

The POA BULLETIN

The Property Owners' Association of The
Villages

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Champion of Residents' Rights Since 1975

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POA Comments on The Lawsuit Settlement

Finally, residents of The Villages will have a real voice in how their amenities are operated thanks to the settlement of a recent class action lawsuit. Filed in Lake County Circuit Court, the settlement between resident plaintiffs led by active POA members Richard Lambrecht and Elaine Dreidame and The Villages of Lake Sumter Inc. would give residents the control over their amenity dollars long championed by this organization.

The Property Owners' Association has consistently advocated resident oversight of the Amenity Division. Some members have contended that certain amenity facilities have been sold by the developer to the Center District without establishing adequate reserves. This settlement also corrects that situation by requiring the developer to provide an initial contribution to the amenity budget in the amount of \$11,803,168.00, together with annual payments totaling \$28,021,000.00 to be made over the next 13 years. The funds provided answer the long held concern of the POA that inadequate reserves were set aside for the modernization and upkeep of older facilities such as the Paradise Recreation Center and in addition they assure the provision of Amenity Services at optimal levels. This will also provide funds for widening recreation/multi-modal trails north of County Road 466.

Thanks to the hard work of attorneys Carol M. Anderson and Dougald D. McMillan of the Anderson and Anderson law firm, working with the assistance of their dedicated client-homeowners team consisting of Elaine Dreidame, Richard Lambrecht, William Garner, Joseph Gorman and Irving Yedwab, residents will finally have a real voice in how their amenity division is administered.

This settlement presents a great opportunity as it bestows important new rights to residents of The Villages, rights long advocated by the Property Owners' Association. This agreement addresses many important concerns regarding past actions and lays a foundation for a better community in the future. The Property Owners' Association has reviewed the settlement and feels it addresses these issues in a positive way.

The Property Owners' Association believes that this agreement presents a watershed moment in the history of our community. Our developer has provided remedies for issues the POA has long believed vital to our community's future. Our developer has acknowledged that mistakes were made, particularly in the early years of development and that the mistakes are

addressed in this settlement. It is only fair to note that there was no simple recipe in place for creating a unique retirement community like The Villages that stretches into three counties and two municipalities. Mistakes were inevitable and it is to the POA's credit for pointing those mistakes out and to the developer's credit for now addressing them.

It is the hope of the Property Owners' Association that both residents and developer alike can now move together into the future recognizing that we share a common interest in our community's success. After all, when our lifestyle is enhanced and our home investments grow in value, everyone benefits - residents and developer alike.

In the next few weeks, homeowners in The Villages residing north of County Road 466 will receive in the mail a notice of this court approved agreement. This notice will provide the details of this class action settlement and give homeowners the opportunity to be members of the "class." You will automatically be considered a member of the class unless you return the notice indicating your desire not to be a member.

To be a class member requires no action on your part, you may simply retain the notice for your own information or throw it in the trash. There is no cost involved in being a class member and we believe this court approved settlement is of great benefit to every homeowner in The Villages for the reasons we have noted above.

The attorneys handling the settlement, Carol M. Anderson and Dougald D. McMillan, for the part of The Villages lying north of 466 are also in discussions to accomplish the same things for that part of The Villages lying south of 466 by establishing a formula for future amenity transactions that will assure adequate reserves.

The POA has always given credit to our developer for doing a great job in creating this community and its unique lifestyle. It truly is a retirement hometown like no other. It has been the position of the POA that certain changes would make our community even better. We believe this court approved settlement makes those kinds of positive changes. With this agreement, our residents and our developer can work together in the future in a constructive fashion so that The Villages continues to be the greatest retirement community in the world.

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Hall of Fame Honors To Harvey, Hokr

The POA is proud to announce its two honorees inducted into the POA Hall of Fame this year: Rose Harvey and Dorothy Hokr.

Ms. Harvey was presented with a plaque honoring her at the regular POA meeting in December. Ms. Hokr passed away ten years ago, but the plaque honoring her was presented to her widower husband who still lives in The

Villages.

Rose Harvey has been a member of the POA since 1986 when she moved here with her husband, Charlie Harvey, who was inducted into the POA Hall of Fame last year. She was instrumental in organizing the house-to-house delivery effort of the POA Bulletin in the late 1980s. She was a strong voice in speaking out for the POA and never missed an opportunity to get her neighbors involved with the POA and its monthly meetings. She continues to attend the monthly meetings of the POA and VCCDD as well as the meetings of the Lady Lake town council. Rose has distinguished herself as a tireless worker for the POA and exhibits the personal qualities of one of our best members.

Dorothy Hokr was president at a critical time in the history of the POA during the maintenance fee lawsuit against the developer in the mid 1990s. The POA was in disarray and dispirited, we lost the expensive lawsuit on a technicality, the POA leadership was discouraged, and the future looked bleak. Dorothy took over as president and offered strong and stabilizing leadership during these troubled times. Although sick with the cancer that would shortly claim her life, she stood up to the developer, increased membership, and put the POA on a sounder footing financially. Dorothy showed the strength of character and the concern for her fellow residents that exemplify the best qualities of the people who dedicate themselves to our organization.

Please join with all POA members, past and present, to honor these two exceptional and dedicated members as our new Hall of Fame honorees.

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POA's January Meeting Is In Laurel Manor On a New Day: Tuesday

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

We are changing 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.

A speaker will comment on the Property Tax Measures in the January 29 Primary Election. This concerns the Florida Constitutional Amendment that is very important.

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

Cheers and Jeers

Cheers - To all the residents who generously gave of their time and in some cases money to decorate the entrance ways into the various villages. Overall, a very nice job!! Thanks.

Question - What does Gary Lester do? He is, apparently, the primary contact for information and news about The Villages. However, when contacted, he generally says "no comment." But, most of the time he cannot even be contacted, and he doesn't like to return phone calls from the media asking for information. If he still does work for the developer, he does a great disservice to all of us by not providing clarification when needed and by hiding in his office.

Cheers - For the Christmas Parade and Winter Carnival. Nice. But, we still don't see why this parade can't be on the Squares, like all the other parades.

Cheers and Thanks - To all of our military personnel serving overseas, many of whom will miss the holidays with their loved ones. Thanks for serving, fighting for our way of life, and preserving our freedom.

Cheers - To the RAC (Resident Advisory Council) for keeping the late closing hour for the several pools open later than the others.

Cheers - To The Villages Hospital for its selection as a finalist in the Award of Excellence given by the Central Florida Workforce Committee.

Cheers - To the VHA for championing the idea of a new post office for us. However, it made the point in its December newspaper that the "two closest Post Offices are outside our community and some distance from our homes." We think the VHA forgot about the Bodega Post Office in La Plaza Grande.

Cheers - To Sumter County Commissioner Dick Hoffman on his election as Commission Chairman. Also, thanks to outgoing chairman, Mike Francis, for a job well-done.

Cheers - To all who take their grandkids to the family pools for fun; and to all adults who take their naps at the adult pools. Everybody's happy.

Cheers - To all the parents or grandparents who gave their kids a hippopotamus for Christmas.

Jeers - To VHA president Roger Kass for not resigning over his conflict of interests relating to his employment by the developer and his suspicious and tainted favorable comments about the developer.

Hometown Democracy Needs Your Help Now

The Florida Hometown Democracy movement is attempting to put an amendment on the upcoming Florida election ballot. This amendment, if approved by voters, would require that any changes in a government's comprehensive plan be approved by voters in that community. This means that community residents, rather than politicians, would decide whether to approve development projects in a community. Below is a letter from the founder and president of the Florida Hometown Democracy movement:

Hello to FHD supporters!

I'm wishing you all Florida Hometown Democracy for the holidays and in the coming New Year!

It's been a busy week. First, my email address was hijacked and a "colorful" email was sent to just about every elected official in Florida. Good thing I have a sense of humor! Then, the State Division of Elections website started doing funny things, like subtracting numbers of valid petitions. Shall I say Florida is still the state that can't count straight? We do have a paper trail and will get this straightened out, but it's distressing to deal with. Also, our appeal on the outrageous revocation statute has been accepted and fast-tracked by the First District Court of Appeals and we will know by January 31st if it will be overturned.

Finally, we have collected and turned in OVER 600,000 total petitions. Our validity rate is running around 75%-80% meaning we still have a way to go to NET 611,000 valid signatures. Most rejects are because many signers are still not registered to vote. And our numbers unfortunately are NOT accurately reflected on the state website due to their "technical difficulties". We have not built up a "cushion" to protect us from the revocation sabotage, so PLEASE keep sending MONEY and PETITIONS.

We will be accepting petitions through January 20th, but really Santa's helpers need to send PETITIONS and DONATIONS now.

We've heard that the Dark Side opposition is amassing their petitions to submit all at once in order to flood the Supervisors so they won't be able to get our petitions counted by the January deadline.

We will make it if you go out and send us 10 or 15 petitions and a donation of at least \$25-\$100.

Read on below if you need further testimony from a professional planner of why Florida Hometown Democracy is essential to saving Florida's future.

Lesley Blackner
President and Founder
Florida Hometown Democracy

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

Help put HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY on the 2008 ballot

Please download and SIGN THE PETITION !

On the Internet at: <http://www.FloridaHometownDemocracy.com>

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

Below is a reprint of an article in The Tallahassee Democrat, published Dec 17, 2007:

Sign and Gain Freedom From a Squandered Future

By Daniel Parker

A once-small group of Floridians frustrated with their local elected officials over land-use decisions now numbers more than 300,000 citizens who have signed a petition supporting the Florida Hometown Democracy amendment.

The amendment is focused on reducing the number of local comprehensive plan changes by giving voters an opportunity to veto them. In letters to papers in Florida, the James Madison Institute, Florida Chambers of Commerce, and others have called the initiative "draconian," "impractical," "extreme" and "severe." If that argument doesn't work, then land-use decisions are called "too complex" for the general public to understand.

There is some merit in these responses, but not enough to dismiss the concept of Hometown Democracy outright.

Florida communities and environmental resources have suffered from permissive development policies heavily subsidized on the back end by taxpayers. We now have aquifer contamination and polluted springs, from Wakulla to Wekiva. The St. Johns River Water Management District is telling Jacksonville that its drinking water resource could pass its sustainable level after six years. The Southwest Water Management District, which includes 16 counties, has spent \$200 million to help restore 3,000 acres of wetlands, forests and waterways.

We're spending \$160 million right here in Tallahassee to offset water

contamination from previous and planned development.

Florida's sprawling development now has us consuming 400 acres of farmland a day and more energy than New York .

We're in a multi-billion dollar shortfall with our transportation infrastructure, and one of the answers is to privatize more road building. Coastal developments can't get insured, so the rest of us are insuring them.

Central Florida is expected to experience explosive growth, and a continuation of the land-use decisions there will overrun areas that shouldn't even be developed.

Sarasota County, in the midst of its Sustainable Sarasota initiative, has proposed to rein in growth by requiring super-majority commission votes on some large or intensive developments. The Marion County school superintendent says that, for schools there to catch up to the need for more facilities, the county would have to stop growing for the next three years.

We're talking an extreme and severe use of taxpayer money.

As a local planning commissioner, I dread a process that is bent toward approving development at a rate that is expensive for existing residents and communities. Instead of having to prove a certificate of need, a development can merely meet the letter of the law. This obligates a community to take on developments of questionable economic, social, and sustainable value. The "spirit" of the law is lost.

If the effort to balance concerns such as economic development and environmental quality, and public needs with private interests, were truly working, we surely would not be spending our public tax dollars on cleaning up springs, adding portables to schools, and fighting over who pays for crossing guards.

The reality is that growth management in Florida is causing more communities to lose what makes them unique and to become more homogenized, more sprawled out and more costly. Any public gain is quickly swallowed by new public costs to support new residents.

The new and well-meaning secretary of the Department of Community Affairs, Tom Pelham, has expressed his intent to improve the planning process. He can do it, but not alone. In the background of our planning woes, efforts to weaken the public sector have been successful. Legislation has been passed that stops votes, cuts down on amendments, limits petitions and revokes signatures. The ranks of public servants, including land-use planners, have been thinned, outsourced and micromanaged at all levels.

This notion of less government has been well at work in Florida. We must be reminded, however, that whether it is based in good intentions or simply an infatuation with cutting taxes, there are costs from a loss of oversight and a cut in services.

There is no constitutional right to pollute, or to build for private gain that leaves public expenditures. There are two things you can accomplish by supporting the petition for a Florida Hometown Democracy Act: You can preserve your public involvement and right to petition, and you can send a message to local and state officials that the status quo with land-use planning is not good enough. Not by a long shot.

Sign the petition. This should give Mr. Pelham the public backing to make substantive legislative changes to Florida's comprehensive planning process before the amendment comes up for a vote. You still can vote No on the November 2008 ballot.

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Did You See the Last Issue of The Villages Magazine?

**John Leininger
The Dream Maker**

In an article by Bud Beck published in December's issue of The Villages Magazine, the developer's propagandist machine continues with a profile of Villages Field Engineer, John Leininger, discussing construction of Villages homes, among other things.

Mr. Leininger takes obvious pride in his work and says that he "does whatever it takes to get the job done-and done correctly." Then he goes on to point out that his job is "to keep work on schedule and preferably ahead of schedule."

We find a tremendous conflict in these two statements. And because we have observed so many issues relating to poor workmanship on the homes we have looked at, we have to conclude that the schedule takes priority over correctness when our homes were built.

We're happy for Mr. Leininger that his conscience lets him sleep at night. Too bad about some homeowners who have told us they can't sleep, or have had heart or other health problems exacerbated because of worry about having to deal with Home Warranty and some of the subcontractors who refuse to do proper repairs when requested. Perhaps the author, Mr. Beck, would like to interview some of these residents for his next article.

Mr. Leininger, it is commendable that you have job satisfaction and have risen in your career, pleasing your employers. But let's remember where your paycheck comes from, as well as the paychecks for VHA president Mr. Kass, and Home Warranty's inspector Mr. Locke and manager, Mr. Stradinger, and consider what your employer's goals are.

The POA Siding Committee members do not get paid for making observations, and we invite you, Mr. Leininger, as we have invited other Villages representatives, to come and see what we are talking about. In fact, we have suggested more than once, that an engineer examine the problem of why so many of the frame homes have buckled sheathing, creating unsightly bellies on the exterior walls of our homes. Perhaps the developer would listen to constructive input from you about how to correct the work and improve how our homes are built instead of just overlooking the issue. Of course, on the other hand, this might not please your employers, so careful consideration is in order. It would be nice, however, for the homeowners who are making the developer and contractors rich to actually receive the quality product they thought they were buying.

Mr. Leininger, your remarks equate "doing things the right way" with doing things "The Villages way." In our observations, we have found this not to be true.

Take, for example the issue of siding finish trim, also known as undersill. We brought this problem to the attention of contractors and various building officials and Villages representatives over a year ago. It has been a battle, but it has finally been acknowledged by a change in the construction of new homes, that although the "alternative method" has been used here for years and years, this "Villages way" of using scraps of siding material as a makeshift filler, was, in fact, incorrect. It has taken the POA Siding Committee members a great deal of effort to get The Villages to change to the manufacturer's recommended method using factory made parts.

The need for proper parts has never been a secret-it is in the manufacturer's published installation manual. However, The Villages and their contractors/subcontractors seem to have decided long ago that they just weren't going to bother with it.

Our conclusion: one can't just assume that because The Villages management wants something that it is the right way. Sometimes you have to look beyond what you are handed, make your own observations, and think for yourself.

Some of the same siders, F&R, for example, have been taking the same shortcut here, siding thousands of houses over the years, without the correct undersill/finish trim, as well as using other techniques not found in any installation manual, such as excessive spacing of the fasteners, and more.

Why, only now are the siding crews required to go to class?

This problem goes back years. It is not just in Duval, as The Villages would have us believe. It is not just south of 466. We can see poor quality siding throughout the entire development, north and south of 466, on spec homes as well as homes built to order.

Why were these practices allowed to continue? Why did it take a homeowner, a retired contractor with hands-on siding experience, to finally speak out when he observed this and other incorrect methods? Why was he labeled a "troublemaker" when he wanted improvements made in the building methods. Why was he, and now why are we, faced with such opposition including anti-improvement, anti-home inspection propaganda from the developer and the contractors via articles in The Daily Sun and The Villages Magazine, as well as evasive maneuvers and incorrect or incomplete repairs from Home Warranty?

As homeowners and residents of The Villages, we simply want this to be an

even better place to live. And we want to get the full value of the homes we paid for.

Mr. Leininger, Field Engineer, we have a question for you: Did you, an educated engineer, really never notice the poorly-installed siding on so many homes over all the years you have worked here? Did you never look at a home and wonder what was causing the waves, ripples and bellies, or the loose pieces along the top, or what could be done to prevent these symptoms? Even one homeowner's 10 year old grandchild noticed that something was wrong! Or were you too busy keeping ahead of schedule to check it out? Where was the "standard of excellence" you mention? We have not observed excellence. We have observed mediocrity and worse. We have observed scheduling taking priority over correctness over and over again and we believe a reversal of these priorities is long overdue.

The Vinyl Siding Committee

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Happy New Year From the Vinyl Siding Committee

We would like to thank the hundreds of residents who have allowed us to share our knowledge in an effort to make our community an even better place to live.

The vinyl siding issue is, in our opinion, a major issue. Not just because of the siding itself, which is a serious problem, but also because it is a measure of how The Villages responds to residents concerns.

And we are not only concerned with today, but the future as well, when we may want to sell our home and the potential buyer then chooses to have it inspected. Will we then have to pay for siding repairs or replacement because it was installed so poorly initially? Or will we lose the sale because a potential buyer may see the shoddy workmanship on the exterior as a sign that there may be other problems as well? Remember Home Warranty's Dennis Stradinger's remark, "repairs can be costly." Why not see that all the necessary repairs are done sooner, by the contractors who created the problem, rather than waiting 'til there is no warranty and no recourse.

For any residents in vinyl sided homes who would like a Siding Committee member to point out what they see, call Eric at (352) 753-7745, and we'll arrange a convenient time. Remember, we are also residents-your neighbors-and we have volunteered our time and experience in support of our community. There is no charge for us to look, but at least you will be able to understand why we are so concerned about this issue when you see it for yourself.

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Open Letter to The Morse Family

Thank you for making such a beautiful place for us to retire, to pursue myriad activities and meet wonderful new friends. Thank you for trying to bring to life the concept of an ideal retirement community.

As you must know, most of us have worked hard all our lives. We expect, when we purchase a home in The Villages, possibly the last home of our lifetime, that it will be built and sided properly. We are not asking for any more than what we paid for. But it appears that we are not even getting that.

You must also be aware that we, the POA Vinyl Siding Committee members, have observed hundreds of homes and found that 100% of the houses we have looked at have siding issues. Not even one home was found to be free of defects, or even had just minor defects.

We have gone through all the channels and up all the ladders and through all the obstacles we can think of in trying to resolve these construction issues with Villages representatives at every level. The POA Bulletin has been publishing information about this matter for a year now. And our Siding Committee members have issued open invitations, through The Bulletin, for those involved in the construction of our homes, as well as various Villages, county and manufacturers' representative, to come and see what we have to show them. Few have responded. In other cases, calls to certain building officials have not even had the courtesy of a response.

Some progress has been made with newer houses under construction close to 466A, so we know changes are being made, albeit reluctantly, and that you must understand that these are serious concerns. Even this would not have happened had we not made public the workmanship issues regarding siding installations.

But when it comes to repairing existing homes, we have met with every kind of denial and evasion imaginable, although certain contractors have been more responsive than others. Even your PR program is trying to minimize the issues and misdirect homeowners' attention elsewhere. And although we realize that these are defensive tactics, we wish the effort would be put into addressing the problems rather than continuing the denial, evasion and misdirection.

Take, for example, the head of your home Warranty Department, Mr. Dennis Stradinger, who claims, through articles published in The Daily Sun, that we (and/or home inspectors) are "frightening" residents. We have questioned this

attitude before: isn't it those who created the problems by inadequate workmanship who are really responsible for frightening people-for frightening seniors who have put everything they have into their home? Some homeowners are literally in tears when they realize the extent of the defective workmanship-some of which was performed by subcontractors who are still working here, for example, F&R. We can't imagine why F&R would continue to be offered work when the jobs are done so poorly! Just based upon the complaints we know about, how could this company still be "in good standing" with The Villages? And by the way, we find what really frightens people is that they have so much trouble getting the problems fixed!

Mr. Stradinger is right about one thing: repairs can be costly. Why on earth would The Villages want to burden homeowners with future repairs-which will become necessary because of improper workmanship or shortcuts-by denying needed repairs, or sending subcontractors who do inadequate repairs again and again?

For instance, your Warranty Department's inspector, Mr. Locke, who has often looked at the same homes we have and told the homeowner that nothing is wrong, when we can quickly point out many flaws and shortcuts taken in the siding installation by simple observation. Mr. Locke seems to make it his business to deny repairs, especially when the homeowners don't stand up to him or question his judgment.

We agree, it is frightening when residents find out that the "warranty" they were told covers every new house isn't very extensive and many repairs seem to be discretionary on the part of the contractor or subcontractor. We have been told many times by homeowners that the subcontractors come to their homes expecting to do (and scheduled for) a 15 minute repair, when a total take down and reinstall is the right way to fix the work. This is indeed frightening-but we're not the ones causing the fright.

As residents in The Villages, we have all agreed to abide by many restrictions, a number of which have to do with upholding the appearance of the neighborhood. We know and accept that it is for everyone's benefit.

Then why is it that lawn ornaments are forbidden, yet it's OK for the builders to leave our homes with bellied and wavy siding, unsightly seam patterns, mismatched color and surface, and so forth?

As pointed out elsewhere in this issue, if a 10-year old grandchild could see that something is amiss, then why don't these siders, contractors, engineers and inspectors see and correct the defects without argument?

By the way, we have also noticed plenty of buckled, wavy siding in neighborhoods that do allow some lawn and garden ornaments, too. This problem is nothing new. Some of the same siders have been working here for years. At least one Villages Field Engineer, who says in a Villages Magazine article that he has been working here over 20 years, has been overlooking bellied siding, which is sometimes caused by buckled sheathing or bowed studs, all this time. Why wouldn't an engineer see this kind of problem and try to address it? Or did he see it? Is there a "don't ask, don't tell" policy here? If a homeowner doesn't see a construction problem, does that mean there is no problem? OF COURSE NOT!

It would seem that with the housing market in its current state that any builder would be glad to have work and would make an effort to create a quality product, overseeing each step of construction, inspecting for quality, and

making corrections along the way.

Why is it that The Villages is still using the same contractors and subcontractors who have failed to produce quality work and are still failing to repair it properly now that they have been caught?

How can homeowners trust contractors and subs to fix work that they didn't do right in the first place. Not once, not twice, but over and over and over-the same "mistakes."

It would seem that a responsible developer would eagerly embrace the need to improve quality control and clean up the mess these builders made, making sure this will not happen again.

There needs to be consequences for contractors and subs who refuse repairs or do inadequate repairs.

On the siding/framing issue, this could mean use of undersill/finish trim, failure to correctly fasten the siding, bad overlaps, waves and buckles, and more. If we can see what's wrong, certainly the siding contractors should be able to see it and fix it without being told about each detail.

Why not choose other builders since some of those here, such as MacDowell and F&R, still don't seem to be able to appreciate the difference between correct and incorrect workmanship.

We're not talking about tornado and hurricane damage and we're not talking about houses collapsing.

We're talking about workmanship.

Instead of being caught up in the spiral of excuses and misdirection, The Villages should take the high road and, in addition to making changes in new home specs, see that each and every home is repaired-properly-the first time, not after five or six recalls. How many complaints about these companies will it take before you make it right? How far does this have to go? We simply want what we paid for-a quality home with decent workmanship.

You, the developer, cashed our checks. You control the performance of your contractors and subs. You are ultimately responsible. Why not step up and earn that good reputation instead of just spinning it with PR?

The Vinyl Siding Committee

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Open Letter To Roger Kass, VHA President

The POA, its Officers, Committees, and its Membership, are surprised that we have heard no response to our recent article asking you to explain to Villages residents why you are not looking out for the best interests of the residents you are supposed to serve.

We remember your article in the VHA Voice assuring the readership that the vinyl siding issue was "overstated" and it was just a "troublemaker" bringing it up.

Well, Mr. Kass, the POA Siding Committee members and AmeriPro, an independent inspection firm, have looked at over 400 vinyl sided homes between them (with some overlap). Not one home has been found to be sided properly in accordance with the manufacturer's published instruction manual. We believe, based on our observation of homes in many neighborhoods between 466 and 466A, that there are very few homes, if any, sided in accordance with any manufacturers instructions, or with the instructions published by The Vinyl Siding Institute.

Do you still believe, Mr. Kass, that there is a "troublemaker" out there? Or is it perhaps it is a few concerned citizens who have used their many years of experience in the construction industry to give their honest opinion to their neighbors. We are not the ones trying to fool the homeowners, or encouraging them to ignore possible construction defects.

Perhaps, Mr. Kass, you should attend the same vinyl siding installation classes that are now, through our efforts, required for all siding crews. If you would educate yourself and be objective about issues such as this, perhaps we could work together for the benefit of all homeowners in The Villages. However, for you to encourage Villages residents to blind complacency is a discredit to your position of leadership, and in our opinion, brings up questions of morality, integrity and ethics.

Why not prove yourself, and your honorable intent, by supporting the residents welfare and re-evaluating your position on the vinyl siding issue? It would be great to have your support in getting proper repairs done on all the homes with poor siding installations throughout The Villages. Then we would have more faith in the sincerity of The Villages developer and the VHA.

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Letter to the Editor: Re: Dodd MacDonald

As a devout Christian, I firmly believe that everything I have is a gift from God: my food, my health, and even my home in The Villages and the circumstances that made it possible to be here.

I am not in the habit of quoting Scripture, but I know that "thou shalt not steal" is a pretty big principle that most of us live by.

When Villages contractor Dodd MacDowell shortchanges us on the quality of our homes, as he has done with mine, and refuses to do the repairs to make it right, he is, in my opinion, stealing. He has not given the value for which he was paid. Therefore, I believe, he is stealing not only from me, but from God.

Why is it that when landscapers, lawn maintenance or pest control companies and the like, fail to give the value for which they are paid, we read about it in The Daily Sun, and Seniors Against Crime actively pursues the problem? Residents are alerted to the unethical behavior of these companies, and warned to take caution. Yet Dodd MacDowell continues to work for The Villages, and from what I have heard from a number of other homeowners also occupying MacDowell homes, as well as my own experience as a Siding Committee member, he continues to shortchange residents on the repairs that are needed. He denied the repairs while my home was still under warranty, and now of course the "warranty" is over.

When I purchased my house, I was assured that any problems I found within a year would be fixed under the warranty. But months before my warranty was due to expire, and after numerous, unsatisfactory attempts to repair my siding, Mr. MacDowell refused to return and fix the problems correctly. Not because it was impossible, but because it would cost too much time and money to do it right.

Maybe it's my own fault for assuming The Villages would do the right thing. I should have inspected the house more closely, before committing to it within a few hours-but then there was that assurance of the warranty...

While Dean Carter, another Villages Contractor, is sincerely trying, even against the efforts of some of the subcontractors to undermine him, to repair problems correctly, Dodd MacDowell continues with his policy of doing the least possible work and denying needed repairs.

Perhaps, since I have had so little success trying to get Dodd MacDowell to make good on the construction problems in my house, he will ultimately be held accountable to a greater power. MacDowell may be able to win over me, but he can't deceive his Maker. Apparently, however, The Villages is happy to allow him to continue his unethical behavior here at our expense.

Vince Mazone
Villages Resident
& POA Siding Committee member

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Letter to the Editor: Recycling Thoughts

What are these people thinking?? Get real. Recycling will create many new problems ... including health issues.

Our garage heats to over 120 degrees in the warm months in Florida. Only picking up garbage once a week?? Wow, holding garbage more than 3 days in our garage is hazardous and unhealthy! If they then decide to add a second garbage day pickup [and they will have to] ... what is THAT going to cost us all?? We already resent being forced to pay a \$2.00 monthly increase -- plus being told to buy special bags for bottles and cans.

In fact, with only one garbage pickup a week ... I expect most will, in pure self defense, end up 'storing' their garbage curbside by mid-week. What a sight and aroma that will be ... all over The Villages!! So let's review: One garbage pick up weekly ... stinky garage. Two pick-ups ... even more costs passed on to us.

We are also suppose to rinse out all cans and bottles?? Huh? First, we are living in 'modern times' ... we have dishwashers and don't even rinse our dishes! Second, and more importantly, we will have to use our precious water to do that. We are on water restriction ... remember? So they are asking a hundred thousand people to wash out cans and bottles while we are under water restrictions [which is most of the time]? Wow, that doesn't sound smart!

We are perfectly happy to stay just the way we are. Let those who want to use the current VOLUNTEER system of recycling. Anything else will force us all to spend more and suffer inconveniences. We will be depleting our valuable water resource, spending more and using special bags^{1/4}and for what?

Looks like a lot of benefit for others ... but surely not Villagers. Someone else gets the profit from recycled materials while we get to keep stinky garbage in our garage longer, spend more and deplete water supplies. Holding garbage a full week creates more bug and animal problems in our houses here in The Villages!

This subject needs to be thoroughly discussed by all sides, with thoughts of future problems from the fallout from this impractical and expensive idea.

Let's have a debate and take a vote on this - let Villagers smell ... oops ... I mean decide, what they want.

Linda Rosenbaum

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Letter to the Editor: Recycle - Blood Boiling

I just finished reading the article about recycling in the current issue of the Reporter and my blood is boiling. I have been following this nonsense all along and nonsense it is. Only in The Villages could this be such a difficult and complicated issue to address.

Thousands of communities across the U.S. recycle and have been recycling for years. I lived in one of them -- Summit, NJ -- where recycling started in the 70s!! I have never heard anyone in The Villages state they are against recycling -- quite the contrary -- everyone wonders when The Villages is going to get on board and join the rest of the U.S. and try to save our environment just like the communities that we all came from. By the way, it was mandatory in every one of the four communities where I lived. I guess mandatory is a dirty word here.

My question has to do with these "clear, plastic bags." Where would they be sold and for how much? What is wrong with plastic bins with handles (like every other community uses) and tying up the paper? I would happily pay \$5 per container. This is not rocket science!

My husband and I will continue to do what we have been doing for the last few months ever since we learned of the transfer station off of CR 466. Every three weeks we bring glass, cans, plastic, cardboard, newspaper and mixed paper there. We have one small bag of trash once a week for pickup.

We are doing our best to leave a better environment for our children and grandchildren. Isn't that what it is about?

Carol Dunworth

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Village Greens

Many of you have called and have voiced a concern about our not having the two days a week for regular trash pickup here in The Villages.

I contacted Gary Moyer because of your concerns. He assured me that we will now have the regular two-day pick up for regular household trash, along with an additional day for recyclables, and one other day for yard cuttings.

As soon as the permit is approved, Gary said, you can look forward to seeing an article in the Daily Sun which will explain all we will need to know.

The next meeting of The Village Greens will be held January 23 at Laurel Manor, 6:30 p.m. Trey Arnett, water engineer and advisor for The Villages, will be one of our panelists to discuss the looming problem throughout the world.

Our water shortage discussion will focus on Florida and The Villages. There will be three other panelists, experts in the field, who will present different aspects of the problem. This will include the choices we have in addressing the shortage including conservation methods. There will be a power point presentation and a Q&A period. This is an important meeting. The water shortage is not going away, it is something we are all going to have to deal with.

At our February 27th meeting our guest speaker will be Dough McCoy, district manager in Wildwood for Waste Management. Doug will talk about recycling and present a DVD showing just how recycling will be done for us.

Sue Michalson
352-259-1426

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Letter to the Editor: In Response to Recycling Concerns

The POA Bulletin presents information not normally in The Daily Sun. You have championed Residents' Rights and continue yanking the chains that result in positive change. Resident involvement in the decision making process seems to be a common thread surrounding each issue you take on. And that brings me to recycling.

When a small group of us first posed the idea of an environmental club, which became The Village Greens, one of our key objectives was to make curbside recycling a reality. We attended meetings with County Commissioners, talked with local and state experts, communicated directly with the developer, did our own research in terms of best practice, presented information at our monthly meetings, and lobbied for the program as individuals and as a group. We have tried to educate and inform and, frankly, we were elated when the developer announced that curbside recycling was coming to The Villages.

Based on the letters and articles in the last POA bulletin, there appear to be several concerns, as follows:

Resident Involvement in Decision Making - This is a concept whose time has come to stay. Of course there should be involvement. But in this case, as the article in the Bulletin acknowledged, residents agree, when they purchase their home, to assign the developer sole responsibility to collect solid waste. That it has finally been determined that curbside recycling is the environmentally responsible alternative to toxic landfills, is to be commended. But let's face it; change doesn't come easily and involvement and education, as

The Village Greens have done through their monthly meetings and newsletters, would have helped make the change, if not seamless, at least more understandable to those who have concerns. Questions could have been addressed in open forum. As important, this would have helped promote individual involvement, empowerment and pride in living where residents care about their environment. It is not too late to do this.

Cost - I'm not aware that the final cost to the residents has been determined although the articles and letters in the Bulletin mention an additional \$2.00 per month. If that turns out to be the case, this amounts to less than 7 cents a day or .50 per week. Residents will need to purchase clear bags for their recyclables and this too will amount to pennies per day. That is a small cost to pay in lieu of the environmental disasters resulting from landfills or of individuals personally transporting limited recyclables to local facilities. As far as companies making a profit from our trash, well, that's what they're in business to do. Frankly, I hope they make a bundle, but given their investment in magnets, fiber optics, sorting equipment, vehicles, fuel, and labor, that isn't likely.

Trash Pickup to Once a Week - As of this writing, we're assuming there will be a reduction; but like the issue of cost, there has been no formal announcement. But let's think about this rationally. How much trash that now ends up in our bags could be recycled? All those newspapers, catalogs, cans, plastic, glass, and cardboard won't be taking up space we currently use for trash. Given garbage disposals in most of our homes, surely trash pickup one day per week will be sufficient. Most of us come from communities that picked up trash just once per week, where summers are as hot as here and where homes housed families creating a lot more trash than we do. We've just become used to doing things a certain way. But this is one change we should embrace.

Use of Existing Facilities - There are several local organizations, as noted in the Bulletin, that accept newspapers and aluminum cans. And residents can continue to use these if they choose. There are also recycling facilities on Rolling Acres Road and in Marion County where residents can take recyclables. The reality is that relatively few of our 50,000 residents do this. Some can't because of physical limitations - most don't because it just isn't convenient to load up the car or golf cart and drive several miles every week to these facilities. It is also important to note that most local organizations do not accept glass, plastic, catalogs and other recyclables so depending on them, or the residents themselves to do it all, ignores basic realities. Curbside recycling will be easy^{1/4} just as easy as it has become to place yard waste in a separate bag. No bins, no mess, no sorting of recyclables.

The concept of recycling is a no-brainer. Few could argue rationally against its value. But like all good ideas, successful implementation requires understanding and commitment from those implementing it. People need information for that to happen and the developer would gain much from providing those opportunities.

Marsha Shearer
Board Member,
The Village Greens

From the POA Website Forum: Hustlers Billiard Room

Nov 15: Have you ever been to Hustlers Billiard Room? It is located under the La Hacienda Recreation Center at the farthest end of the parking lot. Compare it to all other billiard rooms, Hustlers is a disgrace. I feel it is about time the POA take a stand like they did with Paradise Recreation Center. Hustler is outdated and full of mold. The place needs a fresh coat of paint. The mold on the ceiling needs quick attention. The hardware on the billiard tables need a good cleaning. Take a look at the bathroom, it is outdated too. The other day the toilet ran over. This week the Billiard rooms at Chatham, Bridgeport, Canal Street, Saddlebrook, Chula Vista, etc., are fresh looking, bright, nice wallpaper, beautiful decor. The same should be done with Hustlers. I would be glad to serve on a volunteer committee making some decisions on refurbishing the Hustlers Billiard Room. Come on, get with it.

Editor's Note: You have a good point. Now we have the RAC as a vehicle for residents' concerns, issues, etc., about the amenity programs and all related issues. You should consider going to the next RAC meeting and bringing up your concern to the RAC board. Yes, the POA could get involved, but it is best for the residents experiencing a problem to speak up because there is no substitute for direct resident involvement on issues like this

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Short Comments

If you need help on any elder healthcare issue or problem, please call the Shine Elder Help line at 1-800-963-5337. You can also call Harold Barnes, a Villages resident, at 753-8810. Or you can talk to Harold personally at the POA monthly meetings. Harold is an invaluable source of information on all health insurance and drug insurance questions, either through Medicare or other insurance plans.

If you see Bulletins lying in the street or the gutter after delivery, or if you know a house is unoccupied, please pick up the Bulletins and either hold them for the residents' return, or discard them. This is especially important during windy or rainy weather. Thank you for your help on this.

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From the POA Website Forum: Morse Bridge

Nov 28: On the Morse Blvd. bridge going to Sumter Landing, the large curb on the drivers right, separating the golf cart path from the street (Morse Blvd) should be painted white. If you notice the curb has plenty of black tire marks from cars running into the curb. This curb is very dangerous, especially at night. To someone looking at this between the road, the curb, the golf cart path, the concrete all looks one level. Wouldn't some WHITE PAINT on the curb over the bridge make driving safer?

Dec 5: You have a legitimate concern. Based on the number of posts on this forum, I doubt if your post will be viewed by a responsible party. There is a "suggestion box" at most of the postal facilities where you pick up your mail. I think they are maintained by the Home Owners Association. Fill out one of the forms and drop it in. This may be a problem that should be addressed by Sumter County. By the way, I think someone goofed when the bridge was designed. That cart path is way too narrow and there is no way to fix it now other than make it more visible, as you suggest. Another suggestion: bring it to the attention of the Residence Advisory Committee.

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Goodbye Reporter

The Reporter newspaper, a unit of the Ocala Star Banner, has ceased publication. However, its website, myreporter.com, will continue to publish news about The Villages and central Florida from the Star Banner.

The Reporter served The Villages for about 3-4 years. During that time, it came to be known as a good source of news reporting on the stories that The Villages Daily Sun either ignored or censored.

We can only hope that the other newspapers circulating in this area from Ocala, Leesburg, and Orlando pick up the slack.

The Villages needs a professional journalism voice for its local news that is not

addressed by the Daily Sun and not controlled by the developer. We hate to think of what will happen to the Daily Sun's news reporting when it no longer has a publication like the Reporter to keep it close to the credibility line on most stories.

Thanks, finally, to the Reporter for a job well done. All the best to its staff and reporters.

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New Year's Eve On the Squares

The Villages Entertainment Division has decided not to have reserved tables on the Squares after all.

That was after a howl from residents about elitism and charging residents again for what our amenities pay for in the first place.

So, the decision was made to eliminate the reserved (and costly) tables and to revert to the normal hours for entertainment (5 to 9 p.m.). The reason given was for "safety as our first concern."

We couldn't help noticing that the Entertainment Division knew about these so-called "safety concerns" last year and still planned the activities for this year. Probably a good decision to cancel the tables, but we wonder why it took so long to decide. Was it the money from the "sale" of the tables?

Another point needs clarification: the amenities paid by Villagers do not pay for entertainment on the Squares. This is paid for by the developer, the merchants in the downtown area, and the frequent vendors. Thus, it is not true that we residents are paying for entertainment on the Squares for visitors and other locals not living in The Villages.

We are unhappy that activities on the Squares are suppose to end at 9:00 p.m. It would be nice to have a "Countdown To Midnight Event" like those in many big cities around the world. With the organizational expertise and capabilities of The Villages, that would be a nice feather in the cap for our community. Just like New York Times Square.

And, if more security personnel are needed, just do it.

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From the POA Website Forum: Entertainment on The Squares

Dec 9: The Entertainment Department I believe is under the VCCDD just like Recreation Centers, Executive golf courses, swimming pools, etc. Entertainment books all the bands at both squares plus all the shows at Church on the Square, Antique Car Shows, etc. I too question, how come outsiders can come here, enjoy free entertainment, when we the residents pay for a percentage out of our amenities? Residents should come first when it comes to free shows. What about showing your ID ... outsiders take the back rows and no saving seats?

Dec 15: Before we go off the deep end on this subject, it might be a good idea to find out who pays for the entertainment at the town squares. It is my understanding it is the merchants. Even if it isn't, there is so much available to the residents why not share a little with our neighbors? Meanwhile, a call to the Entertainment Department may be in order to get clarification.

Dec 15: I would add that if the entertainment is what brings "outsiders" to our town squares ... so be it. If they did not come and visit the restaurants and shops, these would all be closed in a few months.

Editor's Note: Entertainment on the Squares is paid for by the developer's corporation, the merchants in and around the Squares, and the weekly vendors. No amenity fees from residents are used for this purpose. On special occasions, amenity fees are used for security, crowd control, etc. for special events like parades and festivals that are sponsored by resident clubs and organizations.

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From the POA Website Forum: Paradise Dog Park

Dec 13: Thumbs Up to the Residents Advisory Council in taking a stand on forming a focus group to explore the Paradise dog park idea. What made the residents think that Paradise Lake Park is a free-for-all doggie park? There are doggie parks available for those who want their dogs to meet other dogs. Paradise Park was supposed to be developed as a picnic area for the family and their guest ... what happen? Could you have a picnic there now? Better watch where you step and OH, the smell! I hope the officer who is patrolling gives out tickets and enforces the Florida lease laws.

Dec 15: Leash laws are a necessity and I agree they should be vigorously enforced. Lady Lake not only has a right to enforce them, they have a duty. I

have no problem with providing a designated, fenced area for exercising dogs off leash. But, not at the expense of utilizing existing areas for this purpose. I am somewhat sympathetic to the dog owners, but they knew the rules when they moved here. Leash laws are ignored throughout The Villages, not just Paradise Park. Dogs are not only permitted to relieve themselves on other's property, they are encouraged to.

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Letter to the Editor: Almost Bought Here

As a resident of Florida for some 35 years and a regular reader of your monthly Bulletin, I want to thank you for your support of the Home Town Democracy petition drive.

I have found that newcomers generally do not know how this state has been raped and how development generally has ruined everything from the land to the atmosphere.

It is time that development be controlled and it is very obvious that the elected representatives cannot and will not do it.

I am not against growth, but I want it controlled. As an example, the water plant which was proposed for the local area.

I almost became a resident of the Villages and after reading about the siding problem, I suspect that I would be one of your most ardent supporters had I have purchased there.

I found that within 24 hours of my anticipated purchase I was asking questions that were not being answered.

Keep up the community spirit.

Don Sines/Stonecrest

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Letter to the Editor:

Visitors Allowed (?) in The Villages

We all have seen articles written questioning the use of OUR sports pools by charter school students. The poor answer by The Villages was that we can use the school gym. WHAT ABOUT ALL THE VILLAGERS THAT PAY THE AMENITY DOLLARS for our pools that have NO interest in going to the school gym.

Also, there are teams (Softball) & now Pickleball (paddle girls) that play teams outside The Villages from Stonecrest & Dell Web Spruce Creek; and the opposing teams come and play in the Villages. These opposing teams have players who live in MARION COUNTY.

I think the competition among surrounding retirement communities is great. In fact I have friends that play in the softball league and also friends in the paddle girl group.

My problem with situation is that while I am not in any of these teams, I do play pickleball at Stonecrest (open play) as a guest of a friend that lives there; BUT I CANNOT HAVE THAT FRIEND HERE AS MY GUEST.

Also, while we are on the subject of GUESTS in the Villages, it is my understanding that a Village resident can have children and grandchildren visit and use our facilities UNLIMITED TIMES a year. But a SINGLE PERSON (without children or grandchildren) PAYING THE SAME AMENITY FEES as the people with children and grandchildren cannot have a significant other living in the surrounding counties VISIT AND USE THE FACILITIES.

I understand that STONECREST gets four passes when they buy the house, and these four passes can be used by any one at any time.

Maybe a study should be done of other retirement communities.

Bill Storck

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