

The POA BULLETIN

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The Property Owners' Association of The
Villages

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Champion of Residents' Rights Since 1975

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CDD #1 Residents Win a Dispute with the VCCDD and The Villages Developer

Every once and a while the residents win one in what sometimes has become a contentions debate with the VCCDD and/or The Villages developer on various topics.

So it was that the VCCDD and the developer backed down on the use of Lago del Luna for storage of treated sewage water that was to be stored in the CDD #1 lake. The developer was interested in using the stored water for irrigation of the Tierra del Sol golf course.

This all started a few months ago when the Little Sumter Water Utility, now owned by the VCCDD, started work on the required pumping station and the piping needed to pump treated sewage water into and out of Lago del Luna. Nobody told the CDD #1 supervisors before the work was started. When confronted with this little detail in the

February CDD #1 meeting, various official of the VCCDD pleaded ignorance of how this notification error could have happened. Basically, they said that everybody involved in the decision to build the pumping station assumed that someone else was going to tell CDD #1 supervisors. Thus, the work was started, and CDD #1 supervisors were never told about it.

Nevertheless, the idea was presented to CDD #1 supervisors as something that they could not stop. It was asserted that the developer, with the acquiescence of the VCCDD, could do whatever it wanted regarding the use of Lago del Luna for storage of treated sewage water. It had, so they said, rights to use an easement to the lake. And, use of the lake was consistent with Water Management District directives on using lakes like this to store treated sewage water for irrigation of golf courses, thus saving good water from the underground aquifer.

CDD #1 residents had already conveniently spent over \$300,000 lining the lake to overcome past seepage of the lake's water into the ground. This was a controversial issue several years ago when the developer refused to pay the cost of the liner needed to maintain the water level. This was in spite of the fact that it pocketed roughly \$30,000-\$45,000 per lot for lake front upgrade premium charges. Then it turned its back on residents when its lake started to go dry. So, CDD #1 supervisors in the March meeting were asked to sign the contract allowing this to happen. They were told that they could not stop the proposed use of the lake for the treated water.

However, wait a minute!

A motivated group of CDD #1 residents researched the various legal questions, did some engineering study work, hired an attorney, and presented their findings to the CDD #1 supervisors. The group found the following:

- CDD #1 owns Lago del Luna and has the right to use or not use the lake as they see fit. It has the right to stop any use of the lake that might harm or damage the lake. This allows the CDD #1 residents to limit use of the lake and exclude treated sewage discharge.
- The easement referred to by the VCCDD and the developer was not properly registered for use by the developer as planned. In any event, the easement was designed to apply to common underground utilities (i.e., gas, electric, drinking water, etc.), and was not so broad as to allow pump stations and pipes to permit dumping of treated sewage water into the lake.
- The conclusion was that CDD #1 was under no obligation to allow the planned use of the lake. Furthermore, it had a serious obligation and duty to protect the lake.

Faced with this set of facts, and a group of determined residents, the developer and the VCCDD backed down and withdrew their plan to use the lake for treated sewage discharge.

The chairman of the VCCDD board of supervisors said the engineers would be directed to find an alternative location for storage of treated sewage water for golf course irrigation.

So, for everybody else who lives on a nice body of water, better be on guard -- your lake or retention area could be coveted next as a dumping ground for treated sewage water. And, if you paid a lake front upgrade fee, you may have to get accustomed to the idea of a lake full of treated sewage water in your back yard.

Two final points - the VCCDD and the developer tried to stampede CDD #1 into accepting the proposal. Residents were told that they had to accept the proposal - that

there was no alternative. It is fortunate that CDD #1 residents had enough gumption to stand up for their Rights as Residents and say "no."

Also, the VCCDD was working in conjunction with the developer to get this done. Is there any doubt that these two are willing to trample Residents' Rights when the developer's economic interests are at stake?

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Letter to the Editor on the Paradise Center Proposal

The Daily Sun published a Letter to the Editor on March 17th from Ms. Susan Dupuis regarding the Paradise Center. Mr. Joe Gorman, mentioned as the author of the survey, sent a response to the Daily Sun. However, as of a week after delivery of the letter to the Sun, it had not yet been published. Thus, we reprint Gorman's letter below, but edited for space considerations:

This is to respond to Ms. Susan Dupuis' Letter. Since I was mentioned by name, I would like a fair opportunity to respond. What to do about the Paradise Center is important to this community and it deserves a full review.

The POA Paradise Center Survey was not "Mr. Gorman's survey" as she mentioned. This was a survey of Villages residents. The POA Bulletin reported the results.

It would be impractical to survey all residents on the east side, as Ms. Dupuis suggested. Actually, only 41% of respondents were from the east side of the highway and 57% were from the west side of the highway. A total of 38% were from Sumter County, 5% from Marion County, and 14% from Lake County west of the highway. This is a fairly balanced sampling of residents throughout The Villages, and the results are representative of the thoughts of all residents.

The Survey was not limited to just POA members. In fact, more responses were received in the mail from Villagers who cut out the survey from the Bulletin delivered to their homes. Rather than being POA or VHA members, it appears that the many respondents were primarily just interested Villages residents who wanted to comment on the Paradise question.

Ms. Dupuis mentioned that she talked to many residents who do not want to pay an extra \$2 per month. However, the Survey questioned 540 residents, and 57% (310 people) favored paying the estimated \$1.97 a month. Residents are willing to pay for a new Paradise Center.

She also said she is for a facelift and major repairs, but not demolition. But, she does not represent the prevailing attitudes of residents. 62% of those surveyed favored the Demolish and Rebuild alternative. Only 22% favored the Renovate and Redecorate alternative. By a three-to-one margin, residents want a new facility.

The problem is that previous repairs and facelifts have been merely cosmetic and poorly done - such that we now have a shabby and deteriorating structure. The termite problem has not been solved by new paint and wallpaper. Now we see the futility of previous facelift efforts.

She also itemized the many features of the Paradise Center, like darts, bingo, square dancing, etc. She should have also mentioned termites, rats, mold, mildew, leaky roofs, peeling paint, etc. A full 87% of Survey respondents noticed at least one of these. Nobody should be happy about darts, bingo, square dancing, etc., when they have to coexist with rats, termites, mold, mildew, leaky roofs, etc.

She goes on to say that we should not compare Paradise with the other newer facilities. Residents want to make that comparison. To ignore this comparison would seem to relegate the residents around the Paradise Center to second-class status and tell them to shut-up and be happy with their second-class recreation center. We can all see the Chatham Center and the Mulberry Center and question why we can't have something in our community as nice as these for the amenity fees we pay. If the Paradise Center were relatively new, it would be another story. However, at 30 years old, it is time to replace this shabby structure that is an embarrassment in our community.

Mr. Harold Schwartz often said: Give the People What They Want. The residents have spoken in a representative survey - they want a new Paradise Center. They should have it. We hope the VCCDD supervisors are listening to the will of the people. This is our community and we should be able to make these choices for ourselves.

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The Patron Program

The key objection to the Patron system is that it allows some Villages residents to purchase special favors. This is special treatment for special interests. This is not a fair and equitable arrangement for the vast majority of Villages residents.

An earlier example of this can be traced back to Martin Luther, a leader in the Reformation in the 16th century. One of Luther's primary issues in the Ninety-Five Theses posted on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg was that the Catholic Church's selling of indulgences for money was corrupt and wrong. This was special treatment for special interests. Anyone who could afford to make a donation to the Church could buy indulgences for special purposes.

Indulgences for special payments were considered wrong in the 16th century. The Patron program is wrong now.

Wrong is wrong - the Patron program should be ended now.

An informal survey about the Patron program was conducted recently among members of one of the dance clubs and one of the nationality clubs. A total of 456 members were asked in a written questionnaire if they supported the College Patron Program: 99% (451) responded "no." Only 1% (5 members) said "yes."

Cheers and Jeers

Cheers - To the Daily Sun for publishing the announcement of the February 27th VCCDD meeting in the Daily Sun three days before the meeting. Furthermore, the Sun mentioned that the Paradise Center issue was on the agenda. We hope this is a monthly practice to not only mention these meetings but also to report on the agenda items from these important meetings.

Cheers - To the recreation department for their efforts to move the rained-out Mardi Gras activities indoors on Fat Tuesday. Thanks for the quick effort to avoid a complete wash-out.

Jeers - To Betty Ruth Leech, CDD #1 supervisor, for being the only vote against asking the Villages developer to pay for the original liner in Lago del Luna. We all know that the developer will not pay for the liner, even though it gets the primary benefit of using the lake for storage of recycled water to be used for irrigation purposes on golf courses. But, wouldn't it have been politically astute for Ms. Leech to vote for the request to the developer? Who does she represent anyway?

Cheers - To Sumter County Commissioners Roberts, Chandler, and Cox for voting against the proposed high-density apartments adjacent to the western edge of The Villages. Commissioners Strickland and Rutter, representing parts of The Villages, voted for the apartments. Maybe we do have stand-up voices on the Board that think independently of the Villages developer.

Jeers - To the Villages recreation department for packing residents into Katie Belle's for the Artie Shaw orchestra. Nobody could enjoy the orchestra because of the mob of people. Why wasn't this scheduled for the Savannah Center?

The Second Annual Survey

[\(Print This Form\)](#)

Below is the Second Annual POA Resident Survey. All residents are asked to spend a few minutes filling out this form. Please rate each question with your opinion on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 is the highest, best, or most satisfactory rating - all the way down to 1 which is the lowest, worst, or least satisfying rating. A rating of 5 would be an average, or middle-of-the-road, opinion. If you have no opinion about a question, please put in "NR" (No Rating) for that question. Then, either bring this form to the next POA membership meeting or mail it to The POA, P.O.Box 1657, Lady Lake, FL

32158. Thanks in advance for your help in completing this survey. Results will be published in a future issue of the POA Bulletin.

Rating

- _____ Entertainment Programs on the Square
- _____ Overall Safety and Security in The Villages
- _____ Traffic in The Villages
- _____ The Cleanliness of Villages Streets and Common Areas
- _____ Landscaping in Common Areas throughout The Villages
- _____ The Villages Taxi Service
- _____ The Neighborhood Watch Service
- _____ The Trash or Garbage Service
- _____ The Water Utility's Service
- _____ Emergency Fire Services
- _____ Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- _____ The Villages Hospital
- _____ The Lifelong Learning Center's Patron Discount Program
- _____ The Monthly Amenity Fee
- _____ The Daily Sun Newspaper, in General
- _____ The Daily Sun Newspaper, Objectivity of Reporting
- _____ The Villages TV station, in General
- _____ The Villages Radio Station, in General
- _____ The Property Owners' Association (POA), in General
- _____ The POA Bulletin Newsletter
- _____ The Villages Homeowners' Association (VHA), in General
- _____ The VHA Voice Newspaper
- _____ The Community Improvement Council (CIC), in General
- _____ The Villages District Administrator, Mr. Pete Wahl
- _____ The Villages Center District (VCCDD) Government
- _____ The CDD or Government Unit in Which You Live
- _____ Condition of the Executive Golf Courses
- _____ Condition of the Championship Golf Courses
- _____ The Priority Golf Program
- _____ Greens Fees on the Championship Golf Courses

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We Need Your Help

The POA board needs volunteer help from the membership in the following areas: An experienced sales representative to sell advertisements in The POA Bulletin on a part time basis. A generous commission will be paid. Previous experience selling newspaper or magazine ads would be helpful, but not essential.

An attorney to advise the board on a variety of organizational matters. Previous experience in the areas of real estate law, contracts, and/or corporate law would be

helpful, but not essential.

Please call Joe Gorman (259-0999) for details.

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April Fools Day Revisited (Don't Believe Any of This)

With The Villages spreading out all over the place, many residents are complaining about the long distances to travel via golf cart to get to the outlying courses. Consequently, the developer has decided to build an underground subway between the two Town Squares. The fully functional subway will be able to accommodate golf carts. A stop will be made at the Savannah Center. Eventually, spurs will be built north to the Mulberry Center and south to Wildwood. The one-way trip cost for a golf cart will be \$10.00; individuals will pay \$5.00. Initially, only Priority and Patron members will be allowed to use the facility. When everybody else is allowed to use it, the Priority/Patron discount will be 25%.

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**The POA
PO BOX 1657
Lady Lake, FL 32158-1657**

Contact Information : POB 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158
Phone : (352) 259-0999

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