

# The POA BULLETIN

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

Issue 34.04

Champion of Residents' Rights Since 1975

April 2008

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## More Hospital Woes Seen In Letters to the POA

The POA announced in the previous issue that it would be looking into the problems with The Villages Regional Hospital (TVRH). We asked that anybody with any story about their experiences with TVRH either write or email to us with the details. To date we have received 42 communications with detailed stories about the hospital.

We urge any other residents who may have information about the operations of the hospital to also contact us. This information can be either good, bad or indifferent. You can either write or email to us at the addresses listed on page 15 of this issue of the Bulletin.

Of the 42 responses received thus far, 29 (69%) listed excessive wait times as the main complaint. Many of these wait times were in excess of 8 hours. Most of these expressed understanding that accident, heart attack, legitimate emergencies, etc., take precedence. But, under-staffing at critical times seems to be the rule rather than the exception at TVRH. And, many of these people who had to wait long hours had what would appear to be medical problems that demanded attention within a reasonable period of time.

We noted in the stories provided that some of the complaints came from people who became discouraged at the long wait and just left. One could question whether these people were legitimate emergencies in need of Emergency Room (ER) services. However, when it is Saturday night, or midnight during the week, and no urgent care centers are open, what are these people to do? As a hospital serving the community, TVRH should be properly staffed and ready and able to help these people in need. It is not helpful in the discussion to say that these people should have a regular doctor who can see them during normal office hours and then deny them emergency care or make them wait an excessive amount of time.

Another problem with the hospital is with rude and inattentive staff. Twenty of the letters we received (48%) mentioned rude or inattentive staff as a negative feature of their experience with the hospital.

Frankly, we were appalled at some of the stories we received. It is one thing to say that the hospital capacity in the wards or the ER is full and unable to accept more patients. It is a whole different story to identify rude or inattentive personnel dealing with patients in pain or in need of assistance. This is a management and training issue. And, on this point, we would recommend

disciplinary action for the offensive staff in question. There is no excuse for the actions and attitudes of some of the personnel described in the letters and emails we received.

Another point mentioned was exorbitant charges in 21% of the letters. We realize that good medical care is expensive. However, that statement should not be considered as a green light or justification for some of the outrageous charges documented in the letters and emails we received.

On the plus side, we received five letters (12%) from residents who had a positive or satisfactory experience with the hospital. But, 12% is abysmally low. TVRH needs to address this unacceptably low mark.

**We ask that residents with experiences with the hospital continue to send their stories to us at: [poa4us@gmail.com](mailto:poa4us@gmail.com) . Your inputs are needed in this effort. Your stories are important. If you don't write to us or email us, we may conclude that the problems seen thus far are not widespread or representative of the total picture.**

We will summarize and tabulate the results. We will discuss the results with hospital officials and see what can be done. The current situation is unacceptable - we must see positive steps taken to address these issues and solve the problems. We are working on concepts for a Hospital Patients' Bill of Rights. This is preliminary for now, but we also need your input and suggestions.

Perhaps we need to get TVRH's agreement on the idea that typical ER patients should be seen by the triage nurse within, say, thirty minutes of arrival and by a doctor within, say, one hour of arrival. Obviously, real emergencies in life threatening situations need to be seen immediately. Perhaps we need a functioning Ombudsman to represent the interests of both ER and in-patients. Perhaps hospital staff should go through sensitivity training. Perhaps foreign staff with limited English skills should attend on-site English language improvement classes.

Maybe TVRH needs to do a better job of coordinating its activities with those of surrounding urgent care centers. Why not have the triage nurse tell some patients with less than serious problems at 3 a.m. to go to an urgent care center that is open all night or go to their regular doctor the next morning?

Maybe it is time for the Leesburg Regional Medical Center to activate plans to outfit the top floor of TVRH and make it fully operational. The top floor was built, but not outfitted in the recent expansion, pending a future decision to make it fully operational. Now appears to be the time. Bottom lines on this article:

- TVRH is not functioning very well,
- It needs to improve,
- The POA needs to hear your stories,
- We need your help and support,
- We must insist on positive TVRH steps,
- The POA is working on this,
- We will actively pursue solutions.

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## Workmanship Problems in Largo

In the February, 2008, POA Bulletin, I wrote an article about the Inferior Workmanship that had taken place in the Village of Largo. Since then I have heard at meetings and other sources that these conditions are present in other communities in The Villages.

When we the residents of The Villages bought our homes in good faith, with the belief that our retirement years would be spent enjoying the wonderful amenities that The Village has to offer, we did not plan on spending our time dealing with the many problems that have occurred due to faulty construction of our homes.

Our homes here in The Villages may be the last home we will be investing in and eventually passing on to those that we love.

Let's not stand by and let certain contractors continue to offer us resistance in fixing the homes that we paid for and were promised to be standards of excellence.

Take time to review The Villages publications about all the high quality standards that the builders and inspectors promised us when we purchased our homes. Then make sure that they follow through with their stated promises.

I am asking that if any resident in The Villages has had problems with any type of construction in their homes, please contact me at the email address below, so that we can document these problems and perhaps eventually we can get a remedy: mcarole94@yahoo.com to me - or to the POA directly at [poa4us@gmail.com](mailto:poa4us@gmail.com) .

C.A. Martin

**Editor's Note:** Carol Martin recently joined the POA Board as a Director.

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## The Next POA Meeting Is On Tuesday, April 15

The next POA membership meeting will be on Tuesday, April 15, in the big room (Lincoln) at the Laurel Manor Recreation Center at 7:00 p.m.

We have changed meeting days (from the third Wednesday to the third Tuesday) in order to have our meetings in the bigger room. This should eliminate the "standing room only" situations we have had in the past.

**Janet Tutt, District Administrator for The Villages, will speak on New Services and Features of our District Governments and how these serve you best.**

Please join us for this important meeting. Coffee and donuts afterward make for a nice social time. And, the discussion and opportunity to meet fellow Villagers add up to a thought-provoking and interesting evening. Non-members of the POA are welcome.

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## Is the POA Too Negative?

The comment is often made that the POA is too negative and complains all the time. Do you really think this is true?

You, the reader, should study the recent Bulletin issues and articles. (You can see five years of the Bulletins by month in the Archives section of the POA website.)

Recent issues have focused on the vinyl siding problem, the shoddy workmanship problems, the problems with the hospital, and the lawsuit settlement with the developer. Earlier issues focused on the Nancy Lopez pond sinkhole repair cost, the Sumter County Hospital tax with the planned 20% give-away to the developer, and the renovation of the Paradise Center.

So, if the POA reports on these issues, is that complaining in a negative sense?

If you think it is, you have missed the point.

The point is that the POA is addressing serious and often under-reported problems in this community about which you need to be informed.

And, your displeasure, if any, should be directed at the Daily Sun for lack of comprehensive reporting or our government's central districts (VCCDD and SLCCDD) or the developer for not disclosing important facts that residents need to know.

You should not be displeased with the POA for its reporting. Please don't kill the messenger. If you review Bulletin stories over the years, you will see that the POA's motivation is to identify issues that, if resolved, will make The Villages an even better place in which to live.

Don't you think that residents in The Villages have a right to know the important

news in our community? The POA thinks so.

Don't you think that the Daily Sun has a responsibility as our community newspaper to report the important local news without bias or censorship? The POA thinks so.

Don't you think that our local central governments should publicize their major decisions for all to know? The POA thinks so.

If the traditional information sources in The Villages aren't doing their job to properly inform you, aren't you happy that at least the POA tries to do so?

Please answer "yes" to all of the above questions.

A "no" response suggests your preference for a totalitarian state where a dictator rules, where somebody else makes decisions for you, where the wool is pulled over your eyes by the existing powers, where your intelligence is insulted every day by officials that say you don't need to know ... or shouldn't know.

Pity us if The Villages ever comes to that!

The POA is often the one information source that stands between you and blissful ignorance.

So, the next time you hear someone saying that the POA is a bunch of negative crybabies, please think long and hard about what the alternatives are.

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## **The POA Board of Directors**

The POA Board of Directors is proud to announce two new directors.

Pete Frano comes to us after a career in the Marines and seven years experience as the president of a condo board. He also served on the Ross Perot political team and various political position in Suffolk County, Long Island, New York. He and his wife Sonja have lived in Mallory Square in The Villages for two years.

Carol Martin has a bachelors and masters degree in accounting and business and a doctorate in Pastoral Psychology. She has served as a consultant in financial matters for a drug abuse foundation and as the founder and financial officer in her own company which manufactured components for custom vehicles. Carol lives with her husband Eric in the Village of Largo and has been in The Villages for about a year.

Please join with your POA Board of Directors in congratulating and welcoming Pete and Carol to their new duties on our POA Board.

The POA has additional Director positions open and encourages anyone interested in serving on the POA Board to contact Joe Gorman at 259-0999 for more information.

Mary Paulsboe and Lynton Goulder have resigned from the Board. Mary served with dedication and enthusiasm for six years. The Board thanks her for her unselfish service over the years. Lynton served for only a short time, but we valued his thoughtful service. Thanks again to both Mary and Lynton and best wishes to them in their future endeavors. We will miss them on the Board.

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## **Snowplows??? You Aren't Really Serious? Are You??**

The Article "What Are Those Blue Reflectors?" contained some interesting information as I have seen them and had no idea of their purpose. However the writer of this article must really be upset with The Villages' powers that be to criticize The Villages free snow removal policy. Naming "snowplows" as one of the sources of blue reflector removal is just beyond the cup.

John Obrien

**Editor's Note:** What about the ducks?

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## **From the POA Website Forum: Do We Need A Tunnel?**

Mar 9: Will the new shopping center across from Home Depot be cart accessible? If a pedestrian can cross from Petco to Longhorn, why not a golf cart light for the same purpose? We don't think that it should be limited to street legal carts only. What can be done to promote this?

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## Letter to the Editor: What Happens to the Recycling Fees?

Just a comment about the recycling program: Eleven years ago Pete Wahl told me Sumter County recycled and used inmates to sort everything and Sumter County made money on the material that was sorted. Now, roll the clock ahead eleven years. We pay for bags and pickup, and I wonder who makes the money on the material picked up and recycled??? \$1.47 per month pays for a digester in no time. 25,000 homes at \$1.47 per month = \$36,750.00. Wow! Think about it.

Rita Harvey

**Editor's Note:** Comment for the developer: This is a good point. Where does all that money (\$1.47 per month per household) go? If there are now really 40,000 homes in The Villages, then \$1.47 per month per household equals apx. \$700,000 per year.

It would be helpful for the understanding of residents on this important issue if the developer would publish information on where this \$700,000 goes and what revenues or profit are being earned by whom for all the recyclable materials produced by residents.

Release of this information would satisfy many critics of the program and perhaps encourage greater participation. If this information is not released, we are left to assume an unacceptable application of the money, and the program may be irreparably damaged. If the program is fully legitimate, then why not release the information?

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## Letter to the Editor: The POA Bulletin: Complain, Complain

The POA Bulletin has become nothing more that a forum for people to b\_\_\_\_\_



and complain. The POA Bulletin should be renamed, The POA B\_\_\_h & Complain Bulletin.

I have lived in The Villages for four years and could not be happier over these four years. I have met 100's of people and, with the exception of three or four, I would say the people I talk to love The Villages and don't seem to have all the issues that your POA members do ... wonder why?

Anytime you have 30,000 homes in a small area you are going to have some issues. While the POA is a great idea, unfortunately it has become outlet for people who have far too much time on their hands to bitch and moan about things. I can guarantee you these same people were bitching and moaning just like they are today where they were living before relocating to The Villages.

If you follow the proper procedure for reporting a problem issue, whether it be your home or what ever and you do not get a reasonable response or a solution, sue the hell out of whomever has wronged you and stop moaning and groaning about the same issue week after week, month after month, i.e. the vinyl siding issue.

Question: How many more months do we have to listen to the vinyl siding rehash?

Those Villagers who hate everything need to sell and move back to the Northeast, Midwest, or wherever where they were enjoying a perfect life style before The Villages forced them to relocate, you know, back where the city council addressed all their complaints immediately, there were no traffic jams, streets and roads were perfect, golf rates were cheaper. It makes you wonder why these people still reside in The Villages?

Why not a POA Bulletin with positive comments about The Villages, for the 1000's of us who love The Villages, we are tired hearing all the negatives.

Garvin Bailey

**Editor's Note:** The POA believes that living in The Villages is 90% great - not good, great. However, we have roughly 10% of problems, issues, concerns, etc., that we are trying to address so as to make this community an even better place in which to live. We sometimes succeed, as we all did recently with the lawsuit settlement that will recover \$40 million for our amenity funds to maintain this community in the years ahead. Surely, Mr. Bailey, you have to acknowledge our efforts to achieve that.

If we see issues and concerns, we want to point those out and try to get a resolution favorable for residents. So, if we do point those out, and sometimes sound negative because of the nature of the problem, please do not kill the messenger.

The vinyl siding issue is still festering. Should we now shut-up? Or, should we continue our crusade on behalf of residents to try to get a favorable resolution? If you just spent \$200,000 on a vinyl sided house and had these problems, you just might want to support the POA in its efforts on your behalf.

And, Mr. Bailey, if you still think we are just negative moaners who crab, crab, crab all the time, please send us your address and we will stop delivering the Bulletin to you. This way we might be able to help you lower your blood

pressure and live a long and happy life in a community where other people put forth the effort to make this place better, even for a Pollyanna like you.

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## **April Fools: Oh, My Gosh: We're 60 years Old!**

It is the year 2033, just about 60 years or so since the mobile home park called Orange Blossom Gardens was started. Now it's The Villages, and how things have changed since then!

The population of The Villages now totals 187,000. The cities of Lady Lake and Wildwood are gone - these were annexed by The Villages in 2016, incorporated into our city limits, and all city personnel were fired.

The Villages now extends from just south of Belleview to the old city of Wildwood. Municipal status was voted in by Villages residents in 2023 after all the CDD entanglements were voted out.

Initially, the growth of the Villages was welcomed by many. But, traffic, taxes, and water problems have reared their ugly heads and soured many on what was supposed to be a bigger and better paradise.

Water is a good example of these woes. When the aquifer under Sumter County hit rock bottom and went dry in the year 2018, due to excessive Villages requirements, mandatory water rationing went into effect. Water bills were averaging \$250.00 per month for typical homes before putting into effect the mandatory changes.

All homes were forced to convert their lawns from grass to rock pebbles so as to save on outside watering expenses. Red and blue pebbles were designer colors; brown and yellow were premier colors. Priority members could use green pebbles. Villas had to use orange pebbles.

And, all private pools and hot tubs were banned and required to be removed or filled in with concrete.

The Villages' desalination facility close to Crystal River was built in 2023 at an assessment cost of \$22,800 for each Villages household. Although this promised good water for life, the construction cost assessment and the \$75.00 a month surcharge per household were considered by many to be exorbitant.

The Villages tired of polo in 2017 and there was a debate in the community about what to do with the polo facility and field. There was a brief consideration about buying and moving the Chicago Cubs to The Villages. After the Wrigley Field riots in 2008, however, it looked like everybody finally got fed-up with the Cubs and nobody wanted them here.

Since the Cubs didn't make the move, the VCCDD and the SLCCDD decided to turn the polo fields into The Villages Cemetery. This was an instant hit, with people dying to get in. Some people were upset with the requirement that bodies be buried standing up to conserve space. And, monthly amenity fees have to be paid in perpetuity.

The hospital expanded to 400 beds in 2014 and then to 737 beds in 2019. The 17-story hospital has emerged as a world-renowned teaching facility for the study of geriatrics and ranks as one of the top ten hospitals in the U.S.

In 2018 it discovered and then conducted successful clinical trials for the cure for Alzheimer's disease. Another discovery at the hospital was that Billy Bowlegs beer, brewed locally by The Villages, was a significantly better hair restorer than Rogaine. However, it only worked on half of the patients, and the other half ended up with permanent brown stains on their bald heads.

Unfortunately, the Hospital Emergency Room was closed in 2011 after three skeletons were discovered in the ER waiting room that had been there waiting for over six months. Hospital officials denied knowing that these patients were there. However, these patients were each billed a daily room charge for the entire time as well as \$7,357.95 for aspirin.

The Amenity Fee rose to \$318.00 per month in 2017 and now stands at \$615.00 in 2033. As a consequence, 27% of Villages residents now qualify for food stamps.

The building occupied by the VCCDD and the SLCCDD District governments was swallowed by a giant sinkhole in 2020. Some thought this was God's sense of humor.

The conversion of Katie Belle's to a McDonald's franchise has finally improved the quality of food and service.

The 23-story, high rise apartment building known as El Fleece Em Mucho, built on the site of the filled-in Paradise Lake, has fared poorly. The building was turned over to the Florida Department of Elder Affairs in 2019 to house low-income seniors. However, it was too expensive, never popular, and closed in 2025. The vacant building is an eyesore, and various resident groups, overcoming apathy (to the surprise of all), wanted the building torn down and the lake restored. The local governments said it wasn't their problem and residents were on their own.

The POA is the most popular homeowners' organization in The Villages. Its championing of Residents' Rights finally caught on with residents by 2010, and in 2011 the POA surpassed the declining membership total of the VHA. The POA Bulletin won the Pulitzer Prize for Community News Reporting in 2012 for its series on CDD abuses and solutions.

Everything considered, life is great in The Villages. Hopefully, the next 25 years will be as wonderful as the last 25. See you again in 2058.

April Fools

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## Vinyl Siding: Just Sweet Talk Us

We have recently heard from a number of Villagers who have told us that when contractors come to their homes in response to their calls for siding repairs, the contractors have been polite and accommodating. This is a good thing-but only if the contractor follows up with quality repairs, and is not just full of more talk, or just trying to persuade the homeowner that repairs are not needed.

Just a few months ago, the contractors were not so polite. In fact we heard of more than one episode in which the homeowners felt intimidated. We have already published some of these instances in past issues of The Bulletin.

What happened? Why the turnabout? We have a good idea, but the reason really isn't important. We would like to believe that these contractors who have suddenly become our long lost brothers and who are oh-so-helpful now actually have our best interests, rather than their own pocketbooks, at heart. We would like to believe it, but it just doesn't ring true. If shoddy workmanship is packaged in "niceness," does that make it a better job? Or is it just easier to swallow?

Does the apparent change in attitude mean a change in the quality and extent of repairs? Not if they can persuade trusting homeowners to accept less, or convince residents that their makeshift ways are just as good as the manufacturer's instructions. Villages residents are caught up in this-they want to believe. But niceness does not mean your siding is installed correctly. And excuses, no matter how politely phrased, are still excuses.

Last week, a walk around seven brand new homes in Mariel Villas revealed about 20 types of siding flaws. While this is certainly an improvement over the usual average of 20 per home, it is still far from the quality one would expect on new homes in a development whose PR boasts of its quality. We still wonder who is inspecting these homes because we just can't understand why these problems have not already been discovered and corrected on these brand new homes. It would be such a pleasure to walk around some new homes and find that they have been sided by the book, but it still hasn't happened. And it seems we will still have more and more residents who have to struggle to get repairs after they discover that they did not get what they paid for.

Why is it that a developer capable of envisioning and producing a development this extensive cannot seem to get a handle on something as simple as vinyl siding installations? They have engineers and architects, designers, superintendents and inspectors, who have been educated, certified and licensed. Why is this so baffling for them? Why can't they seem to build straight walls and sheath, wrap and side properly for a correct, functional and attractive result? Why should people who cannot perform work according to instruction manuals, especially those referenced by state codes, be allowed to retain their licenses and certification?

We have had feedback from residents telling us one contractor remarked that

Siding Committee members are too particular. Is it "too particular" to want something done correctly, following manufacturer's instructions, and in this case, state code?

We are presently investigating the procedure to have certification withdrawn from those who are unwilling or unable to install vinyl siding according to the manufacturers' instructions or those who are unwilling or unable to fix their mistakes without the need for multiple recalls.

The Vinyl Siding Committee

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## Vinyl Siding: Don't Lie to Us

One of our Siding Committee members visited a home in Winifred on March 18th. The homeowner told us that when he called Home Warranty to report the problems that had been found, they told him not to believe the POA because, they say, we exaggerate the problems.

It looks as if we are going backwards again. Remember last year when Home Warranty personnel and various contractors were telling homeowners that there was nothing wrong with their homes? Remember the spin about the problems being overstated and blaming everything on a "troublemaker?" And then there was the effort to make everyone think the problems were found in only one neighborhood.

That was before hundreds and hundreds of homes had repairs done including moderate to extensive work that sometimes required complete removal of the siding, and corrections on framing and/or sheathing as well. If the POA had not pressed on in its effort to make homeowners aware, would anyone's home have been fixed? Consider how many thousands of dollars in repairs these homeowners have saved by holding The Villages and their contractors accountable for the shoddy work that was done.

Could this latest remark possibly have been made because Home Warranty doesn't want to fix the problems and would rather have you think there are no problems?

Recently, in Liberty Park, we found another home with nails six feet apart. Is this an exaggeration? No. It is a measurement. The fact that manufacturer's instructions require fasteners every 16 inches may seem incidental to Home Warranty, but it's not their home. And in making the "exaggeration" remark, Home Warranty personnel are simply continuing in an effort to mislead homeowners.

If we are exaggerating the problems, as they said to that homeowner in

Winifred, why have so many homes been re-sided and repaired throughout The Villages? Why have our Siding Committee members found so many flaws on siding installations-to date almost 1000 homes throughout all the neighborhoods that we, or independent inspectors, have visited? If one compares the documentation of actual flaws that have been found to the manufacturer's installation manual, we think the answer is obvious. We are not exaggerating. We are just showing you what's really there.

The Vinyl Siding Committee

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## Vinyl Siding: VHS and Kass Denial

Open Letter to Mr. Kass, President of the Villages Homeowners Association:

What do you think of the Vinyl Siding situation in The Villages now? Do you still think it is being blown out of proportion or overstated as you said months ago in The Voice, or have you changed your position? If you don't want to reply to us, perhaps a member of the VHA will ask you this during an upcoming meeting.

Close to 1000 homes have been observed by our committee members or inspected by independent inspectors and we still haven't found even one home - in any neighborhood - that was fully sided in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

POA Vinyl Siding Committee members have volunteered for 19 months now in support of the Residents' Right to have some professional quality in the construction of our homes, specifically in vinyl siding installations. Our Committee members have responded to residents' requests for help with this issue regardless of whether they belong to the VHA or the POA-or neither. We have gotten a lot accomplished, and we can get a lot more done with the support of the VHA on this serious matter. Here is an opportunity for you to prove to Villages residents that you do care about their homes and the quality of construction in The Villages.

We have heard that the VHA told some homeowners who inquired about the siding situation to contact the POA about it. Why don't you, as a larger and more influential organization, act to help the residents?

We have also heard that F&R, who you previously referred to as the largest siding contractor in Central Florida, has been "let go." Is this possibly because they were unable or unwilling to perform correct vinyl siding installations? Or maybe it was the numerous complaints from homeowners regarding their conduct as the residents sought to have siding installations corrected.

Mr. Kass, we noted your comment in the March 18th Daily Sun: "When we work together in a cooperative approach, we can get more accomplished than with confrontation." While your remark was in regard to the hoped-for postal facility, which the POA also supports, we think the same should hold true for the widespread vinyl siding problems, or any other problems faced by Villages residents. Your remarks urge the community to "get involved" regarding the postal facility. Shouldn't the VHA also get involved to resolve the siding problems?

Now is time for the VHA to climb aboard and support the residents regarding the siding issue.

Wasn't there something in your oath of office about helping, representing or supporting residents of The Villages? After all, your organization is called Homeowners Association, not Developers Association.

If you want to talk, please call Joe Gorman, president of the POA, and get together for a cup of coffee to talk about how your two organizations can work together to get this problem solved.

We are looking forward to your response in the next issue of The VHA Voice.

The Vinyl Siding Committee

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## Villages Greens Meeting

Villages Greens Meeting The Village Greens is very pleased to see that many Villagers have jumped on the bandwagon and are participating in the Recycling Program. Over 70% of Villagers have participated in the first few weeks and we anticipate that this number will increase. There have been a few expected glitches. I spoke with the trash pick up company and they are more than willing to do all they can to correct any problems.

I suggest that if you put your recyclables on one side of the driveway and the regular trash on the other side that it might prevent confusion.

The Village Greens will be devoting the month of April to a special awareness of Florida Friendly Yards. We will stress the importance of proper irrigation, water conservation, and the planting of drought resistant lawns, shrubs, and trees. Our guest speaker for the April 23rd meeting will be Jim Davis head of The University of Florida's Extension Department. On April 5th at 10 AM, at the Oxford Community Center we will be holding a Build Your Own Rain Barrel Workshop. Let me hear from you if you are interested in joining us. Total cost, \$25.00.

The Village Greens will also be on the Square at Sumter Landing selling plants and giving away saplings on the evening of April 25th.

Please contact me if you are interested in having us address Village clubs on topics relating to the environment.

Sue Michalson  
Chairwoman,  
Village Greens  
259-1426

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## Village Greens Environmental Ideas

The recycling program is off to a successful start. But, let's not stop there. Here are some ideas for environmentally-related additional issues, concerns, or goals for all Villagers and the developer to capitalize on the success of the recycling program:

- Place Recycling Bins at all the recreation facilities.
- Place Recycling Bins at all pools, ball fields and other appropriate places.
- Place Recycling Bins at Town Squares.
- Request La Hacienda not to use Styrofoam products for cups, plates, clam shells, etc.
- Build new homes with instant or tankless hot water heaters.
- Build new homes with more efficient windows and walls to keep out heat and cold.
- Build new homes with safe rooms as protection from hurricanes and tornadoes.
- Build new recreation facilities to qualify as tornado and/or hurricane shelters.
- Build new public buildings with a gray water recycling system.
- Place rain barrels attached to drain to catch rain water.
- Build new homes with water conserving sprinkler systems.
- Landscape all new homes with Florida Friendly Plants.
- Eliminate the 50% requirement of grass in front of homes and adjacent to roads and golf courses.
- Build solar powered homes.
- Furnish homes with Energy Star appliances only.
- Replace existing light bulbs with CFL light bulbs in all existing facilities.
- Install CFL light bulbs in all new homes.
- Use Recycled Materials for flooring and countertops.
- Require pools to be solar heated.
- Discourage the use of plastic bags in favor of paper.
- Recycle plastic bags.



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## Letter to the Editor: Stolen Golf Carts

Our golf cart was stolen from a lot in Spanish Springs behind the Rialto Theater sometime between 5:30 and 7:00 in broad daylight. The keys to the cart were in (our) pocket. According to the officer who took our statement, there has been a rash of thefts (apx. 55) over the past couple of months. He said there is a "ring" operating out of Marion County. While our cart is fairly distinctive, they offered little hope that it will be found.

The Daily Sun seems to be remiss in reporting this type of theft or information about this "ring." Unless you plan on sitting in your cart at the Town Square, or parking it where you can keep an eye on it, it may not be there when you get back.

Gini Harris

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## From the POA Website Forum: Golf Cart Accidents

**Mar 20:** It would be helpful to residents if details were given in the cart accident reports. 99% of ours, in our paper, are too brief, abruptly cut off with, "...still investigating," or "...is under investigation."

**Mar 20:** At least the accident was reported. Until the cause and those responsible are determined they are not going to speculate in today's (litigious) sue-happy society.

**Mar 20:** The Sun should report every golf cart and/or auto accident. Residents are not aware of the seriousness of the traffic situation here. A golf cart is

neither a toy nor an automobile and should be not driven like either. The Developer and the Counties have done a commendable job designing trails, lanes, and signage to minimize accidents. The Sun, while not reporting all accidents, has done a good job publicizing golf cart safety. Law enforcement is trying to catch offenders. Like the weather, we can complain about it but can do nothing to change it (except as to our own behavior).

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## **Letter to the Editor: The LifeLong Learning College**

Just finished reading the current issue of the POA Bulletin and page 13 with the Survey Comments as published. At the risk of being redundant, I am repeating the notes and would like to offer "rebuttal comments" concerning The LifeLong Learning College. I have been both a student and instructor for the College which allows me to know their offerings.

**"There is not much learning going on in the LifeLong Learning College, the curriculum is pretty boring."**

This is totally contrary to what most of us know. There are 50 pages of course descriptions involving everything from Art, Computers, Philosophy, History and a host of special classes. They also have special speakers, trips and events. The College is always looking for new courses and does surveys to determine interest. If the curriculum were so boring, they would not have students to participate.

**"The College classes costs are too high."**

What is not "higher" today? The College expense has risen along with everything else. The course cost is determined by the payment for course instructors and the cost of room rental and general expenses charged by the school system. I did a rough survey of costs at other extended colleges, and the LifeLong Learning College is not higher and as a matter of fact is much lower. To take a 4 or 6 week (2 hour) class for \$40 to \$60 is approximately \$5 to \$8 per credit hour.

**The developer seems to continually find ways of squeezing money out of the residents. The latest is the Village Art League was charged \$900.00 per day for a room to hold an Art class in, and the students were charged \$250.00 each for the 5 day classes.**

The developer has nothing to do with the LifeLong Learning College operations. This is a complete distortion of the facts. This was a special 8½ hour 5 day class with an out-of-state instructor who charged \$6,500. If you divide that fee by the 26 attendees, it is \$250 leaving absolutely \$0 for rent. If the college were to charge at \$35 per hour for the room, plus setup each day, the attendee charge would be \$1,680 for the week or \$336 per day vs. the

actual charge of \$250.00 per attendee.

It is unfortunate that people tend to get their information and not check it out but jump to conclusions and because it sounds to them like what they heard but it is not what was meant.

I hope this clarifies just a couple of issues that seem to stick out about the Lifelong Learning College. I would hope that you would meet with the College Administrator to discuss these or any other issues. I am sure you will find that they will be very accommodating to listening.

Pete Rosendahl

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## **Letter to the Editor: Parr Drive Speed Trap**

I have read a few of your editorials concerning what people call "speed traps." The complaint seems to be that they feel it is unfair for them to get ticketed for crossing the double line, while attempting to pass a golf cart. It is an unfortunate problem.

However the distance traveled on Parr Drive, from one end to the other, is not all that great, and so the agony of being slowed down by a golf cart cannot last all that long.

The problem, as I see it, is not that there is a speed trap. The problem is that these people in The Villages do not know how to drive, and they do not understand the laws.

Numerous times I see people passing a golf cart by crossing the double line. They seem to get a lot of practice crossing the double line when it is totally unnecessary.

To the best of my knowledge there is only one valid reason for crossing a double yellow (or white) line and that is to enter or exit a driveway. The laws are that way for a reason and people do not understand the law. I do not feel the slightest sympathy for them if and when they are ticketed. (If someone crossed the double line and hit them head-on, I am certain they would feel differently about those that haphazardly cross a double line.)

The other issue that I recently read about is at the corner of Morse and Rio Grande.

There is a very small percentage of the southbound traffic on Morse that turns left onto Rio Grande. Northbound traffic is held up needlessly until the light turns

green for them. There should be a left turn lane, with an accompanying left turn signal to allow the left turners to turn left, after which the northbound traffic could then begin moving.

I recently talked to one of the commissioners concerning this problem. When I mentioned my idea to him, he indicated that they are looking into exactly that sort of change.

I feel that the signal at that location will be a real asset, and it will allow much more traffic to move thru the area than would be possible with the previous stop sign arrangement.

Keith Henry

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## **Letter to the Editor: House Inspection**

I want to thank you for your sound advice in recommending that I have a home inspection done prior to purchase. I was very pleased with their service and it gave me peace of mind in the purchase of my new home. The inspector found some roofing and siding problems and some other minor things - and everything was promptly and courteously repaired. Without the inspection (which I learned from my real estate agent was novel for a new home here in the Villages), I would not have known about these problems until damage was done, especially with the roof and siding. I used AmeriPro and would recommend them. Thanks for your good work in "keeping them honest." It is good to have a watchdog for government.

Sharon Calliari

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## **From the POA Website Forum: Round-Abouts**

**Mar 20:** Round-Abouts were designed to facilitate the flow of traffic at intersections. They rely on the use of common sense and good manners. Ask ten people the proper way to enter, maneuver in, and exit a roundabout and you will get ten different answers. I know of one situation where a driver in the right lane was hit by a driver attempting to turn right from the left lane. The driver in the right lane was ticketed by the police. However, the insurance companies blamed the driver exiting from the left lane.

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## From the POA Website Forum: Phone Books At The Postal Stations

**Mar 6:** Why do people put their telephone books at the postal stations? Why can't they put a telephone book in their trash? What is it with them? This week someone put about 30 old telephone books, tied up with rope, by the waste can at Paradise postal station. No one is going to pick them up, so there they are, an awful eyesore and mess. I would rather see telephone books at curb side, at least the garbage man will pick them up. This person even had bags of garbage along side the telephone books. What nerve! Shame on you, whoever you are. Put your telephone books in front of your house.

**Mar 6:** Where did somebody get 30 phone books?

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## From the POA Survey of Residents: Comments from The POA Survey

In the recently completed POA Survey of Residents, reported on in last month's issue, we asked for open-ended comments on whatever residents wanted to mention. We were almost inundated with the response. And, we found most of these to be worthwhile for reporting to our readership. So, here is the first batch. We will continue with a selection of comments in future issues as space in the Bulletin permits.

\*\*\*\*\*

Don't like amenity fee being raised every year. I pay more than neighbor and he has a corner lot and a bigger home. Not fair.

Use of Village facilities by the Charter school is outrageous.

Concerns are: reducing trash pick-up; not having a dog park, not enforcing dog size; parking throughout; not requiring residents to accompany visitors and kids; selective enforcement of C & R; increasing water rates based on type of home; shafting of residents, and turning place into kids domain.

I am very happy here. I do wish we could have groups come in that would play more up-to-date music.

Need golf cart accessible craft store, Villages Post Office, and enclosed dog park.

Need no-cost recycling.

I feel we live in a 'Stepford' Community where we are told by a few what we can do or not. - TV, newspaper and radio do not tell all the news - only what the owners want us to see or hear and not all the news of the Villages we need.

When it comes to the recycling this is my concern: We were in the refuse business for 20 years. We also did recycling. When it came to pickup of the recycle materials it did generate some reduction in the refuse that was picked up but we did not increase the price or change the amount of times customers were picked up during a week's time. There is definitely a profit in selling recycled material which will cover the extra cost. Since garbage cans cannot be used and there is limited room in our garages to store garbage (and who wants to) pick ups should remain at twice a week with no extra charge.

We are against recycling if it means losing a day of trash pick-up or if it costs additional money.

Thank you for your help in keeping Villagers informed on what is really happening here, especially about the developer.

Ticketing golf cart drivers for speeding is stupid.

Ambassadors on the championship courses always pushing you for time even when your group is right on time or even ahead of time. What is needed is better marks from the 100 yard and 200 yard positions so they don't have to spend time looking for them. - Small red and blue stakes on one side in the rough.

Use of Villages facilities by Charter schools sucks.

The Villages is 'heaven on earth' for most of us and we're grateful for the visionary Schwartz/Morse families. The developer is 80% great but needs to be more responsive to legitimate resident problems.

Spray love bugs when people are inside.

Keep tent up in summer/fall etc. at Lake Sumter due to extreme sun.

Palm trees - common areas - please trim - does not present attractive or neat

appearance.

Compared to anywhere else I lived the Villages almost gets a 10 on everything. Costs are going up. Great life. Why complain. Be happy.

Too many 19th hole drivers in the Villages.

Been here 10 years and its become an old farts' slum area. Maintain the older parts as well as the new. Once it was nice now it's hell.

Ticketing golf carts needs to be done to keep some under control but adding points to your drivers license is not legal. You do not need a drivers license to drive a golf cart.

Sorry The Villages has grown so large. Liked it when Harold was around. The choice of stores and eating places is nice. In general, I like living here.

Patrol contractor vehicles parking in neighborhoods on wrong side of street, not near curbs. What does Neighborhood Watch do?

Why have gate attendants when anyone can come in? Lower amenity fees instead.

Ladies and men's day have been changed to no cash and certificates are too narrow in scope.

We find living here very nice. Yes, there are issues such as siding, but most controversies that we read or hear about have not affected our way of life.

People have to use their signal light in the round about circles - then you know.

Keep up the good work.

We are fairly new (4 months). We are pleasantly pleased with the Villages overall.

This is to be a retirement community - students should not use our facilities. I am not a supporter of the charter schools.

Pursuit of happiness is everyone's right until it infringes on other peoples rights. Even wind chimes should be used indoors (with a fan) for owner to more fully enjoy. Owner's doors are usually closed, so only the neighbors are forced to hear them. Also, dogs should not be left in screen rooms while owners go out.

Entertainment programs on squares are too loud for people to socialize.

Villages high school has no place in amenities paid pools.

Abolish neighborhood watch - it's worthless.

Neighborhood watch is rarely seen in the Marion County portion of the Villages.

We need another bowling alley.

Radar for golf carts over 20 mph - get a life and work on catching real criminals - waste of our money.

The Daily Sun is so biased it is ridiculous.

I like what the Morse family has done with one exception - I do not like having the Republican mind set jammed down my throat constantly. I have a mind of my own.

I agree that VHA may have too close ties to the developer, but I think POA is just too strident all around. I think you'd have more impact if you were more willing to reason and be polite.

Every community has its pluses and minuses - the Villages sells its 'life style' but doesn't always explain the real cost of this life style.

Thank you for your time and efforts.

I had a full house inspection - there's a lot more wrong than siding. My A/C ducts are leaking and condensation is forming. No vents to the outside. Roof shingles not installed correctly.

If you don't like it here - move to Water Oak.

The developer is in a 'take away mode' and is only interested in his personal profit. The mentality of 'paradise' is insulting and I think the developer's plan is to create a community of Stepford wives - We're here for 8 years and we're leaving.

Thanks for keeping the developer in somewhat of a check. Love the POA Newsletter.

The evening music in the Villages squares need to be improved. Does anyone explain to these bands that this is a retirement community? If they would only look out at the dance area they could determine if the music is danceable. If no one is dancing surely they could figure out that their choice of music is not working. Perhaps a DJ would solve the problem and perhaps be cheaper too.

TV channel 2 is absolutely useless. They repeat the same material every few minutes and for days. With all the activities, there certainly is more to show.

Head light adjustment and some form of ID should be on each golf cart. They are going faster and faster speedwise. This needs to be controlled.

Surveys are good, but does anyone ever do anything with them?

Village facilities should not be used by the Charter school.

Not targeting the REAL OFFENDERS - Big carts on golf cart paths going at high speeds and driving very aggressively are a menace and danger to us all.

Something needs to be done on the ever rising golf prices and priority prices. Need to kick out Ken Creely!

Great - great place to live - the best.

The developer - Gary and Mark Morse are too greedy. Do not trust them. They should be ashamed of some of the things they have done or are doing. They have no shame.

The Daily Sun should print all of the Villages news - good or bad.



Our participation in the performing arts center is dependent on the developer taking a leading role.

We never want citizens groups to be responsible for landscaping and/or maintenance of same.

Traffic circles should be eliminated or reduced to one lane - they are dangerous - the sheriff's department has stopped monitoring same. The Commissioners plan to educate the public through a video is ludicrous. No one knows how to drive them correctly on any given day.

Should use native plants for landscaping.

My main concern with buying in the Villages was the lack of recycling. I am thrilled this has been taken care of. Can't wait to move to the Villages now.

Daily Sun does not report bad news about The Villages.

The VHA newspaper leaves a lot to be desired.

The Developer - money loves money!

State of the art Performing Art Center will compete with Leesburg's and art center traffic is better left in Leesburg rather than cluttering up Villages roads.

Pete Wahl - a puppet for Developer.

Nice to know POA is watching out for us.

In a few years when our roads (private ones) need repairs, will our amenity fees go up?

Unfortunately, until you're able to get some legal representation, change will be very slow. Slowing these 'Morse Brats' down can only be done, effectively, by legal means.

The survey was well done and thought out.

We need a stop light at San Marino and Morse before someone gets killed. I have seen them take surveys but it takes only five minutes to see the situation is horrible.

Best decision we ever made - move to The Villages.

The POA Newsletter creates problems, but does not solve problems.

We will miss Pete Wahl.

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