, their caregivers, family members, and friends. 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Columbia Hospital, Pavilion cafeteria, 2201 45th Street. Free. Call: 407/881-2661.

THURSDAY

Green Cove Springs — Alzheimer’s Support Group (third Thursday only). 2 p.m. Green Cove Springs Senior Center, 604 Walnut St. Call: 904/269-6345, 904/264-5699, or 904/284-5977.

Largo - Bereavement support group. 6-8 p.m. Hospice’s Central Service Center, 7411-114th Ave. North, #314. Call 813/586-4432. Through June 19.

St. Augustine — Alzheimer’s support group (first and fourth Thursdays only). 2 p.m. Social Services Meeting Room, 7 Old Mission Ave. Call: 904/824-1648.


FRIDAY

Fernandina Beach — Alzheimer’s support group (fourth Friday only). 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Nassau County Council on Aging, 1367 South 18th Street. Adult sitter service is available but must be requested in advance. Call: 904/261-0701.

Pinellas Park - Bereavement support group. 2-4 p.m. Hospice House Woodside, 6770 102nd Ave. North. Call: 813/586-4432.

St. Augustine — Alzheimer’s support group (first and fourth Thursdays only). 10 a.m. Social Services Meeting Room, 7 Old Mission Ave. Call: 904/824-1648.

National Service Day brings out volunteers

Some people paid more than taxes on April 15. Some paid time and effort.

More than 700 volunteers throughout the state of Florida — including Department of Elder Affairs Secretary E. Bentley Lipscomb and Deputy Secretary June Noel — spent April 15 working on 45 revitalization and clean-up projects.

Lipscomb and Noel, with plenty of help from 11 volunteers from Fort Myers’ AARP retirees, by Telephone telephones were installed by Gainesville AARP chapter, was the benefitting the young and old.

In another field, education, many former teachers can’t shake their background. They are helping out as volunteers in schools.

Jack Harris, president of a Gainesville AARP chapter, was the moving spirit behind a project that put telephones at the bedside of VA hospital patients. In all, 4,200 telephones were installed by AARP retirees, by Telephone Pioneers of America, and other volunteers.

Harris had worked for Southern Bell for 35 years when he retired. His experience blended easily into the hospital project. Many bedridden patients were unable to get to a centrally located telephone. The problem has been solved by the bedside installations, easing their communications with family and friends.

“I estimate that we saved taxpayers $6 million,” said Harris, who is also a veteran. “I still get letters of gratitude from those we helped. Installing all those jacks, wiring and phones wasn’t an easy job. My fellow volunteers and I breathed a sigh of relief when the work finally was finished four months ago.”

Another example is the huge AARP Tax-Aide program. Many of the volunteers who help low-and middle-income older persons fill out tax returns learned their mathematical abilities before retirement. They were bookkeepers, CPAs, bank workers and business owners.

In another field, education, many former teachers can’t shake their background. They are helping out as volunteers in schools. Evelyn Bonnington, formerly an AARP associate coordinator for Community Operations and now a chapter president, has been a kindergarten aide in a Venice elementary school for 17 years. She does this in addition to her many AARP duties.

Before retirement, Dr. Bonnington worked in the Detroit public school system in positions ranging from teacher to administrator.

Howard Bishop of Boca Raton was a newspaper executive with the New York Times. He dealt with labor disputes, hiring practices and other personnel problems. Now he’s using those talents as AARP’s state training coordinator.

In the political field, Joe Blaber of Clearwater heads up the AARP State Legislative Committee. In his working days, he was a college and private counselor, dealing with all types of people. Now he deals with all types of Legislators and their aides. Jack Holland of Tallahassee, head of the Capital City Task Force, formerly worked as a staff member in the House of Representatives. Now he keeps active from the outside.

Earlier this year John Anderson of Cocoa Beach used his knowledge of cardiopulmonary resuscitation to revive a Kentucky man who had suffered a severe heart attack at a legislative meeting in Washington. Anderson is on the national and state legislative councils. In his working days, he was a certified registered nurse and anesthetist.

Lois Herron of St. Petersburg, the new president of Florida AARP, was a communications executive before her recent retirement. Now she serves as the chief spokesperson and communicator for AARP.

Some retirees prefer to sit by the side of the road and watch the sun set, having worked diligently most of their lives. That’s their privilege. But there’s nothing more satisfying than “keeping your finger in the pie” by doing volunteer work that blends with your working days.

It’s personal, but I must admit that I’m a good example. Before moving to Florida I worked as a newspaperman for 40 years, 37 of them with the Associated Press. Continuing to report and write (without a salary) has been a pleasure I never anticipated.

The state’s Commission on Community Service hosted the Tallahassee projects, which also included work on community shelters and other area residences. The event, part of National Volunteer Week, served as a prelude to the President’s Summit for America’s Future held in Philadelphia at the end of April.

Looking to America’s Future

The National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) has pledged 45 million volunteer hours in service to youngsters. It is making the commitment as part of its 50th anniversary observance.

The pledge was made as part of the President’s Summit for America’s Future. The pledge will be completed by the end of the year 2000.

NRTA is a division of AARP. Experience banks will be developed to match children and adults with similar interests.
The patient is dying and the family knows it. The diagnosis was made long ago and there’s nothing any doctor can do to alter the course of the disease.

But when the patient draws his last breath or his heart falters, relatives panic and dial 911, summoning the people charged with saving lives.

The paramedics arrive, only to learn that the family doesn’t want any heroics - no shocks to restart the heart, no breathing machines, no artificially prolonged death in a hospital’s intensive care unit. But nobody got that in writing ahead of time. So, despite the family’s protests, the rescue workers have to do their job.

It’s a scenario that’s all too common, according to the paramedics and doctors who work in emergency medical services.

Four years ago, rescue workers pressed for a state law that would allow paramedics and emergency technicians to honor the wish of a terminally ill patient to be allowed to die.

In 1993, the state created a form called a Prehospital Do Not Resuscitate Order that allows just that - if it has been signed by the patient or the patient’s representative and two doctors have agreed the person has a terminal disease. More than half a million of these forms have been distributed around the state.

But many people remain unaware that a form is needed for paramedics not to act, officials say. That means paramedics frequently don’t know what else to do.

Almost once a day, one of the medical directors is called regarding these ethical decisions with a dying patient,” said Dr. Randall Wolff, chairman of the county EMS Medical Directors Association, which includes a dozen physicians. “We are now put in this position to make a decision regarding life and death - a decision that wasn’t made when things were calm, voices were clear and a patient’s physician could be consulted.”

Dr. Jeff Davis, medical director for Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue, points out that families who have obtained living wills for terminally ill patients are often surprised to learn that they cannot be used to stop paramedics from performing lifesaving measures.

“The living will isn’t enough even if they do have it,” Davis said. “I end up having to make a decision on the radio about that. It’s not easy.”

After considering the circumstances and the patient’s condition, he usually directs the paramedics to stop resuscitation, Davis said. But if there’s any question, he said, paramedics will work on the patient.

It’s not a new problem.

More than 11,000 people die every year in Palm Beach County alone - more than 30 a day. That includes deaths from car accidents, homicides, strokes, heart attacks and diseases such as cancer, AIDS and Alzheimer’s.

In one incident five years ago, a man had to be restrained by firefighters because he didn’t want paramedics to resuscitate his wife, said Nigel Baker, a spokesman for Palm Beach County Fire-Rescue.

Families may not want paramedics to resuscitate a terminally ill patient, but they still tend to call 911. Why?

EMS officials cite several reasons: People panic. Most people aren’t accustomed to seeing someone die. They may want to have a medical professional there or something to ease the patient’s pain. Some people don’t want the person to die in the house and others simply don’t know what else to do.

Do Not Resuscitate Order presents challenge for Florida paramedics

By Stephanie Artero/Palm Beach Post

“The Do Not Resuscitate Order meets a test that the living will does not meet - a physician has made the determination that the person is terminal.”

— Freida Travis, program administrator, Bureau of EMS, Florida Department of Health.