

# The POA BULLETIN

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

POA Logo

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Champion of Residents' Rights Since 1975

October,  
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The POA Bulletin is published monthly by the Property Owner's Association of the Villages, Inc. Articles in the Bulletin represent the opinion of the POA, except Letters to the Editor, which represent the opinions of the writers. Care is taken to insure that all facts reported herein are true and accurate to the best knowledge of the POA and are taken from reliable sources. The POA assumes no liability for any information published, opinions expressed, or delivery to any person or location. All publication rights are reserved. Publication or reprinting of any material contained herein is by written permission only.

**The POA Urges a "No" Vote for the Sumter**

# Hospital Tax and the Taxing District

The POA urges Sumter County residents to vote against the proposed Sumter County Hospital Taxing District and the related property tax. This means a "No" vote at the general election to be held on Tuesday, November 2, 2004.

In summary, the POA recommends this action for one fundamental reason: The Leesburg Regional Medical Center (LRMC) has not made a compelling case that the tax is needed for either the expansion or operations of The Villages Regional Hospital (VRH) which it owns.

The POA further believes that LRMC is holding the VRH hostage with the threat of no expansion if the hospital tax is not passed.

The 1 mil tax on each \$1,000.00 of house valuation means that a house with an assessed value of \$200,000.00 would have an annual tax of \$175.00 if the \$25,000.00 homestead exemption is recognized.

Although the POA believes that the LRMC's failure to make the case is the fundamental reason for a negative vote, other issues also deserve comment, as follows:

**1. Failure to Provide Information** - LRMC has refused to provide future financial projections for the operating budget and expansion of the VRH. The POA believes that these statements, covering a minimum ten-year forecast period, would show an operating surplus in the years ahead and a VRH ability to shoulder its own expansion costs without the tax. The failure by LRMC to provide suitable information to make the case is inexcusable.

**2. The Hospital Market in This Area** - The POA refuses to believe that the VRH cannot be run with an operating surplus in the years ahead given the favorable demographics and high demand in this tri-county area. From an operating standpoint, VRH should be quite capable of supporting its own operations, growth, and expansion without the tax. The market demand is there - all we need is capable management to capitalize on it.

**3. LRMC Can Provide Funding** - The LRMC says it has the wherewithal to give roughly \$18 million to the VRH over the next few years for operating expenses. This would more than cover almost three years of the annual interest expense of a \$100 million bond offering that the expansion might require. LRMC's offer is from today's vantage point. In another two years, with the expansion almost completed, the financial prospects of VRH should be much better, as should be LRMC's ability to arrange any needed financing.

**4. VRH Profitability** - One of the basic premises in this debate is that the VRH is unprofitable at its smaller size. This is false. The VRH did lose roughly \$7 million in its first year. However, VRH has run at an operating surplus in recent months due mainly to high demand and better management. Incidentally, we continue to get reports of waste and lax management in the hospital. These problems need to be solved now.

**5. Give-a-Way to The Developer** - The Florida Legislature bill authorizing Sumter County to implement the tax has a provision that up to 20% of the tax proceeds, after tax district expenses, can be given to the private foundation of the Morse family. This part of the bill was authored by Mr. Hugh Gibson, Florida

State Representative for our area. The Morse family spokesman said that the family would waive this provision until the expansion is completed, but not afterwards. This give-a-way to the Morse family is so distasteful to our taxpayers that it alone is enough to recommend a "No" vote on the tax question.

**6. No End to the Tax** - The rationale for the tax is that it is needed for the expansion. However, once the expansion is completed and the operation turns to a surplus, the tax will not be needed. Current LRMC management has refused to say that the tax would be ended when and if it was no longer needed. LRMC management wants the free tax hand-out coming indefinitely.

**7. LRMC Management Issues** - When the VRH was being built and then opened, LRMC had no senior or experienced manager available to oversee the initial phases of the operation. When the first hospital manager was replaced, LRMC again had nobody to put into that position. LRMC had to go to a hospital management company for a short-term temporary manager to come in and run the place. When a permanent manager was next needed, LRMC again had nobody for that position and had to recruit from the outside. Many of the start-up and initial operating problems in the VRH are due to inadequacies in the LRMC organization. The POA is concerned about LRMC's continued involvement in running VRH.

**8. LRMC Financial Problems** - LRMC top management has said that it cannot shoulder the \$100 million debt issue because of limitations on its borrowing capacity. Thus, it says, it needs the tax to enhance its own financial position so as to make the \$100 million debt offering more attractive and saleable in the bond markets. The POA reads that as an indication that the real problem here is LRMC and its inability to arrange suitable financing on its own without the tax. If this is so, The POA suggests strongly that the LRMC sell the VRH to any one of literally dozens of hospital management companies in the U.S. that would jump at the opportunity to acquire a hospital as well positioned as is the VRH. Failure to do so would bolster the POA contention that the LRMC is holding VRH expansion hostage due to its own operating problems. LRMC should arrange its own financing, without the tax, or sell the hospital to a stronger company that can.

**9. Stacked Deck Hospital Tax Board** - In the month or so since the governor-appointed Hospital Tax District Board has been in place, news stories indicate that a majority of the board has already decided that the tax is needed. This is before the board has reviewed any financial statements or projections examining the expansion alternative. This looks like the board was appointed with preconceived notions about needing the tax. This looks like a stacked deck. We should use the opportunity to wipe this slate clean with a "No" vote on November 2nd.

**10. Existing Facility** - LRMC already has a building on the east side of Hwy. 27/441 that should be utilized for much of the overflow that VRH cannot now handle. With smart planning and, perhaps, an underground transportation facility between the two hospital buildings, this could serve right now as a major increase in capacity. That east side building was originally built by LRMC to be a hospital facility. Why let it go unused at this time of unmet demand and inadequate supply? Perhaps this also tells you something about the planning and operating skills of the LRMC top management group. We should not reward the ineptitude of LRMC by building another facility when this east side facility goes unused.

**11. Lake County Portion of Tax** - LRMC has said that when the tax is

passed, it will send to the VRH the tax collected from the Lake County portion of The Villages. That should be done now regardless of whether the Sumter County tax is passed. If Village residents pay the tax, the tax should be use for The Villages hospital.

**What To Do Now** - The POA recommends the following actions:

- \_ Vote "No" on Tuesday, November 2nd. Send a message to LRMC that residents will not be intimidated by the "No Expansion" threat.
- \_ Demand that LRMC make the case for the expansion by publishing comprehensive ten-year financial forecasts detailing revenues, expenses, and planned uses of the hospital tax.
- \_ Demand that LRMC explain how the east side hospital building will be utilized.
- \_ Watch LRMC and if it doesn't start the expansion soon, demand that it sell the hospital to a top-quality hospital management company as soon as possible.

**Summary** - The Villages Regional Hospital is very important to this community. We need to give it our fullest support. But, we should not do so foolishly or without full disclosure of the pertinent information.

And, LRMC should not be trying to intimidate us with the "No Expansion" threat if we don't vote for the tax.

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## One Sumter Approved

The One Sumter proposal was approved by Sumter County voters in the primary election on August 31st.

The vote was close: 51.4% to 48.6%, a margin of less than 3 percentage points.

In the Sumter County areas outside The Villages, the vote was 84% against the proposal. Inside The Villages, the vote was 79% in favor of the proposal. There was a larger turnout of voters inside The Villages which produced the slim margin of victory.

The proposal means that starting with the 2006 election, all Sumter County supervisor positions will be elected county-wide and at-large rather than just in the individual districts. Any supervisor, however, must still be a resident of his or her own district.

A group of Sumter County residents is planning a legal challenge of the vote. One of the group's contentions is that minority voters will be diluted in the county under One Sumter, and this may be illegal under federal civil rights laws for voting requirements.

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## The POA Hall of Fame Nominations

Hall of Fame nominations were due October 1, 2004. Our plan now is to have the POA Board of Directors examine the nomination forms very carefully. Additional information may be asked for. We may choose to interview candidates or the people making the nominations. The Board will make a final decision in early December and announce the inductees into the Hall of Fame at the December meeting in conjunction with our annual Christmas party.

Thanks to the POA membership for their interest and support of the Hall of Fame.

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## Pete's Corner

In his Pete's Place column in the September 16th Daily Sun, Mr. Wahl talked about an event of great importance. This is the nominating meeting for the CDD districts that will conduct landowner elections on November 2nd. His comments were directed at any resident interested in serving on a CDD board. Interested parties should talk with Mr. Wahl or senior district staff about what the positions entail and how the process works.

This sounds wonderful!

This looks like an opportunity for interested residents to serve on a CDD board and participate in the local government process.

But, Mr. Wahl's comments are a bad joke on all of us. That is because his comments are grossly misleading.

The chances of any given resident being selected by the landowners for one of these open CDD board positions are slim.

Mr. Wahl is talking about landowner elections - not resident elections.

Chapter 190 gives the developer the right to nominate and elect supervisors in a CDD for up to six years after the formation of the CDD. This is a landowner election.

Residents are gradually given the right to nominate and elect supervisors over a six year period. This is a resident election.

The one supervisor position available in CDD #3 and the three positions available in both CDD #4 and CDD #5 are to be elected by the landowner - the developer of The Villages.

Developers like to nominate and elect people who are well-known to the developer. That is why landowner-elected supervisors are generally friends, business associates, relatives, or employees of the developer. These people are willing to vote the developer's line, even if the interests of residents are ignored.

Just look at the VCCDD supervisors - all are associated, one way or another, with the developer. Almost, if not all, votes on issues favorable to the developer are passed, without discussion, in 5-0 votes.

So, if you are a well-meaning Villager, wanting to decide issues on merit rather than favoritism, and wanting to be independent rather than beholdng to any person or organization or developer, then your chances of being nominated or elected in a landowner election are zero, zip, nada.

If you really wanted to get elected in a landowner election, your should be either an employee, business associate, friend, or relative of the developer. And, your loyalty to the developer could be the primary deciding factor. Then, you could get elected.

So, to Mr. Wahl - thanks for telling us about the nomination and election process in a landowner election.

On second thought - thanks for nothing.

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## **Paradise and Bob Evans**

There has been no news recently on the Bob Evans issue.

On the Paradise renovation, the architects and engineers have been asked to prepare final construction plans and blueprints. When those are received, the project will be put out for bid, a process that can take up to 90 days.

These actions might be completed somewhere around a March, 2005, time frame. At that point a supplemental budget request will be prepared for consideration by the VCCDD.

Also prepared at that time will be a logistics work plan covering the construction timetable and the plans for re-locating all Paradise activities to other Villages facilities.

This may be a difficult time for many of the organizations, activities, and clubs that have used the Paradise Center in the past. District management asks for the patience and understanding of all residents because the new Paradise Center promises to be a wonderful facility about which we can all be proud.

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## POA Web Site

The new POA web site is getting bigger and better. Check it out at <http://www.poa4us.org>.

We have added a link to the Chapter 190 Florida law that created CDDs (Community Development Districts) in 1980 and which continues to regulate CDDs to this day. This inter net link is extremely helpful if you want to learn more about CDDs.

If you have any suggestions or comments you wish to pass on to the POA officers or directors, there is detailed information on the site as to how to contact the POA via e-mail. The easiest way is to contact us is at the web address [poapresident@poa4us.org](mailto:poapresident@poa4us.org).

We also have a need for someone familiar with the inter net to help us with some of the maintenance of the information provided on the site. Please contact us if you would like more information on this.

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## Concern About A New Lady Lake Commissioner

The Orlando Sentinel and The Villages Daily Sun have reported on two candidates seeking the Lady Lake Commissioner's seat recently vacated by Ms. Joanna Perrigo.

We don't yet know enough about either candidate to comment on their qualifications.

However, we know that one of the candidates is an employee of the Citizens Bank Mortgage Company, a business unit in the Morse family group of companies. In essence, this person relies on a paycheck from the developer of The Villages.

The POA views this as a conflict of interests and suggest that this candidate withdraw from consideration for the commissioner's position.

We think the Lady Lake Commissioners should be independent of any possible influence from The Villages. A commissioner should not have a secret agenda, or be vulnerable to influence from a developer.

It is not only an "actual" conflict of interests that concerns us - it is also the "appearance" of a conflict that is just as problematic. The time will come when developer influence will be focused on this person for a certain vote or risk losing her job.

And, a person depending on a paycheck from a developer is a real concern.

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## VCCDD Financial Statements

In the open discussion part of the POA's monthly general membership meetings, we often get questions about the operating revenues and expenses of the VCCDD and the various residential CDDs. People often want to know: "How is my amenity fee being spent?" or "How much is The Villages spending on golf course maintenance?" or "How much is being spent by the VCCDD on repaying the bonds issued to pay for the purchase of common facilities?"

We are fortunate that the CDDs are governments, and, as such, have to provide this kind of information to residents. You can ask to see the financial statements at the District offices on Wedgewood Lane. Or, you can hear about and get a copy of the monthly report at the monthly meetings of the CDDs. Some of the detailed financial information for the VCCDD is displayed in the table below.

This table starts with the Actual numbers for fiscal year 2003. Then the Adopted Budget and the Projected Actual for FY 2004 are shown. The final column is the Adopted Budget for FY 2005. Fiscal years start October 1st and end the following September 30.

If you have further questions, you can go to the district government school on Mondays or Thursdays from 10 am to noon. Call the district offices (753-4508) for details. Or, come to the next POA meeting where we will try our best to



answer your questions.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE VCCDD DETAIL BUDGET](#)

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## Bulletin Pick-Up Locations

Bulletins are sometimes not delivered to your driveway as they should be in the first week of the month. If this happens to you, remember that you can pick up the Bulletin at the following locations:

### **Plaza Grande Shopping Center**

Ace (Sweets) Hardware  
Publix Supermarket  
Winn-Dixie Supermarket

### **Spanish Springs Shopping Center**

Albertsons Supermarket  
Walgreens Drug Store

### **Mulberry Grove Shopping Center**

Publix Supermarket  
Walgreens Drug Store

### **Southern Trace Shopping Center**

Ace Hardware  
Eckert Drug Store  
Publix Supermarket

We do not yet have home distribution of the Bulletin west of Buena Vista Blvd, or into Marion County, or south of Highway 466. Residents in these areas can get their copy of the Bulletin at one of the distribution points above. When you pick up Bulletins at any of these stores, please thank the manager for allowing Bulletins to be displayed.

Finally, we need volunteers who can help us with the stocking of the Bulletin in various stores in The Villages. Duties would involve placing copies of the Bulletin in two or three locations and then checking back twice a week during the month for any needed refills. Please call Pete Cacioppo at 259-9774 for more details.

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## Cheers and Jeers

**Jeers** - To Ken Creely, Villages Golf Czar, for the exorbitant and difficult-to-justify increase in priority golf fees just announced. It is amazing how the administrators of the golf program in The Villages have created so much ill-will and bad feelings in so short a time. Their autocratic methods may be killing the goose that laid the golden egg.

**Jeers** - To Tropical Storm Bonnie and Hurricanes Charlie, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne. Good-bye, good-riddance, get lost, stay away, etc. You guys weren't much fun.

**Cheers** - To The Villages radio station for great coverage during the critical hours of the recent hurricanes. The station did a superb job of mixing information with music that was a nice break from the tedious, monotonous, repetitive, and sometimes trivial, coverage of the Orlando TV stations.

**Cheers** - To the Orlando Sentinel, Villages Daily Sun, Leesburg Daily Commercial and the Ocala Star-Banner for their Hurricane Specials with pertinent news about shelters and other resources.

**Cheers** - To The Villages maintenance department for its quick clean-up actions right after the recent hurricanes had passed.

**Jeers** - To Gary Lester, The Villages' Information Czar, for his attempts, according to the Orlando Sentinel, to recruit a Villages employee for the Lady Lake Board of Commissioners. This could pack the board with a pro-developer voting coalition. First it was One Sumter; then it was Lady Lake. Is Wildwood next? How about Belleview? What about Pedro? Don't bother calling Mr. Lester about this - he won't return your calls.

**Cheers** - To the town of Lady Lake for re-surfacing a variety of streets on the historic side of The Villages. It is nice to see government responsive to residents' needs.

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**Letters to The Editor:**

### **Golf Fee Increase Is Aggravating**

This Kuehne letter below will be distributed to The Villages golfers and local media. We tried to discuss the concern about rising golf prices with Villages Management last January when a 20% increase in Winter Green Fees was announced. However, we were denied the opportunity. It is obvious that Villages Management no longer cares about the lifestyle and low costs that we were promised when we decided to move here. I'm sure Mr. Harold Schwartz, whom we all loved and trusted, is looking down from the Heavens and shaking his head about what is happening to all his old friends.

Gary Bibby

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Raising the price of priority golf membership is just another way of gouging all of us that moved here to live the life of a "Millionaire" without being one.

Mr. Creely, the director of the country club division of The Villages, has instituted a SLIGHT increase in Priority memberships!

In a Sept. 20th Daily Sun article he said that a 12 month, 2 course, couples priority membership only increased \$50, or 7.9%! Is 7.9% slight? Did your Social Security check go up 8% this year? I don't think so.

What Ken failed to mention was the selection that I feel is the one that most of us year-round residents choose, (all courses, 12 months, couple: \$780 in 2004; \$925 for 2005) went up a whopping \$145! That ladies and gentlemen, is about an 18.5% increase!

But wait, Ken Creely says there are going to be 2 new courses opening this year! The way things are now a person is real lucky to be able to play more than 2 or 3 times a week in the prime season. So what good are 2 more choices? More variety, not more golf! Is \$145 a good price for variety?

I just can't wait to see the "slight" increases in the greens fees!

What are your thoughts? Submit your thoughts on the form at the web address: [www.rogfel.us/prices.htm](http://www.rogfel.us/prices.htm)

Roger Kuehne

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## POA Elections

The POA annual elections are coming. All officer and director positions will be up for a vote and open to all active members.

Nominations received will be announced at the October POA meeting. Elections will be held in November. Officers and directors will be sworn in at the December meeting. The term of office begins in January.

Please take a moment to consider how you might participate in the activities of your POA. We need more people to take an active role in the management of the POA by running for these officer and director positions. In many cases, you may find that the time commitment is less than you might think and the rewards are personally satisfying.

So, please consider running for one of these positions and joining the other officers and directors in helping to strengthen the POA and make The Villages even better.

Call Joe Gorman at 259-0999 for more information or talk to any POA director.

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## Where is Your POA Membership Card?

Do you have your 2004 POA Membership card?

If you sent in your 2004 POA Membership renewal form and payment to us via the mail, we mailed your membership card to you **only if** you included a stamped self-addressed envelope with the payment. If you did not include that stamped self-addressed envelope, then we are holding your card for you to pick up at one of our monthly meetings.

Remember that you need the card to take advantage of the discounts and special deals offered by our Discount Partners (see page 6). One of the requirements when ordering the Partner's product or service is that you show your current POA membership card.

Also, you need the card to be able to vote in the POA's elections to be held this year at the general meeting on November 17, 2004.

So, please pick up your card at one of our monthly meetings, or send us a stamped self-addressed envelope for return by mail.

Then, enjoy the great deals offered by our Discount Partners, and vote in the POA elections.

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# The Florida Silver Haired Legislature

By: Tom Poss, FSHL Speaker of the House

**The 2004 Legislative Session resulted in the passage of House Bill: 1843.** This provides that the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) shall pay for nursing homes to hold Medicaid-funded beds only in facilities that have occupancy rates of 95 percent or higher. This bill also provides that beginning January 1, 2005, AHCA may make Medicaid payments for adult dentures and related procedures.

**Relating to Health Care Initiatives. Senate Bill 2002.** Beginning July 1, 2004, \$15 million will be annually distributed from the department of Elder Affairs' Grants and Donations Trust Fund to support a contract with the Alzheimer's Center and Research Institute for the purposes of conducting research, developing and operating integrated data projects, and providing assistance to Florida's memory disorder clinics.

**Relating to the Department of Elder Affairs: House Bill 1865.** This Bill provides for the future development of a fourteenth memory disorder clinic in Pinellas County. Florida's 13 other memory disorder clinics provide diagnostic and referral services for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, conduct service-related research and develop care-giver training.

**Relating to Guardianship: Senate Bill 1782.** This bill provides that guardians and guardian advocates may be exempted from filing annual accountings if the ward receives income only through Social Security benefits, and if the guardian is the ward's representative payee for such benefits. This bill also provides that, prior to registering a professional guardian, the Statewide Public Guardianship Office must receive and review copies of each guardian's credit and criminal.

**Summary.** The FSHL wants to keep you updated on bills that are passed that will have an effect on your lifestyle. This column will serve as your communication line on information that we feel would be of importance to you.

As of the First of July, the FSHL members throughout the State of Florida have submitted over forty bills that will be voted on in October in Tallahassee. These Bills will be submitted to our elected officials in hopes that they become law. The Bills range from adequate nursing home staffing, clean air for the Florida residents, to restoring teachers pension under chapter 238.

There is information available for you on The 2004 Disaster Preparedness Guide for Elders. This guide will help you be better prepared for any manmade or natural disaster. You can order this guide by calling the Elder Helpline at 1-800-963-5337.

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## Beware on Home Repairs

We have received reports of service company problems in the clean-up after Hurricane Frances. Some people and services charge higher rates for work than they reasonably should and perform shoddy or incomplete work.

In one situation, a resident paid \$900 for dangerous tree work, but discovered afterwards that the price did not include clean-up of the cut-down tree and all its branches.

For any home repair or service work like this, be sure to:

1. Get multiple quotes in writing that describe the details of the work to be done,
2. Give yourself a day or so to think about the written quote and have a trusted friend or family member help you review the written quote and work plan.
3. Don't pay any up-front money before the work is started,
4. If you have to pay any "retainer" or "deposit" money, pay no more than 10%-15%, and then only when the work is started,
5. Define the completion of the work as including full clean-up to your complete satisfaction,
6. Don't give the final payment before the work is completed to your satisfaction,

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## POA Discount Program

The POA has a Discount Program for its members. The Discount Partners are listed with program details at the POA web site: [www.poa4us.org](http://www.poa4us.org). Just identify yourself as a POA member and show your 2004 membership card when ordering a product or service.

Please also mention that you saw the Discount Partner listed in the POA Bulletin. Please thank the merchant for making these discounts available for the POA.

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# Your CDD Meetings

The various CDDs in The Villages meet once a month for meetings as follows:

Last Friday of the month at the Sumter Landing Offices, 1894 Laurel Manor Drive:

VCCDD at 9:00 a.m.  
CDD # 5 at 9:30 a.m.  
CDD # 6 at 10:15 a.m.

First Friday of the month at the VCCDD Offices, 3231 Wedgewood Lane:

Sumter Landing CDD at 9:00 a.m.  
CDD # 2 at 9:45 a.m.  
CDD # 3 at 10:30 a.m.  
CDD # 1 at 11:15 a.m.  
CDD # 4 at noon

These meetings are worthwhile and show our local governments in action. Residents wanting to know what's going on or to give input into any of the governments' decision making processes should attend.

Also, the District Administrator, Mr. Pete Wahl, conducts a weekly CDD school at the district offices on Wedgewood Lane. Each school lasts about two hours and is held twice a week, on Monday and Thursday, at 10:00 a.m. Contact Pete Wahl's office at 753-4508 for details.

CDD school is informative and provides a good overview of how CDDs work and are organized. The POA recommends the program. However, the POA also recommends that, after going to this, you come to a POA meeting for the rest of the story. You will not get the whole story at Pete's CDD school.

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## Limerick of the Month

I do not care about apathy - why should I?  
So what if the Amenity Fee goes sky-high!  
\$200 Amenities? - that's okay.  
\$500 Amenities? - I would say:  
Just pay the bill and don't ask why.

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