

Property Owners' Association of The Villages

CHAMPIONS OF RESIDENTS' RIGHTS SINCE 1975

BULLETIN

Vol. II No. VIII



JULY 2001

Your \$105.00 Monthly Amenity Fee Could Be \$70.00 per Month

Every time you write that monthly amenity fee check for \$105.00, it could be \$70.00.

You are paying roughly \$35.00 more than you could be paying every month.

And, that extra \$35.00 is a double payment for something that you have already paid for once before.

The underlying facts are provided in the recently released primary VCCDD amended budget draft for the remainder of this fiscal year ending 9/30/01. This shows amenity fee revenue of \$14.5 million and VCCDD maintenance and administrative expenses of \$9.6 million (that is 66% of the \$14.5 million total).

That means that for every \$105.00 of amenity fees collected, only \$70.00 (66%) is spent on maintenance and administrative expenses.

If you are paying \$105.00 per month ... and maintenance and administrative fees amount to only \$70.00 per month ... where does the other \$35.00 go?

The other \$35.00 goes to pay off the debt which was issued by the VCCDD to buy all those facilities (mostly from the developer) that attracted us to The Villages in the first place.

You might wonder why we are buying these facilities when we paid so much more for our houses and lots when we first moved here. If our houses were built in southern Sumter county, I bet they would have cost two-thirds to three-fourths of what they did here in The Villages. That is because we paid more to be close to the facilities in the Villages. And, the developer priced the house and lot higher than would otherwise be the case so as to capture the value of and access to the near by facilities.

So, if we paid more to be close to the facilities in The Villages, why are we buying these amenities again for this extra \$35.00 per month?

How did this happen?

The root cause here is the agreement with the developer to pay the monthly fee. A related factor is the ongoing indifference on the part of many residents to the use and application of the monthly fee.

Residents agreed to pay a monthly fee for vaguely stated uses when they originally bought their homes and lots in The Villages.

Everybody buying into our community, CDD or not, agrees to pay the developer a monthly fee (now capped at \$105.00 per month) for either "perpetually maintaining the recreational facilities" (old version) or "perpetually providing the recreational facilities" (new version). This phraseology is contained in paragraph 4.1(a) of the Declaration of Restrictions and the dollar amount is in the Warranty Deed to our property which was given to all of us at or before closing on the purchase of our property.

Yes, yes, yes ... we all should have read these provisions and been alert to the subtle implications. Some of us did and some of us didn't. If you did not like the language, the only solution at the time was to not buy a home in The Villages. If you did not notice the problem, well, then, tough, and Caveat Emptor!

The essential problem, however, is that these provisions are so vague and so poorly worded so as to be stacked against us residents and stacked in favor of the developer.

The vague wording allows the developer to spend the monthly fee on almost anything under the guise of "providing" the facilities. Although the spirit of these provisions is for a "maintenance" function -- the developer could put up anything, including a gasoline tank farm behind Town Square, and charge us for "providing" those facilities.

To be sure, the developer does do a pretty good job of providing maintenance and basic services for the \$70.00 per month. However, he cleverly designed the contractual provision to utilize the excess monthly fee, now ballooned to \$35.00, to sell us again what we

though we paid for through a higher house and lot price in the first place.

On the issue of indifference, the developer did charge for just maintenance until the formation of the Community Development Districts (CDDs) in the early 1990s. However, he encountered no effective opposition to his scheme to spend part of the monthly fee not require for maintenance on repurchase of facilities from himself. Nobody effectively countered this scheme; most people just didn't care to be bothered with these details. Silence and forbearance imply consent.

Ok, the problem appears to be real and costly to residents. What is the remedy?

To remedy the problem, the provision for usage of the monthly fee should be reworded and split into two parts, as follows:

The first part should be for just maintenance and administrative expenses and be initially set, using today's figures, at \$70.00 per month. Over time, this figure could go up with inflation ... or it could go down as expenses were spread over a larger base of residents in The Villages. The figure would probably go down over time as more people move to The Villages.

The second part should be for an additional monthly fee for purchase by residents of other facilities in The Villages from anybody, including the developer. But, any significant purchase, say more than \$2 million in the aggregate in any year, would have to be approved by a vote of all residents in The Villages. And, any purchase would have to be supported by a market-based appraisal -- no more of the income-based appraisals that stack the deck in favor of the developer. This additional charge could be \$35.00 per month, or it could be zero, depending on what facilities the residents voted to purchase.

Unfortunately, we are all still on the hook to the developer for the \$105.00 per month.

But, is this fair or equitable for the residents of The Villages? Up to \$105.00 isn't needed for maintenance. And, the extra \$35.00 per month probably does not represent the will of residents regarding purchase of additional facilities in our community.

See Amenity continued on page 2

Amenity Continued from page 1

Why doesn't the developer, in an effort to be a responsible and positive influence in this community, adopt this clarified wording for a two-part application of the monthly fee for all residents as explained above?

If he did, the monthly maintenance fee would be fair and equitable. And, residents could voice their opinion on the issue of additional facilities purchases. This is our community and we, the residents, should have a say in the purchase of any facilities.

This would seem to be a reasonable solution for both issues. Residents would pay fair value for fair value regarding maintenance expenses; and, the developer would have the opportunity to develop and sell facilities to residents.

Please, Mr. Developer, could you do the right thing and make these change to the definition of monthly fees?

-- Tom Poss --

OBJECTIVES OF THE POA

OUR ACTION AGENDA

The POA is dedicated to maintaining and improving the quality of life in The Villages for the benefit of all residents. Specific objectives are as follows:

1. Change the Florida State Law, Chapter 190, that created the CDDs (Community Development Districts), to achieve the following:

- Resident approval for any spending program or purchase of facilities
- Market-based appraisal system for purchase of any facilities from the developer
- Conflict-of-Interest regulations applied to developers, lawyers, consultants, commissioners, supervisors, vendors, and other involved operatives
- Election of the District Administrator
- Competitive Bidding requirements
- Code-of-Conduct regulations
- Full disclosure for Monthly Fees and use only for the designated purpose.

2. Promote Objectivity in the news reporting function in The Villages as performed by the local newspaper, TV station, and radio station.

3. Support and Promote HB-83 sponsored by the Silver Hair Legislature calling for reform of the property tax methodology.

4. Support and Promote the efforts of CHIPS (Concerned Homeowners in Partnership, Inc.) on the issue of full disclosure and explanation of monthly fees.

5. Coordinate POA activities with any other relevant outside groups addressing homeowner rights, interests, and issues.

WE NEED YOUR HELP ON THESE SPECIAL PROJECTS

Your POA needs volunteers and helpers on the following projects:

GOLF COURSE ASSESSMENT - We are thinking of starting a committee of golfers who actively play the executive courses. We want to start rating the quality of the greens on an objective scale. The idea would be to share this assessment with the Golf Course Department. The only requirements are that you play the executive courses and be willing to sign-up and coordinate other golfers to help this committee do the rating on selected courses. Call Win Shook at 753-2928.

BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT - We want to form another committee to identify locations throughout The Villages that need flowers, landscaping, shrubs, or whatever to make them look more beautiful. This committee would then work with the gardening clubs of The Villages and Lady Lake as well as with The Villages to see if something could be done. Call Sadie Woppard at 753-0615.

TELEMARKETER - We are looking for an experienced telemarketer to sell ad space in the Bulletin. If any POA member with the right experience is interested, this could be a nice source of income on a part time basis working in your home. Call Joe Gorman at 259-0999 for details.

SALES MANAGER - We need someone with sales management experience to help us recruit, train, and manage a telemarketer that we are now trying to recruit to sell ad space in the POA Bulletin. Call Joe Gorman at 259-0999 for details.

FLOWERS AND WEEDS - We need material for this monthly column in the Bulletin. Please let us know about anything that you see that might be appropriate. Write it down and mail it to us at POB 1657, Lady Lake, FL, or give a written summary to us at one of our monthly meetings.

BULLETIN ARTICLES - You write it - we will print it. Well, within limits, that is. If you want to write an article for the Bulletin, we will be happy to consider anything. An article on a local government issue? OK! An article about your grandfather's shoes? Sure! An article about your last vacation? Sounds good! An article about problems in the local grocery store? Nice! An article about your bottlecap collection? Super! An article about a problem in The Villages? Do It! An article about something nice in The Villages? Even Better! Just talk to one of the POA officers or directors about your idea - we would like to hear about it. 200-300 words would be ideal. And, you can claim the official title of "contributing editor."

POA MEMBERSHIP DUES NEW AND RENEWALS

If you have not renewed your POA membership for the year 2001 yet, please do so soon. Dues are still \$6.00 for the year, from January to December. Either give the payment to Charlotte Poss at a POA meeting or send it to the POA at P. O. Box 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158-1657. Your membership card will be returned by mail.

If you are not a member of the POA, this is a perfect time to join the POA. You already know that the POA stands for resident's rights and now is the time to support POA activities. Again, give your payment to Charlotte at a meeting, or send a check to her at our Post Office address listed above.

Some people have also asked about additional financial support for the POA. We can use any additional financial help beyond normal membership dues that you can give us. Between meeting expenses, mailing expenses, publishing and delivery expenses for the Bulletin, and other organizational expenses, our budget is strained as it is. Any extra financial support will be greatly appreciated. Thanks in advance for your generosity.

HOW TO MAKE A DONATION TO YOUR POA

The more common ways you can contribute to your Property Owners' Association:

- Your unrestricted gift - we'll direct it to the greatest need,
- Your gift-in-kind (services and goods) to reduce our expenses and/or generate revenues,
- Your gift of stock, insurance, or other asset,
- Your gift of real estate or personal property,
- Your bequest and/or remembrance in your will,
- Your memorial, tribute, special occasion, and/or designated gift to our General Fund,
- Your cash donation to our Special Property Owners' Fund,
- Your donation of cake, cookies, and refreshments for members at our monthly meetings,
- Your volunteer time on special POA projects,
- Your kind words to neighbors and friends about the benefits of membership in the POA,
- Prayer support - it is always welcome.

Whatever method you use to support your POA, please know that it will help all of us enjoy and preserve our wonderful way of life here in The Villages.

FLOWERS AND WEEDS

The idea of publishing a Flowers and Weeds column is a good one. However, the column cannot duck the hard issues that should be mentioned. So, the POA will address this problem with its own Flowers and Weeds column. We will not avoid the hard issues. We ask readers to submit material for future columns.

FLOWERS - To Chico Mir, president of the VHA, for clarifying a point for us. In a recent VHA general membership meeting, Chico was asked about the proposed Hospice facility in The Villages. One questioner asked if the residents should send letters to anybody to voice their opinions. Chico said that writing a letter to the developer of The Villages was useless because the developer would just throw the letter in the waste basket (or words to that effect). Thanks, Chico, for your explanation. Maybe you are starting to understand the problem.

WEEDS - To a maintenance employee of The Villages who was spreading fertilizer on the three-foot wide grass surface on Cazaras just south of the Santo Domingo postal station. This worker had a large lawn tractor, at least six foot wide, with a rear-end fertilizer spreader. He drove the tractor half on the grass strip and half off the grass strip on the roadway. Fertilizer granules were spread on the grass and all over the entire roadway by the spreader. But, he fertilized the three-foot wide grass strip! Genius at work!!

FLOWERS - To Baseline Golf Course for showing that intelligent maintenance can produce an excellently groomed golf course. Why can't The Villages golf-grooming brain thrust do something about the deplorable condition of some of The Village's greens? More genius at work!!

FLOWERS - To The Villages Entertainment division for the excellent variety of entertainment on the Square and in the clubs almost every night. And the full page ad every night on page three of the Sun's Lifestyles section is first class. These people know how to get it right. Congratulations and keep up the good work!

WEEDS - To the VHA for no support on the important POA initiatives for homeowners' rights. First, we called for a moratorium on further sales of facilities by the developer to the VCCDD (that's us, folks). Second, we called for resignation of VCCDD supervisors over potential conflicts of interests. Third, we called for popular election of the District Supervisor. Maybe the VHA hierarchy just doesn't care about these resident's rights issues. What (or who) are they afraid of? What a disappointment this must be for the many concerned VHA members who care about our community and know that the POA is right on these issues.

WEEDS - To The Villages Water Company for its "Notice To Customers" announcing the average 6.4% increase in water and sewer rates. Not one iota of explanation as to why the rates were increased – only that they could be increased. Maybe the April Fools column was right – it speculated that rates would have to be increased to compensate The Villages Water Company for its loss of profit as residents heeded the call for lower water usage during the recent drought. Then the letter said to contact the local utility with any questions – but, the letter provided no phone number. As a final insult, nobody had the courtesy to sign the letter. Don't you wish you had the freedom to change companies?

FLOWERS - To The Daily Sun for running the front-page article about 2,000 Florida state doctors with criminal pasts. Now, could the Daily Sun do an investigative reporting article about the number of those doctors practicing in Lady Lake? Wouldn't you like to see that information printed?

--Publius --

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE POA

WHAT THE POA STANDS FOR

The Property Owners' Association of the Villages is an independent organization devoted to the home ownership needs and interests of the residents of The Villages.

Specific attention is focused on housing, community, neighborhood, and government issues.

The POA serves Villages residents through programs of research, analysis, education, representation, advocacy, and legislative action.

The POA was founded in 1975 as an independent organization. The POA has no ties or obligations to the developer of The Villages that might compromise the POA advocacy of homeowners' rights. Membership is open to all residents of The Villages.

HAVE A SAFE FOURTH OF JULY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA



SELL THAT OLD SNOWBLOWER

Well, maybe you can't sell that old snowblower here in Florida.

But, you might be able to sell that old set of stereo speakers, that old chair, that old garden equipment, that old set of dishes, or maybe even your dog!

Just place a classified ad in your POA Bulletin. All you have to be is a member in good standing of the POA, have something to sell, and pay for a POA classified ad.

For \$4.00 paid when the ad is submitted, you can place a one inch ad that is one column wide in next month's Bulletin. We will even help you with the wording (see the sample ad on the back page). Just call Charlotte Poss at 750-5640 for details or help. Remember, the Bulletin is delivered to about 8,500 homes in The Villages – that is pretty good coverage!

If you want to repeat the ad for another month because it did not sell, we will re-run the original ad for \$3.00 for a second month and \$2.00 for a third month. If it doesn't sell after three months, well, maybe it is time to just throw it away – or donate it.

The POA Classified Ad Section

Your Ad can be placed here.

See Example Below:

TV For Sale. Excellent condition. XYZ Brand. 19", great color, used only to watch commercials. Comes with a pack of cigarettes, a box of brand flakes, and a certificate for a wallet-ectomy at Pete's place. Call 555-5555, after midnight, on Tuesdays.

Sorry, you can't buy that TV. But, you can place an ad like this (hopefully, a little less irreverent). Call Charlotte Poss at 750-5640 for details and/or help in composing your ad.

NOTICE

A couple of letters and e-mails have been received in regards to a letter in the June Bulletin about the Lady Lake Sports Complex.

The P.O.A. is neither for nor against the Sports Complex. But the Bulletin is everyone's paper. If a letter is received in good taste and in the interest of the majority of people, it will be printed. It is what we call Democracy. --C. Poss--

P. O. A. PHONE: 750-5469
 P.O. 1657 LADY LAKE, FL 32159
Officers
 Tom Poss President 750-5469
 Win Shook Vice-President 753-2928
 Joe Gorman Secretary 259-0999
 Charlotte Poss Treasurer 750-5640
Directors

Ted Morris 750-1843
 Frank Renner 750-0306
 Sadie Woppard 753-0615
 Ralph Yohn 750-1413
 Charlie Harvey 753-7294

Advertising Dept. 750-5469 or 750-5640

The P.O.A. Bulletin
 Published by the Property Owners Assoc. of the
 Villages of Lake/ Sumter Counties
 Articles are the opinion of the writer and must be
 signed. Articles may be edited for length, grammar
 and clarity. Mail Box letters must be signed by the
 writer, thus, giving the Bulletin permission to print the
 letter with signature. These letters will be edited only
 for inflammatory language.
 Advertising: Call 750-5469 or mail to PO Box 1657,
 Lady Lake, FL, 32159

P.O.A. MEETINGS
 Board of Directors - 7:00 PM
 1st Tuesday of the Month
 Charlie Chaplin Rm - Paradise Center
 (all POA members welcomed)
 General Meeting - 7:00 PM
 3rd Wednesday of the Month
 Paradise Recreation Center
 Refreshments Served
 (ALL RESIDENTS WELCOMED)



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**JULY 18 - POA GENERAL
 MEMBERSHIP MEETING**
 Our next meeting is scheduled for Wed. July 18,
 7:00 PM. Paradise Rec. Center.
Guest Speaker :
 Harold Barnes
 Area Coordinator of SHINE
 (Serving Health Interest Needs of Elders)
 Sponsored by the Department of Elder
 Affairs of the State of Florida.
 ROLLS AND COFFEE COME AND JOIN US---
 July 18, 2001 7 p.m.
 ALL RESIDENTS WELCOME

THE P.O.A. HAS FORMS FOR
 FREE PRESCRIPTIONS

PLEASE COME TO A MEETING AND
 PICK UP COPIES OF ALL THE
 INFORMATION THAT YOU WILL NEED
 FOR THIS SERVICE. YOU CAN SEND A
 SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE
 AND WE WILL MAIL YOU THE
 INFORMATION. —TOM POSS—

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 P.O. BOX 1657 LADY LAKE, FLORIDA 32159

Completion of this form constitutes acknowledgement of
 the P.O.A. as your representative

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

VILLAGE/VILLA: _____

COUNTY _____ PHONE: _____

NEW RENEWAL DATE: _____

ANNUAL DUES: \$6.00

Donation: \$ _____

Due to the overhead of the Bulletin (P.O.A. Paper) any
 contributions above the amount of membership will be appreciated.

PLEASE REMEMBER CAROL KOPE
 Carol is in the Lady Lake Specialty Care Center
 630 Griffin Ave. Lady Lake, Florida 32159.
 It would be so thoughtful of everyone to remember
 her with our prayers, letters and cards. Carol has
 done so much for so many while she was active in
 the P.O.A. Lets not forget her now while she is
 recovering from a serious operation.

**Webster Flea Market
 Every Monday**

Sumter County Farmer's Market, Inc.
 P. O. Box 62, Highway 471
 Webster, Florida 33597
 Telephone: (352) 793-2021 and 793-3551
 Fax: (352) 793-9474

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THANK YOU
 A Hearty Thank you, goes out for the filling in of
 the hole behind the Post Office on LaGrande Blvd.
 —Rose Harvey—

Now, lets see about getting all the dead flowers
 replaced. This is an eye sore to the people living
 on the East Side of the Villages. —Rose Harvey—