# Property Owners'

**CHAMPIONS OF RESIDENTS' RIGHTS SINCE 1975** 

# BUILDININ

# **Association of The Villages**





Vol. II No. V

**NOVEMBER 1998** 

#### POA ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT NOV. 21

See Page 4 for Details

# Thoughts of the President

The air is cooling, our friends from the North are returning - so it must be Fall

Welcome home, snowbirds! Sure hope you had a good summer. Boy, it was mighty hot down here. Did you get back in time to vote in the important CDD#1 Board of Supervisors election? Unfortunately, we had to go to press before the elections and at this time we have absolutely no idea who won what! Regardless, congratulations to the winners! We hope the newly elected officers will do their best to work in behalf of the residents!!

Folks returning from the North will notice many new additions to the Villages. Take a ride out to the CDD#3 area. Start out by taking ElCamino Drive (be careful you don't get lost). You won't believe all the new homes. This place is getting huge! In fact many people are saying its getting too big. They left big cities to retire in a more rural environment. The bigger a place gets, the more susceptible it is to crime. There have been numerous reported burglaries already - some have even taken place during the day.

Security will become a bigger problem as the Villages grow. Remember, we live in what many people consider an extremely affluent community, and we are supposed to be those senior citizens who are loaded with money.

Presently, we live in what is called a gated community. We have security gates but actually anyone can get. Cars simply stop at the gates, the guard opens the gate, no questions are asked. Not so with Spruce Creek and Water Oaks. In these two communities, guards stop all cars that do not have a security pass - you need a reason to get in - or to visit someone, guards call that person.

The Villages security guards drive around the area, but they have no authority to arrest, plus these folks are elderly, retired people like the rest of us. What kind of protection can they provide? The Lady Lake police and Sumter County's sheriff's department patrol, but it is getting so big, they can't possibly be everywhere.

Times have changed and we must change with them. Just take normal safety precautions.

Go outdoors and enjoy the glorious weather. Do gardening - go fishing - play golf, tennis, bocci, shuffleboard - do whatever you desire. While enjoying this near perfect weather - have sympathy for your northern friends and relatives (shoveling, shaking with cold, etc) - but, be sure to rub it in - I call a friend in Maine just to tell him that I am calling from my screened porch!

Wishing you all a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Until next month - Joe

#### WHERE DO I LIVE?

I had a call the other day in which the caller wanted to know in which CDD he lived in. Undoubtedly, there are many Sumter County residents who are confused on this issue (Lake County residents are not involved in any CDD lucky them). Perhaps the following will clarify the problem for Sumter County:

Your Villages Identification Card carries this information. For example:

Houses unit county lot#
03- 100- 101
Villas 98 same same
99 "

VCCDD - Village Center Community Development District. We all live under this one.

VCCDD(RAD) is the Recreation
Amenities Division of the VCCDD

VCCDD(UTIL) is our water and sewer district of the VCCDD.

CDD#1- Sumter County units 1 through 17, plus Villas. Includes the Villages of: Rio Grande, San Pedro, DeLaguna, DeLaguna West, DeLaMesa, Patio Villas, DeLaVista South, DeLaVista North, DeLaVista West, San Antonio, San Miguel, Valdez, Tierra Grande, LaPaloma, Hacienda-N-S-W, Palo Alto, Rio Ponderosa, Rico Rancher, Tierra DelSol

CDD#2 - Sumter County units 18 through 26 plus Villas. Includes the Villages of VeraCrruz, DeLeon, Santo Domingo, Ramona, Alhambra.

CDD#3 - No residents

CALL\* JOE GOTTFRIED FOR MORE DETAILS

#### ??QUESTION?? WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THE POA?

**OUR** Property Owners Association (P.O.A) is in trouble! Financially? Yes, but even more importantly, we find fewer and fewer residents (property owners) joining in an Association organized for the good of all the Residents of the Villages.

We all like it here. We like the life style. We like the organization, the activities, the facilities, the appearance, and we must give credit to the Developer for all his good ideas.

But, does this mean that we cannot disagree with him in any way, that he will do, or neglect to do, something important to us? Is dissent taboo? No. I think not! The Developer is not infallible

Is the P.O.A. passe'? A dinosaur that just won't quit? You tell me I don't know the answer. What can we do? I confess that I don't know the answer to that one either.

However, there is one thing that I do know, and truly believe. That the P.O.A. is needed here. As a watchdog, preserving the rights of our neighbors.

Only YOU, the residents, can determine whether the P.O.A. continues to exist, to be your voice in the future.

How can you help? By joining us. By voicing your opinions at our meetings. By bringing forth new ideas to serve your neighbors. We need you!

Please consider what I've said here. Dues to join us are only \$6.00 per year. Will you join with us? Thank you.

Win Shook, Vice President, P.O.A. Tel. 753-2928

#### DID'JA KNOW???

CDD#1 RESIDENTS PAID TO PUT IN THE EL CAMINO REAL ROAD?

THAT THE DEVELOPER IS GOING TO SPEND \$5,000 TO PREPARE HIS LAND FOR THE TUNNEL. WOW - ISN'T HE WONDERFUL TO SPEND THIS KIND OF MONEY ON US?

#### WHAT COLOR IS MY BALLOON?

BLACK to symbolize sympathy for all the residents who are taken in by the smooth talk of Frank Topping, VHA President. The VHA was established (with a great deal of help from the Developer) after the POA settled legal litigation against the Developer. The POA prevented the Developer from taking away contracted amenities (free cable, trash pickup, and golf) from a huge group of original residents. Incidentally, since this litigation, the POA has been black-balled by the Developer, his news media and the VHA.

Quoting Mr. Topping ".much can be done when reasonable people sit down to work out solutions in a friendly atmosphere". If people would stop and think logically. Would the POA irresponsibly spend thousands of dollars on legal fees without doing everything possible to amicably settle a dispute. Does anyone believe that the POA did not spend many, many hours (before we were black-balled) attempting Mr. Topping's simple solution (constructive dialogue and compromise) before filing any litigation.

Of course, now that the POA is considered non-existent, they won't even talk to us. (Has anyone noticed that we are not in the phone book or that we are never mentioned in any of their news media?) Our only means of communicating with the Developer or CDDs is to engage an attorney and file litigation. Is this Mr. Topping's idea of mutual respect and cooperation?

Another more recent dispute resulted when the contract with residents of a particular section of the Villages was completely ignored and the date contracted for their maintenance fee was updated. The VHA refused to help the residents. The POA tried talking to them (I say talk because, remember, we don't exit - so there was no negotiating). We finally had to engage an attorney. They paid no heed to our attorney until we prepared to file Learning of the impending litigation litigation, they reversed their action and made adjustments to the unfairly charged residents. (Does this fit Mr. Topping's statement in the following paragraph.)

I resent being talked-down to by Mr. Topping. I find this statement particularly offensive, "...the best sale tool is a bunch of happy residents......If a reasonable person stopped to think, they would soon come to the belief that the developer wants us to be satisfied and happy here and doesn't plan to see how much he can upset us". A REASONABLE PERSON WILL SOON COME TO REALIZE THAT THE DEVELOPER IS ONLY INTERESTED IN HIS PROFITS!

Regarding changes and benefits the VHA has produced for the residents, Mr. Topping says their batting average is high enough to be major league caliber. What accomplishments? Installing a dangerous 3-way stop sign at Morse Blvd and Rio Grande? A water fountain in the "square"? Oh yes, they also have a VHA committee that checks on the condition of the executive golf courses and they report that they are all in fine condition!!

Mr. Topping is also on the CDD#1 Board of Supervisors. How is his batting average there? Approved approximately \$20,000 for gates on Morse Blvd (the Developer assured the Sumter Commissioners that they would absorb all costs). Approved \$150,000 to make Morse Blvd more attractive by putting in new grass?!!! Approved \$195,000 to build a tunnel under ElCamino Real from the Developers commercial development on one side of the road to his commercial development on the other side of the road?!!! Refusing to allow resident input at their meetings?!!! Allowing issues to be thoroughly discussed by Board Members prior to meetings (illegal according to Chapter #190)?!!! How else can they come to the meeting and approve everything put forth without discussions? Remember, folks, this is your tax money they are using.

Mr. Topping and the VHA support the Villages' opinion that they should build and operate a hospital in the Villages. WHY? To add more prestige and power to the Villages? LRMC is the qualified affiliation for such a venture. They have successfully operated their hospital for 35 years. LRMC has appeared on the 100 best hospital list in the country for two successive years. LRMC is a hospital which is constantly enlarging, updating, and improving all aspects of health care. They have just added a new heart unit and very shortly will do heart transplants. They already have the building on Route 27/441 which is equipped with state-of-the-art medical technology. They have fully trained hospital staffs and some of the best physicians in the state. Their plans include a full service hospital, 24-hr emergency care, and are negotiating agreements that will allow Ocala physicians' accreditation. Their present facility in the Villages can accommodate triple their request for moving 40 beds from their Leesburg campus and can grow as the needs arise. How can the Villages compare to such an operation? What experience do they have? The Villages' plan is to build from scratch!! How are they going to finance such an undertaking? Who is going to pay for this? Would not the financing make their operating costs extremely high? Possibly making their rates higher than LRMC

Remember, "they" never give you anything "for free". I don't trust them. If they get the CON, for the hospital, somewhere, somehow, the residents will pay something.

No, Mr. Topping, I do not like your balloon. Fortunately, balloons eventually loose all their hot air. They are extremely fragile and a tiny pin prick can burst them.

-- Carol Kope

#### WHITE ELEPHANT SALE

The annual charity sale for the Villages Recreation Dept. was again a huge success.

I understand that there is no financial accounting of the event. Residents and volunteers, therefore, do not know exactly how much was taken in and what the Rec Dept uses the money for. Do you folks realize that the Rec Dept.'s budget (which comes from your maintennace fee) provides plenty of money to furnish all necessary equiptment. Why do they need this charity event? There are many more worthwhile places to use this money.

I cannot understand why hundreds of volunteers will spend many hours working on this "charity". I cannot understand either, why the residents donate items to this "charity". The hours of labor and donated items would be much more appreciated by the many local organizations who operate thrift shops and really help people. These organizations will gladly pickup your donations.

Speaking of reasonable costs, I took a tour of the sale, as I do each year, and I could not believe the prices. But, then, again, each item had a Rec Dept price tag so I assume they wanted to charge as much as possible ("Their" usual nickel and dimeing us to death).

As a reward to the volunteers, "They" are giving them a big, delicious, free dinner (I'm sure out of the proceeds). I thought volunteers volunteered because they wanted to help and did not expect any payment especially payment out of the proceeds.

SEE YOU AT NEXT YEAR'S WHITE ELEPHANT CHARITY SALE FOR THE VILLAGES RECREATION DEPT.

- Alta Gray, Village Resident



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Michael Carmichael, M.D.



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#### DON'T FORGET -- SIGN UP

Property Owners Association of the Villages

# Annual Charity Golf Tournament



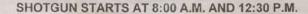
Orange Blossom Hills C.C.

The Villages of Lady Lake



# Saturday, November 21, 1998

REGISTRATION BEGINS OCTOBER 18 AT OBG HILLS C.C.



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 Make up your own foursomes if you wish — Open to Men & Women All Players must have either a USGA handicap, or five scorecards from any of the Villages courses or other USGA rated golf courses



Registration fee of \$30 per player includes green fees, carts if needed, refreshments on course and a turkey dinner at Paradise Recreation Center.

(Cash Bar at 5:30 and dinner at 6:30)



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Since the inception of our Annual Golf Tournament the profits have been donated to the Sunrise Association for Retarded Citizen (ARC). This year we are happy to again donate to ARC from the POA and all the residents of the Villages who participated in our Tournament. We are extremely proud to support this wonderful program.

Our donation is specifically donated for their very important "early intervention" program which is offered to children from birth to six years of age from Lake and Sumter counties. Under this program, children with Down's Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, brain damage, and those at risk from prematirity, substance abuse or overall delay in development, are taught basic living functions (dressing and feeding themselves, perform simple tasks, and obey simple directions).

Teaching and caring for these children is a full-time, all consuming job. Many of these children have several other siblings and parents that both work - leaving no time for the child. Some children have well meaning parents but the parents simply do not have the knowledge and patience to work with the child. We simply do not have enough of these special training facilities like ARC. As a result, many trainable children remain completely developmentally disadvantaged. The younger the child enters this early 'intervention' program, the more that child can accomplish. In some cases, this program can help a child to enter special classes in regular school

ARC receives money from United Way, but their main support comes from people like us. Please, don't forget to sign up for the tournament and help these beautiful, trainable children.

#### IS IT A "TEE" OR ISN'T IT A "TEE"?

Collarless Blouses Do Not a "Tee" Shirt Make

Recently I was challenged on my attire on an Executive Golf Course because I was wearing a collarless top. My problem is, when is it a "Tee" Shirt? A hand-painted top, an embroidered top, a beaded top, a matching top and bottom outfit?

A "tee" shirt is a "tee" shirt. Plain, maybe an underwear look - "tees" maybe painted with advertisements, etc. However, a collarless top does not make it a "tee" shirt.

Ladies, let's band together. I, for one resent being interrogated about my clothes. Besides, what is so wrong about a "tee"shirt. They are a heck of a lot less revealing than some blouses I have seen.

--- Joyce

#### FALL LEAGUE SIGN UPS

Like a good Village person, I got up early on Oct. 5 and went to sign up for the Fall Leagues. I got there at 8:25 AM - was asked at the door what Rec Center I wanted - replied Tierra DelSol - was given a slip of paper with a number on it - #26.

What happened next you will not believe. People were like animals - to be next in line. After about three quarters of an hour I was finally at the right place - Tierra DelSol. A woman in line ahead of me had #54 - I'm #26. Boy did I get an ear full. Guess what? #54 went before I did.

What a rat race just to play a game. My thought for the next time - call each number one at the time. Better yet - I hope my house is sold - so I can be gone from this place.

—Joe Gottfried

#### DRINKING WATER

Has anyone gotten sick drinking from the Hilltop and/or Silver Lake executive golf courses water fountains? I have! The fountains are filthy!! Yet, the VHA committee reports that the executive courses are in real good shape! Then, why don't they clean the fountains?

YOU CAN RENT THIS SPACE

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#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS' NEWS

The big rip off. It all started Sept. 15 when the Villages Developer's attorney appeared at the Sumter County Commissioners meeting seeking approval for land to be used as a hospital stating that the land was in compliance with the Regional Impact ordinance which is necessary for land to be approved for a hospital.

Just before the Commissioners voted on this issue, Russ Day asked what they were going to do about the golf carts going into that area. The attorneys replied that there is a golf cart bridge over 27/441 and, that they also are seeking approval for a cart tunnel to built under this area. The Commissioners approved the plan

A week later, the VCCDD (managed by Pete Wahl) notified the Supervisors of CDD#1 and CDD#2 that they were requested to approve a total of \$440,000 to build this tunnel. Both Districts unanimously approved the request. That is a combined vote of 10 to 0.

This tunnel is to be built on commercial land driving range on one side of the road to the other side of a commercial venture - doctors offices, wellness center, maybe a hospital.

Why should the residents of CDD#1 and #2 pay for this project?? This area is not in either CDD#1 or CDD#2.

Doesn't this make you think? What kind of a Developer is this? A Developer who is more concerned about money than what is right or wrong! Is this the type of Developer who you want to build and run a hospital? Do you want him on a hospital board?

We hope the state people who are going to evaluate the applications for a hospital's Certificate of Need will leave politics out and consider all the facts: costs, performance record, a known entity, integrity, reputation, etc.

Another big one. Since the residents voted down turning down the Villages into a city or town, the VCCDD said, let's approach it from a different angel, let's start a fire company for the Villages. It will only cost \$97 per household. But, let's butter it up and say the VCCDD will put in \$41 per household - so it will only cost the homeowner \$57. (Now, the \$41 is your money too - unless you just got off the banana boat.)

So where do we stand? Sumter County residents go from \$30 to \$97 and receive nothing more than you now have. Lake County residents go from \$85 to \$97 and receive nothing more. BUT, it will be VCCDD controlled fire department. A step needed to create a city.

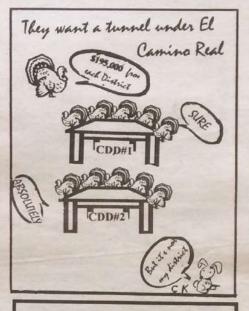
All the other CDDs voted unanimously, without discussion, to approve and pass their ludicrously high budgets.

-Joe Gottried

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#### THE SAMSUNG TOURNAMENT

According to all accounts, the Women's Samsung Tournament was a huge success, and a portion of the profits will go to the Villages Foundation. I don't believe the Villages are not too concerned about profits (for once). They realize that they will be getting (possibly) millions of dollars worth of free publicity. Publicity is the name of game!

The Villages spent months preparing for "They" manicured the golf course constantly - hired a tournament coordinator sold souvenirs - built bleachers - closed Tierra delSol closed and used the DellaVista executive golf course for a parking lot.

To me, the irony of the whole thing is that "They" turned a golf course into a parking lot, BUT, "They" WILL NOT ALLOW A HANDFUL HANDICAPPED RESIDENTS TO DRIVE THEIR CARTS UP TO THEIR BALL!!!

#### WHAT'S ON THE GRAPEVINE

- I hear that a group of people were asking who gave the country club the right to close the De laVista golf course to use it for a parking lot and the Tierra del Sol swimming pool and dining room for the time that the gal golf pros were here?. answer, "THEY" did. (This could possibly be illegal - use of a CDD facility for a commercial venture). Now why don't you folks do something about it?
- I have also heard that in a certain Villa, a group of people called the CDD#1 Landowners Representative (who is also a Village employee - and lives in that Villa) for help about their rat problem. No one in management wants to help I wonder if he has more kills than Mary Lou in the San Pedro Villas.
- Rumor is that if the Villages' ludicrous proposal for a fire department is approved. guess who will be Fire Chief - Frank Topping!! He certainly is a "jack of all trades" (but master of none).
- Also, we hear that many residents who belong to the Country Club are getting extremely upset because they can't get tee times. They are also concerned about the new "Villages Vacation Packages" that will give the renters as much free golf as they want. (Wanna bet, the renters get preference over the residents?)

#### THE MEDICINE CHEST

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#### FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Sumter County Commissioners held a Work Shop on October 26 to discuss fire protection improvements for Sumter County residents. Present were representatives from Village Sumter County and Oakland Hill residents, the VCCDD, and the POA. A decision from the Commissioners should be made within the next couple of months.

The following is an open letter to the Sumter County commissioners that I read at the work shop.

"I am here tonight to ask you, the Sumter County Commissioners to help the people of the Villages.

We are currently under four Community Development Districts and have a bond debt of \$150 million and still climbing.

The fire protection proposal for Sumter County residents as being presented tonight falls under the control of the VCCDD (Village Center Community District) District that does not have or will never have resident representation on its Board of Supervisors (because it is a commercial district that no resident lives in).

The monetary figures that they are presenting are only to start the program. The VCCDD plans to control this program and we are certain the exact dollar amounts will grow significantly and payments will involve the residents.

We realize that Sumter County is looking at methods to better service the Villages residents. But, please, not this way.

Very shortly, on November 3, the Villages CDD#1, comprised of Sumter County residents, will for the first time be allowed to actually vote for the CDD#1 Board of Supervisors. CDD#2 will vote for their own representatives next year.

It would be much more beneficial for all involved if you, the Commissioners of Sumter County, would negotiate with resident representatives rather than a dictatorship board such as the VCCDD. The VCCDD has a poor track record regarding listening to the residents.

Commissioners, please help us find another solution to the fire protection problem in the Villages. A solution where knowledgeable resident people are involved and the people and elected representatives will be in control."

Respectfully submitted. Joe Gottfried, POA Pres.

728-8881

OFFICE HOURS BY APPOINTMENT

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#### THE CITY OF SCHWARTZBERG (Or Maybe Morseville)

You never heard of this city? Good Heavens you are living in it!! Perhaps it isn't called this now - but - wait. Plans are definitely on the board for this to happen.

A few years ago "They" presented this idea to the Lake Co. section. It was overwhelming rejected. "They" didn't take the hint, and that isn't going to stop "Them" "They" feel there are other ways to "skin a cat". Remember, a municipality allows for another level of taxation.

"They" are carefully and systematically working toward this goal. VHA President, Frank Topping is already trying to get people to use "The Villages" as their mailing address instead of "Lady Lake"

The VCCDD (controller of your amenity fee) is working feverishly to establish a Villages Fire Dept. Their proposal sounds terrific. But it is completely unrealistic. The costs quoted are merely startup costs (understated at that). The most disastrous part of the whole plan is that the VCCDD would be in control of the fire department!! And, who would end up paying all the additional expenses?

When we moved here we were told our address was Lady Lake (actually we live in Sumter County and our address should be Oxford). I am proud to live in Lady Lake (or Oxford if such a change were to be made). I do not want to live in a Schwartzberg or Morseville!!!

-- Carol Kope

#### WHAT'S HAPPENED TO OUR RETIREMENT COMMUNITY???

When we bought here, we were told that at least one spouse had to be at least 55 years old to purchase a home. Children under the age of 19 could visit for a max of 30 days a year. We liked this idea. We would be living among our age group people with common interests, concerns, memories, etc.

Now, I understand that The Villages is classified as an "adult community. You no longer need to be at least 55. There are quite a few residents owning homes here who are not 55. Steve Wresh, the golf pro, is an example.

Don't get us wrong. We were all young adults once. They are wonderful, energetic people. But, we sure as heck believe that we have been lied to again!!!

-Raili Day, Resident

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# VILLAGE ENTREPRENEURS

Michael and Angelika McKenzie of the Village of Del Mar are two such entrepreneurs. This husband and wife team are proving that you can fulfill a life dream.

They have recently established a "service" that is very necessary for southern residents, heating and air conditioning maintenance Michael does the work and Angie handles all the administrative functions.

Michael is a State Certified Contractor and has been in the heating and air conditioning business for 6 years. Angie is employed by LRMC as a Phlebotomist. Both their parents are Villages residents. Angie's parents, David and Margaret Smalley live in the Village of Mira Mesa. Michael's parents, Joseph and Evelyn McKenzie live in the Village of Del Mar. Angie and Michael each have a young adult son living

We congratulate Michael and Angie of "Village Heating & Airconditioning, Inc." and wish them great success in their new venture.



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#### CAR TAG RENEWAL

1999 car tag renewals are popping up. For the people who live in Sumter County, please make sure your renewal tag comes from Sumter County. If you did not originally register your car in Sumter, the renewal application comes from Lake Co. and if you return your application by mail, your renewal tag will again be Lake County.

You can go to the Sumter County Annex opposite Morse Blvd on Rt466 to renew your car tag. You'll save 50 cents but more importantly, Sumter County will get the renewal fee.

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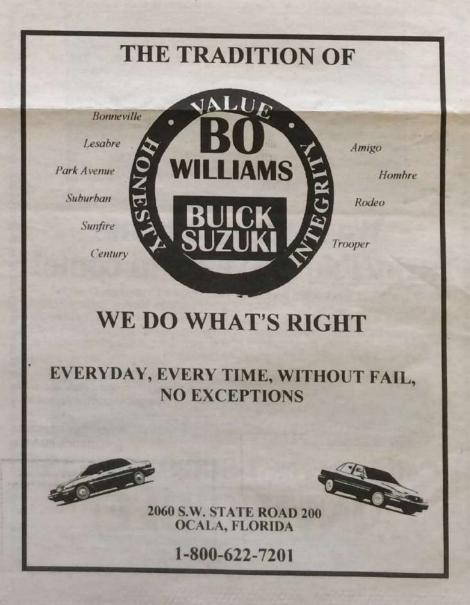
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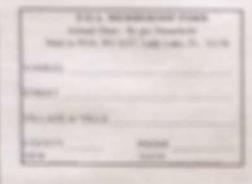
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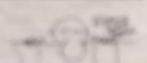
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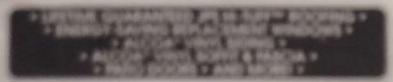
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