

The POA BULLETIN

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

Issue 33.11

Champion of Residents' Rights Since 1975

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2007

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Are Residents South of Hwy. 466 Considered Second Class Citizens?

Are Villagers living south of highway 466 second-class citizens?

Are Villagers living north of highway 466 first-class citizens?

Why? What's the difference?

Residents south of the highway cannot vote for their central district government officials who make all the big decisions in their community.

The residents north of the highway can at least vote for supervisors on a Resident Advisory Council (RAC) that has a direct input on an advisory basis into the decision-making process of the VCCDD supervisors on amenity and recreation issues. Some view this as a first step to having the residents directly control that decision-making process through a Resident Authority Board (RAB) which might be possible some time in the future.

The difference here is profound - the POA believes that residents should control their own elected government. Residents should control decision-making for issues in their own community.

Without this vital element of control, residents suffer "Taxation Without Representation." The monthly amenity fee is not exactly "Taxation," but the "Without Representation" part of the phrase is appropriate in The Villages.

The first test of this advisory input just occurred with the RAC voting unanimously to strengthen penalties for abuse of the golf tee-time system. The VCCDD will take this up for consideration at its November meeting. Most expect the proposal endorsed by the RAC to be passed by the VCCDD.

However, the VCCDD only speaks for the residents north of highway 466. Only residents north of the highway have official input into the deliberations and decisions of the RAC. The residents south of highway 466 have no representation on the RAC.

On this particular question regarding abuse of the tee-time system, the central district staff under Ms. Janet Tutt has said the proposal would also be taken to the SLCDD for consideration. The reasoning here is that any change in the tee-time system would have to be uniform in all of The Villages to be effective.

But, the SLCDD will see the proposal without any input from SLCDD residents south of highway 466. Without consideration and input from its residents, what should the SLCDD do?

This is the dilemma for the SLCDD and its residents.

And, this is also the crux of the second-class citizen problem for SLCDD residents.

Residents south of highway 466 need to have their own RAC.

However, there is a problem - a big problem.

The developer of The Villages started the discussion about the RAB, which evolved into the RAC, after completing the build-out of the properties north of highway 466 and the subsequent sale to the VCCDD, with the developer's own hand-appointed supervisors, at grossly inflated prices.

The developer hasn't completed the build-out of the properties south of highway 466 and doesn't want a resident board voting on, or perhaps vetoing, the sale of those properties to the SLCDD at inflated prices.

In the VCCDD area, we estimate the total value of the bond debt assumed by residents and the related interest at over \$500 million. The tab for south of highway 466 could easily top \$1 billion. Residents are required to pay off those bonds out of their monthly amenity fees. Residents cannot approve or reject this requirement.

The developer might eventually allow a RAC for the south side - but, not for another five or so years until the full build-out.

So, south side residents appear doomed to be second-class citizens until then with no effective voice in the big decisions made for them by the developer's hand-appointed supervisors on the SLCDD. This is their Taxation Without Representation.

However, it doesn't have to be that way.

South side residents might be able to get a RAC for themselves if they loudly demand to have this voice in their community now. An accommodation with the developer over common facilities might be possible to balance the interests of both parties.

But, residents have to speak up and let the SLCDD know that residents demand this role in decision-making now. If SLCDD residents want to vote on this, they can schedule it for November, 2008, when the county's election apparatus will be in place.

The place for residents to speak up is at the SLCDD meeting on the second Friday of the month at 8:00 a.m. in the district offices in Laurel Manor. Also, at your individual residential CDD meeting (see day and time schedule in this Bulletin).

The RAC meeting, open to all residents, both north and south of highway 466, meets on the Wednesday before the second Friday of the month in the district offices on Wedgewood Lane.

In summary, south side residents can have a voice in decision-making in their community. But, this won't be handed to them on a silver platter. Residents will have to

speaking up and fighting for their own RAC. Until then, they will continue to be second-class citizens. And, they will continue to suffer "Taxation Without Representation."

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Recycling Now ! Villages Green

Good news! The Village Greens organization recently had a conversation with Gary Moyer, VP of Development for the developer, about the recycling program that has been under consideration for us here in The Villages. Well, it looks like it is going to happen!

The latest news is that the Wildwood transfer station has been completed and they are just awaiting approval from the Department of Environmental Protection to start operating. If every thing moves along as planned, we could be recycling at curbside by Thanksgiving.

The method is called, "single stream recycling". What that means to you and me is that once a week we will fill a clear plastic bag with all of our recyclable items and place it at the end of our driveways. Glass, soda cans, cardboard, paper, newspaper, food cans, plastic containers; all in one bag.

The bags will be picked up, taken to Wildwood, placed in larger trucks and transferred to Orlando where the contents will be sorted in a state-of-the-arts "murfing" facility. The contents will be separated, baled and then sold to vendors whose business is marketing the material and/or recycling.

It has not been definitely decided as of this writing, but anticipate a small (less than \$2.00) monthly increase in your trash pickup bill. That sounds pretty reasonable to me. I have been lugging my recyclables to the Rolling Acres collection station every week. This service will be far easier and cost me less in gas running back and forth weekly.

We have fought long and hard for recycling to come to The Villages. Once it gets here let's all enthusiastically be part of it.

If all of us get behind this we can make an enormous difference in helping clean up our planet. We will be protecting our resources, our environment, and our quality of life.

The Environmental Expo put on by the Village Greens in October was a smashing success. There were over 1400 people that attended this first Expo, and the Village Greens signed up 52 new members bringing this young club's membership to close to three hundred in just seven months.

The next Village Greens meeting is November 28th at 6:30 p.m. at the Laurel Manor Recreation Center. We will be showing a film on Solar Power.

For more information, contact me, Sue Michalson, at 259-1426.

The November Meeting of the POA is at the Laurel Manor Rec Center

The next POA general membership meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 21, in the Laurel Manor Recreation Center at 7:00 p.m.

A spokesman from the Performing Arts Alliance will explain the plans for the proposed Performing Arts Center. Annual elections for POA officers and directors will be held. This will be the POA Annual Meeting.

We also plan to provide an update on the activities of the Vinyl Siding Committee.

If you haven't been to one of our meetings in the past, please join us on November 21, the evening before Thanksgiving. Coffee and donuts afterwards make for a nice social time. And, the discussions and opportunity to meet fellow Villagers add up to a thought-provoking and interesting evening.

POA Elections In November

Annual election for POA officers and directors will be held at the general membership meeting on November 21.

Announced candidates are:

President -- Joe Gorman
Vice President -- Open
Treasurer -- Frank Carr
Secretary -- Mary Paulsboe
Director -- Jack Ryan
Director -- Marty Rothbard
Director -- Lynton Goulder

There are several director slots open. Additional nominations can be made at the meeting or before. Anyone wishing to consider running for an officer or director slot should call Joe Gorman at 259-0999 before the meeting for more information.

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POA Hall of Fame Nominations Are Due

Just a short reminder about the nominations for the POA Hall of Fame. Nominations are due by the end of November. A final decision will be made by the POA Board of Directors in early December. The Hall of Fame honorees will be identified at the December 19 meeting when they will be formally inducted in the Hall of Fame.

So, if you have any person(s) you wish to nominate for this honor, ask Joe Gorman (259-0999) for the Nomination Form. Also, contact Frank Renner, chairman of the Hall of Fame Committee, at 750-0306. And, with time running out, please do it sooner rather than later.

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Cheers and Jeers

Cheers - To Mother Nature for the rain and cooler temperatures.

Jeers - To Governor Crist for lobbing the hurricane insurance time bomb into our laps.

Cheers - To Louis Bremer, recently resigned CEO of the Leesburg Regional Medical Center (LRMC), the owner of the Villages Hospital, for getting our Villages hospital expansion off the ground and making it a reality. LRMC was stalling on the expansion until Mr. Bremer cut through the baloney and got it done. He is the real hero here. Thanks, from all of us.

Cheers - To The Villages Regional Hospital for receiving the Premier/CareSciences Select Practice National Quality Award for being among the top 1% of U.S. hospitals in terms of quality and efficiency. Congratulations to Tim Menton, CEO of TVRH. Less than 50 of the 4,500 acute-care hospitals in the U.S. received the award.

Jeers - To the yard maintenance companies charging far in advance for their services and then failing to perform as required. Residents should be alert to these scams and never pay in advance for landscape services. Anything in advance is too much.

Sadness - Although we mourn the passing of Flower, we celebrate her life, courage, leadership, and family. She will be missed. Flower, please give our best to Shakespeare.

Cheers - To the newspaper delivery people who double-bag the newspapers on rainy days. Thanks.

Cheers - To Janet Tutt, Administrator of the Central Districts, for cutting through the doubletalk and making the Customer Service Center a reality.

Congratulations - To the Red Sox on winning the World Series. Cubs, you're next. Remember, Cubbies, 2008 will be the 100th season since the last Series win in 1908.

Jeers - To the Daily Sun for completely dropping the ball on reporting the details of the CSST problem in The Villages. You would think that on such an important safety issue, that the Daily Sun would have reported on this for the benefit of Villagers rather than blindly following what we think is its "don't report anything negative" policy that supports the developer's sales effort.

Cheers - For entertainment on the Squares. It's getting better and better.

Jeers - To the developer for not having the foresight to plan for more late night entertainment places in the Sumter Landing Square. We need something like Katie Belle's for dancing and we need places for a late (up to around midnight or so) nightcap. By the way, how about making it a priority to get a new business operator to re-open the Bistro on Main Street in Spanish Springs?

Jeers - To the central districts for not trimming the dead fronds from palms all over The Villages. Sure, you save money, but that is at the expense of having an unsightly mess and what is probably a real fire hazard.

Jeers - To Roger Kass, president of the VHA, for refusing to resign over his conflict of interests regarding the ongoing Vinyl Siding controversy.

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The POA Forum

The POA has a Forum on its website.

A Forum is a cyberspace meeting place where residents can leave comments on any topic they wish to comment on.

If you want to comment on the new Resident Advisory Council, you can do so on the POA Forum.

If you want to comment on the second-class status of residents on the south side, you can do so on the POA Forum.

If you want to start a new topic, you can do so on the POA Forum.

Just go to the POA website, click on the POA Forum, and follow the directions. Select

a topic, review the previous comments, and then, if you want to, leave your own comments. Start a new topic if you want to.

So, if you have something on your mind that you want to talk about, the POA Forum is the place for you. Or, if you just want to see what your neighbors are saying, the POA Forum is still the place for you.

Give it a try at www.poa4us.org .

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Vinyl Siding Truth

On Friday, October 12, a Vinyl Siding Committee member responded to a resident's inquiry and looked at the siding installation on a home in the Crestwood Villas.

The homeowner had recently purchased the villa and had already called Home Warranty to have the siding checked out.

The homeowner informed our Committee member that the contractor's representative had come by and, without spending any substantial time looking over the house, told her there was nothing wrong with her siding, that it was all fixed before her closing. She wanted a second opinion.

The Committee member's list of observations was quite lengthy, and included the following items:

Panels not lapped 1-1/4" (many lapped 3");
J-Channel resting on shingles, and very wavy J-Channel;
Short panels; Damaged panels;
Panels not in the lock on the front porch;
A very large belly on the rear of the home;
3 bellies on one long side of the home;
and more...

Why would a contractor's rep tell this homeowner that everything had been fixed, everything is OK, and yet these flaws are easily noted within a few minutes of looking at her home?

As we have suggested in previous issues of The Bulletin, every homeowner should look down the length of their home from the front corners and from the back corners. Look carefully. Many problems are easily spotted this way. Look for bulges (bellies) and panels that are wavy instead of straight.

We have noted these problems in many neighborhoods, lately in Crestwood and Holly Hills, where many new owners are questioning the quality of the workmanship.

From what we understand these Villas were built by Dodd McDowell.

Villages residents need to be able to trust their builders (contractors and subcontractors) to be honest about evaluating and repairing siding problems, not just minimize homeowners' concerns about these problems. Contractors need to realize that these issues are not resolved by denials or halfway fixes. Home buyers in The Villages want, and deserve to have, properly constructed homes.

We again suggest that any resident that has a concern about their siding installation request that a Committee member look at their home, or have an independent Home Inspector do a more thorough examination and document the problems found.

If you recall the lesson of the fox guarding the hen house, it may not be wise to rely solely on the builder's opinion as to whether any repairs or corrections are needed.

Conversely, our Committee members are retirees from the construction industry, who are your neighbors and have nothing to gain, and who have volunteered to share their knowledge and experience by showing other homeowners what they see.

The Vinyl Siding Committee

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Vinyl Siding Training

Finally the vinyl siding installers are going to class!

The Vinyl Siding Committee has heard that now all the siding installers are required to go to classes to learn about correct siding installation. Now for sure there should be no excuse for shoddy work or not going by the book. They will just have to apply what they learn, with an attention to quality, not just speed.

Maybe we are finally on our way to a resolution. More than thirteen months of perseverance is beginning to get results. And if this is true, we thank the contractors for taking this giant step forward.

However, we must all continue to be vigilant in watching the way the installations are being done to make sure they are indeed going by the book. We find some steps are being overlooked. For example, the Vinyl Siding Institute (V.S.I.) manual states on page 35, Step 5 (the italics have been added for emphasis):

"Install undersill trim under/over the window as a receiver for the cut siding. Undersill trim is used any time the top lock or bottom lock has been removed from the siding. Furring may be needed to maintain the face of the panel at the desired angle."

Page 35, Step 6:

"Use a snap lock punch to place lugs in the cut edge of the panel every 6 inches."

That's SIX inches, NOT 24 inches as we have been finding.

Page 33, Step 7:

"When panels overlap, make sure they overlap approximately 1-1/4 inches. Note: Overlap with factory cut ends whenever possible. If you must use cut ends, duplicate the factory notches before installing."

That's 1-1/4 inches, NOT the 2-1/2 or 3 inches as we often find.

These are just a few of the proper installation steps that have been consistently ignored in the past and that we now hope will be consistently applied on all new siding installations, as well as on repairs. For example, we will also expect to find finish trim where V.S.I. says it should be and to see staggered overlaps so that all seams are separated by at least 3 courses.

As for the "stepped" look, for best visual appearance it should be avoided. Why would we not want our homes to look their best? The contractors & subs did this shoddy work, let them fix it properly at their own cost, not ours. Let them FAIRLY present the alternatives so the homeowners have the choice to have their house look its best. We find that many owners are unaware that the siding did not have to be "stepped" in the first place.

Thank you again, Dean Carter and New Look Exteriors, for continuing to do the right thing. They are the best contractor and the best siding contractor, from our observations. If the contractors and subs would all do the same, there would be no need for a Vinyl Siding Committee at all!

We hope that the workers and the contractors will now be able to take some pride in knowing the right way to do an installation and following through each and every time. It would be great to just get this done right once and for all and not have to continue publishing all the inconsistencies. Let's make each step a step forward!

The Vinyl Siding Committee

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Letter to the Editor: McDowell - You Did Me Wrong !

I have a question for Villages contractor Dodd McDowell: How could you do this to a customer? A year ago I purchased a home built by Dodd McDowell. Most of you may have read his name before, most likely in connection with complaints about construction.

The problems with my home are what prompted me to become a Vinyl Siding Committee member. I want all of our homes to be well built. That's what we were supposed to get when we bought here. Our committee has received more complaints about construction problems on homes built by McDowell Construction than the other contractors.

McDowell's men re-sided my house TWICE, and even when they were finished for the second time there was a belly on the gable end that can be seen from the road. Why won't they fix it? I paid for a complete home, not one with bellies. I paid the price they asked. They cashed my check. My check was good. They took my money. But McDowell's work is flawed and should be corrected without excuses and evasion.

I was told by Dodd McDowell and Rick Murray, the head of the contractors, that the framing was done according to code. At another time I was told by Mr. McDowell and his framer that they would give me the lumber and I could fix it myself. Am I to understand that framing with bellies is according to code? Are home buyers expected to make framing repairs themselves on new homes? Not where I come from. I am pursuing that question through the building inspector.

More importantly, why should I even have to argue and fight about this to get it resolved. Why isn't the developer standing behind the product and requiring the builders to correct these defects? Many people have never been involved in construction and are not aware of many construction problems, but I do know the difference and I want my house done right!

I feel bad for anyone who purchased a Dodd McDowell house. If you have any problems with your home, you will probably have to do battle to get it taken care of, just like me. I feel let down by The Villages management who has allowed these siding and framing problems not only to occur, but to continue on and on, unresolved. I doubt Mr. Schwartz would ever have allowed this to happen. Now they are in such a hurry to make the sale and get the money, but don't have the integrity to fix the problems that are pointed out. What a disappointment!

Home Warranty asks in a survey at the end of the first year if I would recommend The Villages to friends and relatives. Of course, the lifestyle and amenities are commendable, but certainly NOT the quality of the construction, particularly the construction on my McDowell home, as well as other homes I have observed as a Vinyl Siding Committee member. Nor could I recommend based on their willingness or ability to correct problems. Homeowners have to struggle to get repairs done correctly, often involving multiple visits from workers who do an inadequate or incomplete job. Some issues still have not been resolved on my home or on others' homes. It should not be this way for new homeowners in The Villages.

I have heard that another contractor, Dean Carter, is much better at correcting the problems that are found. If he can do this, why won't McDowell? Had I known about this before, I would have bought a Carter home. Why is Dodd McDowell still allowed to build in The Villages? We deserve better.

Vince Mazone Villages resident and Vinyl Siding Committee member

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Performing Arts Alliance and Facility In the Villages

Independent volunteer efforts are underway to get a state-of-the-art, 1500-seat performing arts center built in our community. There are currently more than 100 active volunteers in the Villagers Performing Arts Alliance (VPAA) involved in these efforts.

Currently, an independent Feasibility Study paid for by donations to the VPAA is underway which involves intensive interviews of about fifty community leaders by an outside consulting firm. Also underway is an on-line opinion survey. Thousands of Villages respondents are expected to take part in this survey.

The question is, would you yourself please participate? It will only take you a few minutes, and would be most helpful in determining whether the capital campaign goes forward.

To participate, please go to: www.donovanmanagement.com/vpaa.htm.

Your answers to the questions will be confidential. At the conclusion of the survey, only overall results will be reported.

Also, if you're interested in learning more about the VPAA, please visit their website at www.villagerspaa.org. Or, send an email to Tom Bender (tombethbender@comcast.net) asking him to email you the monthly VPAA newsletter.

P.S. You are cordially invited to attend the next VPAA Volunteers Meeting: 7 p.m. Monday, November 5, at Laurel Manor Recreation Center. They are in a campaign right now to add new volunteers.

Also, a member of the VPAA will explain the effort to build a state-of-the-art Performing Arts Center in or close to The Villages at the monthly meeting of the POA on Wednesday, November 21, at the Laurel Manor Recreation Center at 7:00 p.m.

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Letter to the Editor: Light Bulbs

In the most recent issue of the POA Bulletin someone suggested the use of compact fluorescent bulbs in the exterior post lamps in the Villages. While these bulbs are a great way to go green the package states in the "Caution" box that these bulbs are

not to be used in lighting fixtures controlled by dimmers, electronic timers or photocells. Our exterior post lamps are controlled by photocells therefore, these bulbs are not a viable option.

Sheila Buerkle

Editor's Note: Some of the compact fluorescent bulbs cannot be used in conjunction with timers, photoelectric cells, or dimmers. Some of the newer ones can be used in these applications. Be sure to read the label and any cautions for directions on the specific use you are planning.

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Fourth Annual POA Resident Survey

Below is the Fourth POA Residents' Survey. All residents are asked to spend a few minutes filling out this form, but, please, just do it once.

Please rate each question with your opinion on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 would be your highest, best, or most satisfactory rating - all the way down to 1 which would be your lowest, worst, or least satisfying rating. A rating of 5 would be an average, or middle-of-the-road, answer. If you have no opinion or no information about a question, or it does not apply to you, please put in "NR" (No Rating) for that question.

Then, either bring this form to the next POA membership meeting or you can mail it to: The POA Survey, P.O.Box 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158.

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

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POA Survey Form

Click [here](#) for a printable version of this form.

Rating

1. _____ Entertainment Programs on the Town Squares
2. _____ Overall Safety and Security in The Villages
3. _____ Traffic in The Villages
4. _____ The Cleanliness of Villages Streets and Common Areas
5. _____ Landscaping in Common Areas throughout The Villages
6. _____ The Neighborhood/Villages Watch Services
7. _____ The Driving Situation on the Traffic Round-About Circles
8. _____ Emergency Fire Services
9. _____ Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
10. _____ The Monthly Amenity Fee
11. _____ The Villages Regional Hospital
12. _____ The Lifelong Learning Center
13. _____ Courtesy and Helpfulness of the Recreation Department Staff
14. _____ The Daily Sun Newspaper, in General
15. _____ The Daily Sun Newspaper, Objectivity of Reporting
16. _____ The Villages TV Station, in General
17. _____ The Villages Radio Station, in General
18. _____ The Reporter Newspaper
19. _____ The Property Owners' Association (POA), in General
20. _____ The POA Newsletter, The Bulletin
21. _____ The Villages Homeowners' Association (VHA), in General
22. _____ The VHA Newspaper, The Villages Voice
23. _____ The Developer of The Villages, Messrs. Gary or Mark Morse
24. _____ The SLCDD District Administrator, Mr. Pete Wahl
25. _____ The SLCDD Assistant District Administrator, Ms. Monica Andersen
26. _____ The VCCDD District Administrator, Ms. Janet Tutt
27. _____ The VCCDD Assistant District Administrator, Mr. John Rohan
28. _____ The Deed Compliance Director, Mr. Nick Xenos
29. _____ Suitability and Reasonableness of the Covenants and Restrictions
30. _____ If you live north of Highway 466, your VCCDD Government
31. _____ If you live south of Highway 466, your SLCDD Government
32. _____ The Local CDD or Government Unit in Which You Live
33. _____ If you live in Sumter County, Your Board of Commissioners
34. _____ If you live in Marion County, Your Board of Commissioners
35. _____ If you live in Lake County, Your Board of Commissioners
36. _____ If you live in the Town of Lady Lake, Your Board of Commrs.
37. _____ Condition and Administration of the Executive Golf Courses
38. _____ Condition and Administration of the Championship Golf Courses
39. _____ Greens Fees on the Championship Golf Courses
40. _____ The Priority Golf Program
41. _____ The Golf Tee Time System
42. _____ Ambassadors on the Executive Courses
43. _____ Ambassadors on the Championship Golf Courses
44. _____ Executive Golf Tee Times Reserved for the Sales Department
45. _____ Disclosure Information Given When You Bought Your House Here
46. _____ Performance and Service of the Home Warranty Department
47. _____ Use of Villages Facilities by the Charter Schools
48. _____ Resident Control of Decision-Making in your Central District
49. _____ Use of Radar to ticket Regular Golf Carts traveling over 20 mph
50. _____ Your Contributions for a state-of-the-art Performing Arts Center

General Comments: _____

Please Return this Completed Form to: The POA Survey
P.O. Box 1657
Lady Lake, FL 32158-1657

Thank You ! Please, vote just once.

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Why Do Another Survey of Residents?

Some residents have asked why the POA does its periodic POA Survey when The Villages already does an annual survey and publishes partial results in the Daily Sun.

A related question is why even do a survey when most residents are perfectly happy with The Villages and wouldn't have moved here unless they were happy with what they saw.

On the first question, the POA has been disappointed with the annual survey done by The Villages. It just seems like that survey misses the opportunity to address some of the hard issues of concern to residents. We have often said that the survey seems to sidestep the important issues and whitewash the results of what is surveyed.

The POA has come to view The Villages' survey as much too general, incomplete, and lacking in enough details that can be measured on a continuing annual basis.

Hopefully, this POA Survey addresses some of these concerns. Take a look at some of the questions listed on the right. Don't you think that we should be asking these questions, getting the answers, and doing something about any problems uncovered?

On the second question, we agree that most people are happy living here. But, that doesn't mean that no issues exist that could be addressed and, if solved, would make our community an even better place in which to live.

So, let's do this POA Survey and see what we find. Let's not whitewash issues. And, let's be honest about what is good and what is not-so-good about The Villages. Maybe we can make this place better for all of us.

There are 50 questions. To complete the entire questionnaire, on two sides, should not

take longer than a few minutes. Thanks in advance for helping on this survey.

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Past POA Surveys

The POA has conducted three previous Surveys. The first was conducted in late 2002 and reported on in the February, 2003, issue of the Bulletin. The second was conducted in April and May, 2004, and reported on in June, 2004. The third was conducted in October, November, and December, 2005, and reported on in January, 2006. All three of these are available for review on the POA website in the archived Bulletin section.

As we report on this 2007/2008 POA Survey in a few months, we will show comparison to the earlier Surveys where appropriate.

Rather than go into details right now on previous Surveys, and perhaps influence this year's results, let's just do these general comments listed below:

The earlier Surveys showed favorable opinions of The Villages on the general questions and various resident services.

The Villages Media Group generally showed good marks for the radio and TV station. The Daily Sun, however, didn't fare as well and was marked down for objectivity.

The golf program got so-so marks, but the executive golf program fared better.

The POA scored better than the VHA as an organization and for its newspaper.

The lowest scores in both surveys were recorded by various elements of our local governments.

Overall, the POA was pleased with the past results. But, we have been disappointed that the Central Districts didn't act on the several troubling scores or pick up the format for the annual survey done by The Villages. That is a shame because we feel The Villages' survey could benefit from the stronger format and more pointed questions used in the POA Survey.

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Only twelve more weeks till the end of the year... and our deadline looms.... Scary!

We have collected over 500,000 total petitions. To be on the safe side, we still need at least another 200,000 validated petitions.

Believe it or not, we are getting emails and phone calls from voters who fell for Thrasher's letter - the revocation ploy. Even though we're confident that we will prevail in our lawsuit against the nefarious revocation scheme, that it will be found to be unconstitutional and will get thrown out, we can't afford to be complacent or take any chances, and so we must collect extra petitions to compensate for any revoked petitions.

Please sponsor a quick petition drive to help us get where we need to be through your favorite group, neighborhood, friends, church--wherever and with whomever you hang out. Send 50, 100. or 500 petitions. These last 3 months can make or break this campaign.

Think about this¼..how bad will it be if for some awful reason we don't make it to the ballot and you didn't do your share?

Please help make this happen. Send petitions and donations--both together is best!

Lesley Blackner
Founder & President
FHD

Below is a reprint of a newspaper article explaining the tactics of the opposition to the Florida Hometown Democracy initiative.

**Hometown Democracy
Facing Slimy Scare Tactics
Posted on Sun, Sep. 30, 2007
BY CARL HIAASEN
The Miami Herald
Land-use initiative facing
sneaky tactics.**

You can be sure you're on the right side of an issue if John Thrasher is on the other.

The former Florida House speaker and big-shot lawyer-lobbyist has sent out a mass-mailing to scare voters into removing their signatures from a statewide petition in favor of the "Florida Hometown Democracy" amendment.

The Hometown Democracy initiative would let citizens vote to approve or reject major changes to the comprehensive land-use plans in their counties or cities. For the first time, Floridians would have some direct control over how their communities grow.

Thrasher's deceptive and slimy letter is proof of the panic that has set in among those who've made a fortune raping the state and are afraid of losing their sweet ride.

The lobbyist ominously warns that, if the Hometown Democracy amendment passes,

"special interests" will triumph and "Big Developers" will wreck Florida's "scenic beauty."

Like it's not happening now?

Special interests already manipulate many county and city commissions - not to mention the Legislature - while Florida's green space continues to disappear under bulldozers at the rate of hundreds of acres per day.

What Thrasher neglects to reveal in his fright mailing is that big developers and landholders are the ones most frantically opposed to the Hometown Democracy movement, and that he himself represents some of the biggest, including the St. Joe Co. that is selling off the Panhandle.

He says allowing the voters to decide whether they want a new megamall or condo tower down the street could stifle growth and cause taxes to go up - another cynical fiction designed to frighten middle-class workers and the elderly.

What really causes taxes to soar is the need for increased services due to over development and overcrowding. Bad planning means that the public ends up paying dearly and repeatedly for more roads, fire stations, police patrols, water-treatment plants and schools.

Lots of folks in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties will tell you that runaway growth has done nothing but push up their tax bills and diminish the quality of their family's lives.

All over the state, Floridians are disgusted by the failure of their elected officials to do restrained, responsible planning. That's why the Hometown Democracy petition has momentum.

While it might not be the perfect answer to derailing the engine of manic greed that's ruining so many lovely places, many residents are so heartsick and frustrated that they would welcome a dramatic change.

According to the internet Web site www.floridahometowndemocracy.com, petition supporters have collected about 331,000 verified signatures of the 611,009 needed to place the amendment on the November 2008 ballot.

Thousands more signatures are awaiting validation. The deadline for signing is Feb. 1, only four months away, which has lent urgency to the opposition's propaganda blitz.

Nothing is so horrifying to some developers and corporate interests as the prospect of having to deal directly with citizens when trying to get a building project passed. It's much easier to woo politicians, whose loyalties often can be purchased with a hefty campaign contribution or outright bribes.

That's the way things have always worked in Florida, which explains the plague of ugly sprawl.

Predictably, opponents grandiosely calling themselves Floridians for Smarter Growth have cooked up a rival constitutional amendment that would require 10 percent of voters in a city or county to sign a petition, before any land-use referendum takes place.

The petitions could be signed only at the office of a municipal clerk or elections supervisor, an inconvenience that virtually guarantees a fatally low turnout.

Obviously, the forces behind Floridians for Smarter Growth aren't interested in participatory democracy. They want the public to shut up and let the politicians do their thing.

According to the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, the group raised \$841,000 between April and August. Major donors included the National Association of Home Builders, the Florida Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Sugar.

It's a motley roster of special interests whose motives are anything but pure.

The Hometown Democracy movement undoubtedly was the prime target when pro-development legislators passed a law allowing voters to revoke their signatures from amendment petitions.

That opened the door for John Thrasher's specious letter pretending to denounce the very developers for whom he's shilling. In urging citizens to abandon the Hometown Democracy campaign, he blames "slick lawyers" for tricking them into putting their names on the petition.

Thrasher himself is one of the slickest lawyers in Tallahassee, and it is he who has stooped to shameless trickery.

His scare letter comes with a postage-paid envelope. Mail it back with the two-word reply of your choice.

*Carl Hiaasen writes for
The Miami Herald*

HELP SAVE WHAT'S LEFT OF FLORIDA...LET THE PEOPLE VOTE to control growth!

Help put HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY on the 2008 ballot

Please download and SIGN THE PETITION !

<http://www.floridahometowndemocracy.com/>

PO Box 636, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170-0636

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Florida Hometown The Opposition

The Florida Chamber of Commerce, which has long crusaded against the right of citizens to amend the Florida Constitution through petitioning, is now paying their professional collectors \$3 per signature for their "Smart Growth" petition! The Chamber, with a huge war chest funded by St. Joe Corp, Big Sugar, Miami Corp and other major land developers, is rapidly buying their way onto the ballot!

Florida Hometown Democracy is funded only by our grassroots supporters and a few groups like our good friends at Florida Chapter Sierra, and doesn't have the finances to do likewise.

If you want to save what's left of Florida and see Hometown Democracy on the ballot, we need you to go all out with us and start sending in lots of petitions now! ... for Florida's future!

Now that "fall" is here, there are many opportunities to collect petitions: before football games, art festivals, green markets, fairs, walk your neighborhood....next week at the polls all across Florida there will be gathering at polling places - this is THE PRIME SPOT for gathering petitions yet this year! PLEASE, PLEASE take a clipboard and spend a few hours at your polling place next Tuesday, and each week thereafter till the end of the year collecting petitions for our campaign. We have only these precious remaining weeks to get this reform on the ballot. It's up to you.

Start with your household and make sure everyone close to you who is a registered voter has signed. Please spend a couple of hours each week collecting petitions among your friends, at work, at your favorite gathering spots, church groups, county and city council meetings, send out in your homeowner's association newsletter, stand in front of your local library, driver's license office, grocery store, etc. We are very close, but we need each and every Floridian to commit to an individual effort to make this happen. Getting Florida Hometown Democracy on the ballot must be an effort that each of you takes personal ownership of. If we don't make it, you'll know why. It is our heritage and our responsibility to go out and exercise our constitutional right to petition for redress of grievances. In this case we have a big grievance: the ongoing destruction of Florida.

Many, many thanks, and Florida 's future thanks you!

Lesley Blackner

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POA Select Sponsors: Paretnership Reality and Cebert Wealth

The POA is working with two Select Sponsors as just announced: Partnership Realty and Cebert Wealth Management Group.

The role of these Select Sponsors within our organization is to come to each of our general membership meetings and take the podium for a brief explanation of a topic or issue in their area of business. The topic should be important to our membership, timely, informative in a general way, and with direct application to Villagers.

For example, Partnership will be talking about the real estate market in general, price

trends, creative financing, what to do now as a seller, or a buyer, etc.

Cebert will be talking about investment strategies, the role of mutual funds, annuities, stocks, foreign investments, real estate, etc., in a well-balanced portfolio.

Both Select Sponsors will have the podium for about five minutes with a brief Q&A session afterwards. Both will be at the meeting early and then afterwards for coffee and discussions, etc.

These are wonderful benefits for residents and the POA hopes all of us will take full advantage of these opportunities.

By the way, the POA congratulates Partnership Realty on achieving \$1 billion in sales of homes in The Villages. This is a significant achievement.

As a final note, remember that the POA does not endorse, recommend, or guarantee the services or products of the Select Sponsors. It is up to residents to assess what these companies say and their ultimate value.

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Seniors versus Crime

They're Back!

Yes, for year-around residents, that means the Snowbirds are coming and it won't be long before things get really crowded around The Villages.

The others who are coming back are the scam and fraud artists whose singular goal is to separate you from your money. In particular, you need to be very wary of offers from "visiting" travel agencies. You will know them by the way they operate - they advertise "free vacation packages" or "discount travel coupons" and in some cases, special code numbers that when used, will get you huge discounts on vacations and cruises. The other way you will know them is that they ask you to call a toll free number to register for the seminar which will be held at a local area hotel.

More often than not, these "travel agencies" are going to take your money (and usually lots of it) and you will get literally nothing in return. You will be asked to sign a contract, pay them several thousand dollars and wait for your promised documents and discounts which never come.

Don't get caught by this type of scam. Deal with reputable local travel agencies only and check with the Better Business Bureau before dealing with any business.

Until next time, remember the old sayings, "There is no such thing as a free lunch", and "If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is."

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Pete Wahl Retires as Administrator

As you probably already know, Mr. Pete Wahl has resigned as District Administrator for the SLCDD. Ms. Janet Tutt has assumed administrative responsibility for both central districts in The Villages.

We have had our differences with Mr. Wahl in the past. But, that is in the past and we wish Mr. Wahl all the best for success in his new endeavors. He will assist the developer on special projects.

We feel it is important to focus on the future and support Ms. Tutt in her new role. She is well-qualified to assume her new duties, and we also wish her all the best for continued success in the future.

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We Need Your Help Tabulating the POA Survey

We need your help.

You can see the form for the POA Survey of Residents on pages 7 - 8. We need help in tabulating the Survey.

The time required would be at least 1-2 hours, maybe more if you want. The tabulation has to be done with MicroSoft Excel and results must be then e-mailed to us. The work is very precise (as you might imagine with Excel) and can be tedious.

But, if you want a challenge - we can use your help.

Please call Joe Gorman at 259-0999 for more information.

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We Need Your Help Managing the POA Membership Database

We manage the POA Membership Database in the MicroSoft Access Database program. And, we need an individual to take over day-to-day management of the database.

The person selected should be quite familiar with the Access program or databases from previous experience. We can provide some direction, but the person taking over would have to be a self-starter.

The time required varies by the time of year. We are very busy when the bulk of renewals come in; now we are relatively quiet in terms of time demands.

Please call Joe Gorman at 259-0999 for more information.

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Michael Douglas, Actor

In the September 17, 2007, issue of Newsweek Magazine, the actor Michael Douglas talked about his wife Catherine Zeta-Jones and his 90 year-old father Kirk Douglas. Michael said:

"Not long ago, my father gave me some great advice. He loves giving advice now. He pointed toward Catherine and said, 'When it's all over, all you really have is your wife. You can dote on your kids all you want, but they're going to grow up and leave you someday. Then it will be just the two of you.'"

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Your CDD Meetings

The Villages CDDs meet at the Laurel Manor district offices:

Second Friday of the month:

SLCDD at 8:00 a.m.
CDD # 2 at 9:30 a.m.
CDD # 4 at 11:00 a.m.
CDD # 1 at 1:30 p.m.
CDD # 3 at 3:00 p.m.

Third Friday of the month:

VCCDD at 8:00 a.m.
CDD # 5 at 9:30 a.m.
CDD # 6 at 11:00 a.m.
CDD # 7 at 1:30 p.m.
CDD # 8 at 2:30 p.m.
CDD # 9 at 3:00 p.m.
CDD # 10 at 3:30 p.m.

The RAC meets on the Wednesday before the second Friday of the month in the conference room of the Customer Service Center at 3201 Wedgewood Lane. This is a 2:00 p.m. meeting.

Please watch the Daily Sun Announcements section, or the Our Place column on Thursdays, for notices of schedule changes. Holidays can alter the schedule, and special meetings may be held at other days and times.

All Villagers are welcome at any of these worthwhile meetings which show our local governments in action. Residents wanting to know what's going on should attend, watch the proceedings, listen, and ask questions.

Also, the District Administrator's office conducts a two-hour CDD Orientation twice a week at 10:00 a.m. on Monday and Thursday at either Laurel Manor or other recreation centers. Call 751-6700 for details.

CDD Orientation is informative and provides a good basic overview of how CDDs work and are organized. The POA recommends the program for all residents.

However, the POA also recommends that, after going to this, you come to a POA general membership meeting for the rest of the story. You will not get the whole story at CDD Orientation.

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**Letter to the Editor:
Will Puritt, Recent POA Speaker**

Dear Joe: I cannot thank you and your association members enough for allowing me to speak at your August meeting. You are a wonderful group and it is evident that the needs of our state and country are first and foremost in all of your hearts.

My last seven years in the Legislature have been a productive journey to say the least and it is important that we continue to speak the truth and "tell it like it is." It is apparent that all of you represent this same belief and I am honored to have spent time and gotten to know all of you.

Over the next year I will continue working to address the issues that affect us all here at home in Lake, Sumter, and Marion Counties as a citizen's advocate in the Florida Legislature. I will be working hard to address many of the property rights issues that affect those that live in gated communities.

There is much work to be done and I look forward to being your next State Representative and "telling it like it is." God bless all of you and your families and if I can ever be of assistance to your association please do not hesitate to call.

Warmest Regards,
Will Pruitt, President
Pruitt & Associates

Editor's Note: The POA expects to work closely with Mr. Pruitt in his role as a citizen advocate to advance the POA Disclosure Reform proposal in the Florida Legislature next session.

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Historic Side Beautification

At the recent POA meeting in the Paradise Center, a question came up about having a Historic Side Beautification Committee. If you are concerned about how things look on the east side of highway 441/27, and would like to serve on this committee, please call Joe Gorman at 259-0999 for details.

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The POA Discount Partner Program

The POA Discount Partner Program has been updated for 2007. Many new Partners are listed here. We will be adding more in coming months. Our website will carry this information also so check there often.

Just show your 2007 POA Membership card when ordering the product or service listed here. And, please say "thanks" to our Discount Partners for participating in this program.

All Things Fine - 1171 Main St. - Spanish Springs (352) 257-7384. 10% off all regularly priced merchandise. Excludes sale items. Not valid with any other offer.

Arden's Fine Jewelers - 1060 Canal St. - Lake Sumter Landing (352) 751-6613. 50% off Jewelry appraisals.

Bravo Pizza - 1080 Lake Sumter Landing (352) 430-2394. 10% off dine in & take out (whole meal). Not valid with any other discount offer.

Caribongo - 1041 Canal St. - Lake Sumter Landing (352) 750-6147. Free color changing Tote Bag (retail value \$9.99) with the purchase of \$25.00 or more at the time of purchase. Offer not valid with any other offer or promotion. Limit -- one Tote per family.

Carvel Ice Cream Store - 674 US Hwy. 441 - Rolling Acres Plaza (352) 430-2588. Buy one cone/cup - get one free. Also 30% off on all other items. One benefit offer per family membership.

Chick-Fil-A of The Villages - 7330 US Hwy. 441 - Rolling Acres Plaza (352) 430-0223. Buy a value size combo and get an original Chick-Fil-A sandwich free.

Cingular (Spectrum Global Network) - 972 Del Mar Drive - Spanish Springs (352) 205-7513. 10% off all phones with activation.

Cold Stone Creamery - 13769 US Hwy. 441 - Lady Lake - Close to the Lowe's and Beall's stores. (352) 430-2680. \$3.00 off any small or medium round ice cream cake.

Comfort Suites - 1202 Avenida Central (352) 259-6578. Special Rates: \$97.95, May 1, 2007 to Oct. 31, 2007. \$107.99, November 2, 2007 through April 30, 2008. Not valid Leesburg Race Weekend. All reservations are based on availability. Must call hotel directly in advance for individual reservations.

Cozco Handcrafts - 1121 Main St. - Spanish Springs (352) 430-0386. 10% off - excludes sale items.

Domino's Pizza - 1558 Bella Cruz Dr. - Spanish Plains Center (352) 430-0800. Buy one large pizza at menu price - get one medium one-topping pizza free.

Enterprise Rent-A-Car - Leesburg off Hwy. 441 on Mount Vernon Rd. Call (352) 787-1128. Special rates for POA members. A pick-up service is available.

Fort Knox Self Storage & Truck Rental - 13634 US Hwy. 441 - Lady Lake (352) 750-4647. Rent a 5x5x10 standard unit, get the second month for \$1.00. Valid on new contracts only.

Gourmet Go Go - A delivery service for dinner menus from local restaurants. POA members receive a \$1.00 discount off regular delivery fees. For details call (352) 205-0829.

Great Day on the Water Boat Tours - Discounts of \$5.00, \$7.00 or \$10.00 per person on various boat tours. Call toll free at (866) 269-6584 for details and reservations.

Hertz Local Edition - 900 Main Street, Spanish Springs (352) 430-1039. 20% Discount.

Island Images - 1112 Main Street - Spanish Springs (352) 259-7623. 10% Discount on Mondays. Excludes sales items.

Kilwin's Chocolate and Ice Cream - 1108 Main Street, Spanish Springs, 352-430-3600. Buy one, get 50% off on any ice cream menu item. One offer per family membership.

MOE'S Southwest Grill - US Hwy. 441 North - Rolling Acres Plaza (352) 430-3610 Buy 1 Get 1 Free Every Sunday! Not valid with any other offer. One benefit offer per family membership.

Ollie's Frozen Custard - Next to Blockbuster in the Spanish Plainses Shopping Center. Either use the Ollie's Coupon in the POA Bulletin, or get a 10% off discount by showing your 2007 current year POA membership card.

Panda Express - 869 North Hwy.27/441, Home Depot Plaza (352) 751-2507. 10% off, not valid with coupons or specials.

Plaza Jewelers - 16770 S. Hwy. 441, Baylee Plaza, Summerfield, (352) 307-3846. 20 to 40% saving off the already low retail price, & all watch batteries \$3.00.

Quality Hearing Center - 16850 S. Hwy. 441, Suite 306, Baylee Plaza, Summerfield. Call (352) 307-7377 for an appointment. 10% discount for any product or service.

Quiznos Sub - 3509 Wedgewood Lane- Southern Trace (352) 751-5698. \$2.00 off any toasty combo meal. Includes sub or entrée salad, side item, and a 20 oz. fountain drink.

ScentSational Candles and Gifts - 994 Alvarez Avenue - Spanish Springs (352) 753-1604. 20% off any one non-sale item.

Sonic Drive-In - 11211 SE 178 Pl. - Wal-Mart Shopping Center (352) 347-2860. Tuesday Nights: 5 single patty burgers for \$5 after 5 PM. Add-on at extra charge. Wednesday Nights: 1/2 price single patty burgers; 99¢ single topping sundaes. Valid at the Summerfield location only.

Southern Image Photography - 97 Del Mar Drive - Spanish Springs (352) 430-2056. 10% off the Special of the Month.

Sunshine Hair & Nail Spa - The Terrace Shoppes of Spruce Creek, Summerfield, across from Wal-Mart, 352-307-0099. 10% off on retail products or nail services.

Tropical Accents - The Terrace Shoppes of Spruce Creek, Summerfield, across from Wal-Mart, 352-307-2100. Free gift with \$30.00 purchase.

Vic's Embers - 7940 US Hwy. 441, Leesburg (352) 728-8989. Complimentary after-dinner cocktail or dessert for each person in the party.

Victoria's Estate Jewelers - 1106 Main Street, Spanish Springs, (352) 751-3386.
50% off Jewelry Appraisals.

Villages Car Wash and Lube - Bichara Blvd. - La Plaza Grande Center. Call (352) 753-1306. \$1.00 off the regular price of a silver or gold wash package.

Villages 24/7 Kart Aide - Triple A Rescue Service for golf carts. 10% discount on yearly membership. Call 352-409-5853 for details.

Villages Paw Spa - Villages Largest Premier Country Club for Pets. Call 352-751-5711. 10% discount on grooming or boarding.

Wholesale Computer Components - The Terrace Shoppes of Spruce Creek, Summerfield, across from Wal-Mart, 352-245-1500. \$15.00 off on any computer repair by showing your current year POA membership card.

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a check for \$12.00 for a one year subscription to:**

**The POA
PO BOX 1657
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