

# The POA BULLETIN

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages

Issue 34.07

Champion of Residents' Rights Since 1975

July 2008

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## **The Vinyl Siding Issue: POA Progress and a Suggested Solution**

The POA Bulletin has been printing stories about the vinyl siding problem for about a year-and-a-half now. The volunteers on the POA Vinyl Siding Committee have given extensively of their personal time and have checked over 1,000 vinyl sided houses. We have made a considerable effort to address the problems and are pleased to have attained some worthwhile progress.

In summary now, we can point to some successes as follows:

- People have become aware of the potential problems and have educated themselves about proper installation techniques,
- Many residents have had the defects in their vinyl siding installation repaired,
- Many homes that could have suffered significant deterioration due to vinyl siding problems have been spared that possible consequence,
- The inadequacies of the warranty program have been exposed,
- The ineptitude of the warranty department has been exposed,
- Some of the managers of the warranty department have been shown to lack good construction experience and judgment and to have a negative pre-disposition when dealing with residents,
- Some less than capable siding sub-contractors have gone out of business,
- Some of the developer's construction companies have been shown to be sloppy, negative, and not worth the "quality" label that the developer advertises,
- Some capable vinyl siding repair companies have been identified,
- Some capable vinyl siding and whole house inspection firms have been identified. In spite of all of these successes, we still don't have a solution. Listed below are the elements of a solution that we wish for and think would be reasonable:
- Acknowledgment by Mr. Morse that these vinyl siding problems exist and

were caused by sub-standard workmanship by his construction people,

- Agreement by Mr. Morse to arrange for independent vinyl siding inspections, at his cost, to determine the extent of problems,
- Agreement by Mr. Morse to perform or pay for the required remedial work,
- Agreement by Mr. Morse to extend the warranties for vinyl siding workmanship and installation issues to a full 10 years or more,
- Agreement by Mr. Morse to reimburse residents for inspections or remedial work already done or paid for by residents.

The POA would like nothing better than to report that Mr. Morse has accepted responsibility for the homes built by his construction companies and is willing to stand behind his product and make things right.

In doing so, Mr. Morse would demonstrate that he wants to take the high road mentioned in his VHA presentation. And he would demonstrate the integrity that we believe is there but that needs to be expressed through his high road actions now.

It would be a great day in The Villages if and when that happens.

We hope it happens soon.

We ask Mr. Morse to please stop stalling, take the high road (it's not too late), demonstrate your integrity, and make things right for the many residents who have come here to recognize the dream of Harold Schwartz - to have a happy retirement.

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## **Status of the Hospital Review Effort**

In the previous issue of the POA Bulletin, we mentioned that we sent letters to the federal and state agencies responsible for certifying and regulating hospitals. We heard back from both indicating that each has started an investigation of The Villages Regional Hospital (TVRH). We expect to hear from both for follow-up activities. However, this may take some time and we are not sure how rapidly the follow-up will occur.

In the meantime, we have now received over 130 letters or stories, via either regular mail or email, explaining the writer's experience with the emergency room at TVRH. Some of the stories are very disturbing about the quality of care given by the emergency room. We continue to believe that TVRH may be providing sub-standard care in many of the cases we have been told about.

We noticed that the problems mentioned go way beyond the long wait times

and over-crowding that seem to be common in many communities. Some of the problems we are seeing often describe:

- Questionable triage,
- Inattentive care,
- Mis-diagnosis,
- Rude staff,
- Lost tests and paperwork,
- Poor communication in English,
- Overworked staff,
- Poor staff training,
- Understaffed departments,
- Lack of on-call specialists,
- Poor nutritional support,
- Inadequate facilities, etc.

We would ask that residents with stories about the emergency room that they would like to share with us, be these positive or negative, to please write or email their stories to us. We will respect your confidentiality.

It is important that you tell us your story so that we have the most comprehensive picture of the situation in TVRH. Please don't delay or forget to do this - we need your story. If you don't tell us your story, we may not have enough of the picture to convince the certification and regulation agencies that change is needed. Please do it now.

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## The Next POA Meeting Is On Tues, July 15

The next POA membership meeting will be on Tuesday, July 15, in the Laurel Manor Recreation Center at 7:00 p.m.

Please note that we are back to the Laurel Manor Recreation Center and our regularly scheduled meeting day on the third Tuesday of the month.

**The staff of the Paramount Urgent Care Center, newly formed in Santa Fe Crossing Shopping Center on Highway 466, will speak about what an Urgent Care Center offers compared to an Emergency Room.**

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

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## Lofty Goals And the High Road

In his presentation to the VHA recently, Mark Morse said the following: "If you want to achieve lofty goals, you've got to take the high road."

Inspiring language, certainly. The problem is that Mr. Morse finds things like this easy to say - but, he is not following his own inspiring language.

Case in point - the vinyl siding problem. Mr. Morse says he builds a quality product. But, if so, where did all of these overwhelming vinyl siding problems come from?

Our Vinyl Siding Committee has checked the vinyl siding on over 1,000 Villages homes and has not found one that is without problems. Most of the problems relate to the decision of The Villages to ignore manufacturer's instructions and cut corners in the installation process. Furthermore, it appears that inadequate training and inexperienced workers just magnified the sub-standard workmanship problem. And, we can see bad decision-making in how some basic good construction rules were broken.

Is this the high road to lofty goals mentioned by Mr. Morse? We don't think so.

If you want to see the high road to lofty goals in action, consider the Tylenol recall problem from 1982. Several people died after taking Tylenol which had been laced with poison by a still unknown person.

The manufacturer of Tylenol, Johnson & Johnson, didn't know whether the problem was a manufacturing problem, or a distribution problem, or a local problem, or a national problem, or a tampering problem somewhere between the manufacturing plant and the customer.

But, with uncertainty about the cause, and the prospect of more people dying from taking the product before the cause could be identified, Johnson & Johnson made the high-road decision - it recalled every bottle of Tylenol in the entire country. This covered 31 million bottles with a retail value then of over \$100 million

Yes, it was a huge expense and effort. But, Johnson & Johnson felt an obligation to not only its loyal customers, but also to stand behind its product, and took the high road. Why? Because the management of Johnson & Johnson had character and integrity and wanted to maintain the trust of its customers.

Now, what lessons are there here for Mr. Morse?

The question is what should Mr. Morse have done when the vinyl siding problem first emerged a-year-and-a-half ago?

If Mr. Morse wanted to achieve his lofty goal (of building quality homes), he should have taken the high road, by acknowledging the problem, and offering to stand behind his product.

Mr. Morse should have investigated the problem quickly, and, once discovering that it was sub-standard workmanship on the part of his construction crews, he should have offered to repair the vinyl siding installation on any home with a documented vinyl siding problem.

That would have been the high road approach to building quality homes. It is very disappointing that this high road was not taken.

We ask Mr. Morse to please stop stalling, take the high road (it's not too late), demonstrate your integrity, and make things right for the many residents who have come here to recognize the dream of Harold Schwartz - to have a happy retirement.

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## Summary of the Recent Lawsuit Settlement

Here is a summary of the main points of the recent lawsuit settlement with the developer covering the area of The Villages north of highway 466 in the VCCDD administration area:

1. The total value of the lawsuit settlement amounts to \$50,423,544, paid as follows: \$39,823,544 in cash is to be paid by the developer into the amenity fund of the VCCDD and an additional \$7,000,000 in cash paid by the Developer was ordered by the Court for legal fees and expenses. Further, an additional \$3,600,000 was identified in annual VCCDD budgets as money which should have been placed in the Renewal and Replacement Reserve account, and this was officially moved to the R & R account, thus insuring that these funds will also be under the direct control of the soon-to-be-elected Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) described below.
2. The Developer has already made an immediate payment of \$11,803,168. It was agreed that \$2,812,295 would be used immediately to pay off the remaining debt on the Paradise Recreation Center renovation project. The remaining \$8,990,873 was negotiated to provide \$4,243,600 for renovation of the 8 miles of recreation trails north of CR 466 and \$4,757,273 for the Renewal and Replacement Reserve fund. The actual decision on how to spend this remaining \$8,990,873 will be determined by the AAC.
3. Over the next 13 years, the Developer will pay a total of \$28,020,376 into the amenity fund of the VCCDD with the first payment in the amount of \$1,748,659 in December of 2008. The largest annual amount is in 2018 in the amount of \$3,104,103 and the smallest is \$166,695 which will occur in 2020, the last year of the payments. This additional funding was required until the year 2020, at which time the reduction in bond debt, due to scheduled amortized pay-off of some of the earlier bonds, is calculated to be sufficiently reduced for regular amenity fees to provide adequate funds.

These funds were secured to assure monies for the services that had been reduced (pool monitors, decrease in Neighborhood Watch services, recreation facility monitors, etc.) and to pay expenses that were not budgeted at the time of the revenue bond issues (Renewal and Replacement Reserves, recreation trail and tunnel maintenance and reserves, retention pond maintenance and repair, and additional funds for unforeseen circumstances such as substantial increases in the minimum wage).

4. The settlement also includes the creation (which occurred last month) by Interlocal Agreement of an Amenity Authority Committee (AAC), whose members will be one resident, elected by residents, in land owner elections, in CDDs 1, 2, 3, 4 and the Lake County portion of The Villages. One member of the VCCDD Board of Supervisors will also serve on the six-member Committee. The AAC will have: (a) discretion over expenditures of all non-bond required amenity funds and the rate setting of amenity facility user fees; (b) operational control over the amenity facilities and services; (c) approval or disapproval over future debt secured by amenity fees or facilities, sale, assignment or trade of amenity facilities, and future areas to be brought within the VCCDD Service Territory (excepting no more than 300 additional dwelling units without AAC approval); and (d) authority to establish a maximum amenity fee for the VCCDD Service Territory.

5. An agreement that the number of executive golf tee-times reserved for sales purposes for prospective residents shall not exceed a monthly maximum of 325 of the approximately 25,000 tee-times available on the VCCDD-operated executive courses.

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## Bulletin Delivery

We need your help for Bulletin delivery.

During some times of the year, especially the summer months, the Bulletin is sometimes delivered to unoccupied houses. The homeowner may be away for vacation, or may be a snowbird. And, the Bulletin may lie on the driveway for some time. We ask if neighbors could pick up the Bulletin when these situations occur, or at other times during inclement weather, and either discard the Bulletin or hold it for the resident's return.

Those who know they will be away for any length of time can contact us at the email address: [delivery@poa4us.org](mailto:delivery@poa4us.org) and advise us to put you on our "No-Throw" list. Just include your name, address, village or villa, and the time period for which you do not want the Bulletin delivered. We'll do our best to not throw the Bulletin on your driveway as you request.

Thanks and we do appreciate your help.

## Cheers and Jeers

**Cheers** - To The Villages Regional Hospital for sponsoring the Teen Age Volunteers program this summer. The TAV program focuses on 14 - 18 year-old students and gives them insights into various health care careers through volunteer work in various departments of the hospital. Students will work with various staff and administration officials and interact with patients when possible under the direct supervision of TVRH personnel. This is a good way for local students to test their interests in various health care professions, from nurses to doctors and administrative staff.

**Jeers** - To Roger Kass, president of the VHA for his continuing conflict-of-interest over his position as president of the VHA and his job working for the developer. Roger is dependent on the goodwill of the developer for a paycheck and then praises the developer on various issues, vinyl siding included. Roger should resign one of those positions, preferably the VHA presidency, since his actions show poor judgment in the performance of his official duties.

**Cheers** - To Janet Tutt for organizing the new Customer Service Center. Great idea - long overdue. Thanks.

**Jeers** - To Lee Huntley, new CEO of LRMC, and Tim Menton, administrator in charge of TVRH, for wasting a lot of money on "feel good" and "pat yourself on the back" ads in the Daily Sun and glossy brochures. That money would have been better spent on hiring more staff, paying better wages, and organizing more effective recruiting for TVRH. Prime need: another doctor at critical times for the Emergency Room.

**Jeers** - To the VHA for not supporting the POA's effort to improve the quality of medical care in the Villages Hospital Emergency Room and for continuing to insist that the hospital is "one of the finest hospital facilities in the country." Also Jeers to the VHA for not joining the POA in its call to the developer for an accounting of where the annual charges of \$700,000 for the recycling effort goes.

**Cheers** - To the VCCDD and the RAC for opening our first "dog park." We can only say thanks and "woof-woof" for a job well done.

**Cheers** - To Lake County for a smart and enlightened garbage recycling program that provides real financial benefits to county residents for their recycling efforts.



# Stages of Truth

"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident."

Arthur Schopenhaur

**Editor's Note:** Do these first two stages describe the response of the Villages Hospital to the initiative of the POA regarding problems in the ER and the hospital itself? And, maybe also, the developer's response to the POA comments on the vinyl siding issue?

Schopenhaur was a German philosopher who died in 1860. We wonder if he lived in a vinyl sided house?

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## The POA Celebrates 5,000 Members

The POA passed a significant milestone when our membership officially passed 5,000. Congratulations to all on this great achievement.

As recently as 2001/2002, the POA membership stood at approximately 500-700. The compound annual growth rate since then has been about 40% per year. This compares to a compound annual growth rate for the population of The Villages during this period of approximately 18% per year.

**We feel the rapid growth of the POA is attributable to the POA's efforts to speak up for residents about significant issues affecting all Villagers.**

Whether it was the Nancy Lopez pond sinkhole ... the Sumter County hospital tax ... the start of the hospital expansion ... the renovation of the Paradise Center ... the vinyl siding problems ... the problems with the Villages Hospital emergency room ... the closing of the Chula Vista and Silver Lake recreation centers ... the location of the Bob Evans restaurant ... the central districts' activity policy ... the developer reneging on his granting of free amenities to some residents ... the lawsuit over the use of the "maintenance fees" ... and most recently, the \$50 million lawsuit settlement - the POA was there to speak up and fight for Residents' Rights.

We champion Residents' Rights for all Villagers ever since our founding in 1975. People understand that we are fighting for them, they identify with our efforts on their behalf, and they support their POA. That is why we have grown

as rapidly as we have over these recent years.

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## A Letter to Sarah

A week before the battle of Bull Run, Sullivan Ballou, a Major in the 2nd Rhode Island Volunteers, wrote home to his wife in Smithfield.

\*\*\*\*\*

July 14, 1861, Camp Clark, Washington DC

Dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days - perhaps tomorrow. And lest I should not be able to write you again I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I am no more.

I have no misgivings about, or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged, and my courage does not halt or falter. I know how American Civilization now leans upon the triumph of the government and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us through the blood and suffering of the Revolution. And I am willing - perfectly willing - to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this government, and to pay that debt.

Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing but omnipotence can break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me irresistibly with all those chains to the battlefield.

The memory of all the blissful moments I have enjoyed with you come crowding over me, and I feel most deeply grateful to God and you, that I have enjoyed them for so long. And how hard it is for me to give them up and burn to ashes the hopes and future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together, and see our boys grown up to honorable manhood around us.

If I do not return, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I loved you, nor that when my last breath escapes me on the battle field, it will whisper your name...

Forgive my many faults, and the many pains I have caused you. How thoughtless, how foolish I have sometimes been!...

But, O Sarah, if the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they love, I shall always be with you, in the brightest day and in the darkest night ... always, always. And when the soft breeze fans your cheek, it shall be my breath, or the cool air your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit

passing by.

Sarah do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for me, for we shall meet again....

\*\*\*\*\*

Sullivan Ballou was killed a week later at the 1st Battle of Bull Run.

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Source: The Civil War TV series by Ken Burns.

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## POA Membership Renewals for 2008

We are sending out emails and letters to POA members as a reminder about renewing their 2008 membership in the POA. These emails and letters are being sent out in the first half of July. If you don't received an email or letter from us in this timeframe, then we don't have at least your information on file.

We are using email more and more because of the low cost compared to sending out membership renewal notices by regular mail. It would be a big help to us to have your email address on file. For each membership renewal notice, the difference is about 50 cents for letters versus emails.

So, if you don't received an email or letter from us, we would appreciate it if your could at the very least email your name and address to us so that we can update our membership database. If either a letter or an email gets through to you, then we have your up-to-date contact information.

Email your current information to us at: [poamembership@thevillages.net](mailto:poamembership@thevillages.net)

We will not sell or use your membership information for any purpose other than our membership database. So, it would be most helpful to have your information on file. Thanks in advance for your help.

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# ALCOA Vinyl Siding Defects

Recently the POA Vinyl Siding Committee has received inquiries from homeowners in one Courtyard Villa neighborhood who are puzzled about letters they received from Alcoa Home Exteriors (Plygem). There are two versions of the letter: one states that their home has had a "thorough field inspection" and no defects have been found; the other tells homeowners there is a product defect (without specifying the extent or the defect), and that defective portions of siding will be replaced. An unspecified cash settlement is offered as an alternative.

Apparently, there are about 30 homes that have received this second letter, and from those who followed up on it, we learned that the defect is in the formulation or coating of the vinyl, making it susceptible to fading, and giving a blotchy effect. According to the letter, Alcoa plans to remedy "only a portion of the product." We do not know if any other homes or neighborhoods are involved.

Our Committee members question a number of things about this situation:

1. How could a "thorough field inspection" have been conducted without the majority of those we spoke to knowing anything about it?
2. How could a "thorough field inspection" have been done when some of the homeowners keep their courtyard gates locked, and they were not contacted to allow access to their back yards? 3. For those homeowners who were not at home to give permission for access, why did the "inspector" trespass on their property? This was not an emergency situation and many homeowners do not want anyone on their property without their knowledge or permission.
4. The wording of the "no product issues" letter has led some homeowners to believe that nothing is wrong with the installation, either. This situation has nothing to do with installation problems.
5. If portions of the siding exposed to long periods of sunlight have visible defects now, won't the same defects show up on the rest of the home as the total sun exposure increases over time? How will your home look in 5 or 10 years?
6. Homeowners told us that Alcoa expects them to sign off on the repair. What recourse will they have when the same problem shows up in other places in the future?
7. Doesn't it make more sense to re-side the entire home? If Alcoa realizes there was something wrong with the formulation or manufacturing process, wouldn't that effect the entire "lot" made from that mix of material? Replacing a few panels that have visible problems now is just a "band-aid" fix.
8. If you sell your home in the future, you may be required to disclose any problems, and this could have a significant dollar affect on the value of your property; or you may have to make another claim with Alcoa (if you still can, having signed off on the repair) or fix it, at your own expense.

We urge residents who have received either of these letters from Alcoa to be particularly cautious when dealing with this issue. We feel that the correct

repair would be to re-side the entire home, not just a few panels on the front or the side. Additionally, the "thorough inspection" should be done, by appointment, when the homeowner is present.

Please note that in the course of observing so many homes, we have often noticed significant fading and "chalking" of shutters, as well as some vinyl panels. This condition may be covered by Alcoa as a "product failure" since the product itself carries a lifetime limited warranty. This concerns the vinyl material itself, not the installation. Alcoa's Product Failure Department can be reached at (800) 962-3563. As always, make sure all repairs are done completely to your satisfaction before you sign anything. If you are unsure, have the work checked independently before you sign off!

The POA Vinyl Siding Committee

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## Letter to the Editor: Thanks to the Vinyl Siding Committee

Please extend our most sincere thanks to Ray Micucci and the POA Vinyl Siding Committee for their services and outstanding efforts on behalf of Villages homeowners. The POA is the one organization in our community with a proven record of looking after the best interests of Villages homeowners.

Glenn Pannell

**Editor's Note:** Thanks from Ray Micucci and thanks also from the POA. We don't hear enough good comments about the work we do.

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## Letter to the Editor: More Vinyl Siding Thanks

I am so GRATEFUL for you people.

I year ago I called the Warranty Dept regarding my vinyl siding.

At 2 am one night I was awakened by such a loud noise I thought the house was blowing away or falling apart. I called The Warranty Dept the next day and they sent a worker from F&R, and guess what he said? There is nothing wrong.

I felt crazy, but every time it rained or was windy I could hear the siding blowing. I knew one year later they would not send someone again, so I hired a man that had an ad in the POA.

I have pages of problems, and he specifically wrote that the TRIM needs to be installed at all locations. Horizontal J- channels under eaves and windows.

The installer sent by the warranty department said he could not do it the way Alcoa or the inspector suggested. He said there is a revised way.

I called the warranty department and got Dennis, a real charmer. He said the same. I asked for written documentation to be sent to me stating this revised method. He did and now I'm trying to contact Alan Hoying (Alcoa Technical Services Manager) without much success. He is the person that wrote the letter of the revision dated Dec 6, 2006. I'm trying to find out the date of the revision from Alcoa.

I bought Sept, 2005. I live in Tall Trees and there has been so many problems here since day #1. If you or any others can add any info to the above I would appreciate it.

Keep up your amazing work.

Mary B. Farrell

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## **Letter to the Editor: Lynnhaven Vinyl**

I live in the Village of Lynnhaven. For the past few months now, siding companies have been in here and inspected and re-sided just about every house in the neighborhood.

My house is all wavy and there are bellies...I called the Warranty Dept. and they sent out someone who inspected and said that the house was fine.

I decided that I needed a home inspection and I called Mike at Precision Home Inspections and he came and gave me a report. There were bellies, wavy siding and also trim missing around the windows.

I then called Warranty again and they now sent out a fellow named Chris Andrea who I believe is with McDowell Construction who is the builder of my home. He basically told me that they are not residing any more houses and the J channels around the windows were not being done anymore because they looked terrible and stuck out. He also said that he would only repair gaps.

I called Warranty again and they said that they would call McDowell and have them contact me. I am waiting for the phone call from McDowell.

My plans are to have it re-inspected again and again and again until it is fixed correctly. I get the feeling that these builders are coming out to look to make it look good for The Villages but could care less about doing the work correctly.

Is there anything else I should be doing to have my house sided correctly? I also told Chris Andrea that I wanted to see certifications of anyone who works on my home. He wasn't too happy!!!

Carole Hannigan

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## Online Letters: Home Inspections

**Editor's Note:** This is an exchange between a potential home buyer in The Villages trying to contact the POA. The contact person in this exchange is at the website called [The\\_Villages\\_OnLine](#):

Hi guys! I am renting here---about ready to make a purchase when I read your newspaper delivered to my rental unit this morning. Is there any way to have my vinyl siding checked on my potential new home before I make an offer? All this talk about the poor quality of the homes built South of 466 is scaring me. I am by myself...and don't really understand a lot about home building! The home I planned to buy is in Hadley Village. Also, if the hospital in The Villages is less than satisfactory--where do you guys go?

Lynn Fitzgerald

Lynn: First, welcome to The Villages. Glad you have chosen to move here.

Second, we are not connected with the POA. They are located on our web site at this link <http://the-villages-online.com/> associations. I would suggest you have a home inspection done before closing and have a lawyer present when you close. I chose an inspection company from Orlando because of my experience when selling my house in Orlando. He represented the buyer there. All in all there are a few problems in The Villages, but at least 90% of it's right. Like always the buyer should be wary and protect himself. I would check with The POA. They may be able to recommend some one on both counts.

**Editor's Note:** See the various ads here in this issue of the POA Bulletin for vinyl siding and whole house inspectors.

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## Letter to the Editor: Bulletin No Throw

Please notice a comment in today's Villages Daily Sun (Page C4) regarding CDDs budgets.

For CDD 3, Gail Lazenby "expressed concern" about "free publications that do not require a subscription and that are thrown in driveways only to later become street debris or litter". Read on, to Janet Tutt's response.

We appreciate delivery of your "free publications", & want to continue to receive them. That's all I care to say on the subject at this time, but my thoughts are activated :))!

Please keep it "real", as Bill Maher says, giving us the un-embellished facts of what is going on in our community. We appreciate honesty without "spin".

Carole Del Monte

**Editor's Note:** We are also concerned about Bulletins which may sit for some time in driveways of unoccupied houses. For residents who will be away, we ask that they contact us at: [delivery@poa4us.org](mailto:delivery@poa4us.org) beforehand and ask that their house be put on our "No-Throw" list for the months during which they will not be there. We will then try our best to avoid throwing the Bulletin on their driveway. For others who may be away for several days about the time of the delivery, we ask neighbors if they could pick up the Bulletin and either save it for the resident's return or discard it. Thanks in advance to all who try to be a "good neighbor" and help us on this important task.

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## Letter to the Editor: Cheers to the POA

I just cannot understand, or endure, the charges of negativity directed at the POA, so I decided to award you three cheers on my personal list of "Cheers and Jeers."

Cheers to you for providing critical information to Villages residents - it's great to be treated like intelligent adults for a change!

Cheers to you for identifying and addressing issues adversely affecting our community - a daunting task in the face of so much resistance!

And Cheers to you for your dedication and for sacrificing your leisure and peace of mind on our behalf!

My husband and I have personally experienced the appalling construction practices used in homes built in the 2005-2006 time frame. Even before closing, we'd submitted pages of defects to be corrected, and we reported a multitude more during the warranty period. We, also, found that the level of resistance of the Warranty Department was proportional to the costliness of the correction. Because of your reporting last year, we had AmeriPro perform a whole house inspection and have since spent many hundreds of our own dollars to correct construction problems that could well have caused significant damage in the future.

I learned firsthand, also, the inadequacies of The Villages Regional Hospital's emergency room when I accompanied my friend there last year after her accident. I won't go into details of that horrific experience now, but I want to say that you are spot-on with your recent reporting.

It amazes me that folks want to "shoot the messenger" (i.e., the POA) and are willing to give the developer a free pass because of the "Villages lifestyle he provides." The Villages IS a lovely environment and a fun community, but we all pay for that lifestyle when we buy our homes and through our amenities fees. Further, the "Villages lifestyle" works to the benefit of the developer. It is key to his marketing plan, as it alone sets The Villages apart from other developments offering far more house and property for the price. This symbiosis works for all and I'm not knocking it! But let's not be naive either.

I guess there are residents who wish to retain the Villages fantasy of a carefree retirement at all costs and who lack compassion for their less fortunate neighbors. But, just as with people we love, we can maintain our affection for The Villages while acknowledging its flaws. The POA attempts to make The Villages the best it can be for all homeowners, thus fulfilling the fantasy. We should be grateful that we have a tireless and informed ombudsman working on our behalf while the rest of us enjoy our leisure.

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## Letter to the POA President

Below is part of a personal letter addressed to Joe Gorman, president of the POA:

I was at breakfast this a.m. with other [residents]. One of them brought up the latest issue of the Bulletin and the hospital issue. They were VERY supportive of the POA, VERY grateful that it is working the issue. Two of them said they had considered writing letters, but hadn't done it. I strongly urged them to follow through. They were also supportive of the [vinyl] siding committee. You once commented ... that you appreciated feedback, so now you have some. I hope the two other hospital-story people do write.

P.S.: They especially liked the bit where [the Bulletin] took the [hospital] paragraph from 4.5 years ago, and it could all be about right now.

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## From the POA Website Forum: Hospital Stories

**Jun 13:** At best, most ER's are filled with horror stories. Having said that, my only personal experience with the ER at TVRH was positive. In fact, the ER Dr. found something my personal Dr. had missed.

Sometime ago an article appeared in the Sun introducing some management change at TRVH. Reading between the sugar coated lines I detected problems existed that were going to be addressed.

**Jun 14:** While it is true that all hospitals may have some problems that need correcting, that doesn't make it OK. Just because Hospital A has problems, it doesn't make it OK for hospital B to also have problems. Having problems should not be "the norm."

I had a horrible experience in the ER. I have no complaints about the ER

doctor. He was kind and caring, and was able to diagnose my problem. The care was good, but the nurses were the rudest, most insensitive people I have ever met. I was extremely ill, and they had no compassion at all, to the point of being angry at me for being sick. They made a bad situation even worse. These are two people who need different jobs, not working with sick people.

People who put their heads in the sand are fooling themselves. If problems are not fixed, they will only get worse. While The Villages is a wonderful place to live, there are still problems that should be addressed. No matter how wonderful something is, it can always be better.

**Jun 15:** And is that not what TVRH is doing: "trying to get better"? How can TVRH, or any other enterprise serving the public, not improve unless they are provided with people's concerns.

**Jun 15:** My neighbor had the same bad experience.... His doctor corrected it by sending him to LRMC where his experience has been outstanding.

**Jun 21:** ...my experience was last summer. I wrote a letter explaining it in great detail, with the nurses names, to the head of the hospital, and the head of the ER. I heard from the ER, and was promised that the nurses would be "spoken to." I never heard back. I will not go back to this ER again, unless I have no choice!!!!

**Jun 3:** Do the recent full page ads in the Daily Sun explaining what the hospital is doing about wait times in the ER along with the Orlando Sentinel series on hospital ER wait times in Florida and the nation now make the POA Hospital witch hunt irrelevant?

**Jun 4:** I want the hospital to improve. But is the way to do it by soliciting horror stories and then publishing them in the POA news letter? In the meantime the hospital seems well aware of the problem and is applying resources for improvement.

**Jun 7:** Until TVRH solves the current problems with the ER, we will have the same stories repeated in the next six month and beyond, if necessary. To be silent to a very crucial matter is like an Ostrich putting it's head in the sand.

**Jun 7:** If the same problem exists throughout the state and nation, as reported in the Orlando news media, it will take longer than 6 months to fix.

**Jun 11:** ...saying the POA "investigation" was a "witch hunt" could be considered inflammatory. If posters run the risk of being called names because of their opinions, they will not feel comfortable posting on this site. I have witnessed forums be virtually destroyed because of flame wars.

**Jun 12:** You are right. I chose the wrong words to stimulate discussion.

**Editor's Note:** Community discussions about the hospital problems are good - we need community involvement and understanding. Remember these horror stories are real!! And, when you have to go to the TVRH ER, you may become the next horror story. Hopefully, we will have addressed and solved some of these horror stories and the underlying problems before then.

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## From the POA Website Forum: Hospital Tragedy

**Jun 7:** I'm writing in regards to the so-called hospital here in Leesburg. On Feb 20, 2008, we took my brother to urgent care in The Villages. They sent us to the ER at the Leesburg hospital. My brother was having severe, terrible abdominal pain. Three times I went to the desk and begged them to look at him. I was told the whole room was full of sick people. I have no doubt that there were some there sicker than others. We kept waiting our turn and 7 1/2 hours passed. My brother had a twisted colon and got sepsis from the all-but-perforated bowl. Until he got help and was operated on, another day-and-a-half had passed. Needless to say he died. We were told by three doctors that it should have never happened. He survived lung cancer and removal of the left lung 11 years ago. He was cancer free. So, Mark Morse, when you say that anyone who sits in an ER for over 7 hours and lives to tell about it does not belong there, well my brother died there on March 4th. He did not live to tell about it. He was in good health, walked 3 miles a day, and ate right. He did all the right things except go to the Leesburg Hospital. Had we known we were going to have to wait 7 hours we would have taken him to Shands Hospital in Gainesville. He would be alive to tell this story. He was 64 years old.

**Editor's Note:** Our hearts go out to you for the loss of your brother.

Unfortunately, we may be seeing a pattern here between The Villages Hospital and the Leesburg Hospital. The problem here is not just the waiting time which seems to be a continuing problem among hospitals in many communities.

The bigger problems we are seeing here seem to be: defective triage, indifferent staff, insufficient staffing, lack of resources, poor training, mis-diagnosis, etc. What is it about the common attitudes, management, administration, etc., in both The Villages Hospital and the Leesburg Hospital that seems to breed and tolerate this culture of complacency and sub-standard medical care?

We have to identify the problems and their causes before we can identify the solutions. We need straight answers from both hospitals rather than the several ads they placed in the Daily Sun patting themselves on the back for having great people and a great hospitals. The facts appear to say differently. And, that is truly frightening.

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# Florida Hometown Democracy

Florida Hometown Democracy, Inc., filed a federal suit seeking ballot placement for the Florida Hometown Democracy citizens' initiative in the November 2008 election.

Florida Hometown Democracy is the sponsor of a citizens' initiative to amend the Florida Constitution.

The proposed amendment will require that changes to comprehensive land use plans approved by city and commissions be submitted for final approval or rejection by voters.

Hometown Democracy is a response to decades of uncontrolled development that cares nothing for the long term health and sustainability of communities, Florida's unique environmental heritage, or the quality of life of Floridians. Voters must have the final say over changes to their local growth plans because they are the ones who must live with the consequences.

Over 820,000 Floridians signed the Hometown Democracy petition to place the initiative on the November 2008 ballot. The Florida Division of Elections website currently posts 595,368 validly filed petition signatures.

However, numerous actions by the Florida Division of Elections and opponents of Hometown Democracy blocked Hometown Democracy from having its ballot position certified, in violation of the United States Constitution. The suit asks the federal court to examine and overturn these actions and place Hometown Democracy on the November 2008 ballot.

Hometown Democracy President Lesley Blackner urged all supporters to continue to send donations and petitions in support of this important amendment.

She stated: "...we are compelled to take this matter to federal court. The State's constant war against the citizens' right to amend their own constitution must stop.

We look forward to a complete exposé of the tactics employed to deny us our constitutional rights and a swift vindication in court. We fully expect to be on the November ballot."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Lesley Blackner

[www.FloridaHometownDemocracy.com](http://www.FloridaHometownDemocracy.com)

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New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170-0636

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## Letter to the Editor: Bent Steel Beams in Home Construction

This letter is to inform Villages residents who purchased a steel-frame-built home in the Villages with DEFECTIVE STEEL BEAMS.

In November, 2007, I heard a loud continuous sound as if huge logs were rolling on our roof, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM. After investigating, several metal steel beams supporting the roof were found bent. Since this happened, major creaking and cracking sounds occur continuously day and night.

I called home warranty and Mr. Robert Lock inspected the house and found a major problem with twisting of metal beams around air heat escapes.

On 11/13/07 Dean Carter and Jim Boston of Carter Construction inspected the problem.

The Steel Company did an inspection and wanted to down play a serious problem by reinforcing the bent beams ASAP with 2 by 4's.

This will ultimately cost me the homeowner the devaluation of property at resale. I will have to disclose the bent beams, and, also, a professional house inspection will show the inferior workmanship.

After several months of conversation with contractor Dean Carter and Mr. Rick Murray to solve this problem amicably, Mr. Murray, admitted to the failure of inspections by steel delivery personal, erecting crew, roofers, general contractors, and county inspectors of not seeing the problem, and, also admitted that damage had accrued to several of the trusses before they were installed.

This is not satisfactory to a homeowner who paid top dollar for a properly quality-built home and feels he has been short changed.

In my opinion, the developer, contractors and the Village's real estate company may have some legal liability here for any fraud they commit on home buyers. The property was misrepresented to us as being of high quality and meeting or exceeding building code standards.

I cannot understand why Mr. Morse allows construction companies to build poor quality homes. His failure to make a commitment to quality construction and lack of required inspections spoil the image of the Villages and also lowers our home values. In my opinion the Villages developers need to be accountable, legally and financially, and to change their practices. It appears the only way is to "hit them where it hurts," i.e. in the pocket book.

Please, all residents, if you are having any of these problems, please e-mail me at: [lf222222@yahoo.com](mailto:lf222222@yahoo.com)

Len Farish

**Editor's Note:** If residents have similar problems to those described by Mr. Farish, please email him at his address and also copy the POA at [poa4us@gmail.com](mailto:poa4us@gmail.com).

Thanks.

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## **Letter to the Editor: Please, Save the Buffalo**

It is with a heavy heart that I sit down to write this letter concerning my deep feeling of sadness at the loss of our Village buffalo.

Thursday (May 29th) morning we witnessed the rounding up and shuttling of a herd of buffalo and their young calves on to a truck to be removed from the Villages. As might be expected, the buffalo became quite upset, as did the numerous spectators who had gathered to watch the spectacle.

Visiting the fields to watch the buffalo has become a favorite past time here in the Villages ... some of our citizens have even been privileged to be able to observe the birthing process of some of our recent calves.

To now have to part with these buffalo is almost as painful as if someone came into our home and took a member of our family.

Visiting the buffalo has always been one of our favorite activities. Whenever family & friends come to visit, they, too, are always anxious to see the buffalo. They continued to be one of the unique attractions of the Villages ... one that has set us apart from other retirement communities. We know the Village administrators have found creative solutions in the past to solve problems that needed to be addressed. Is there a possibility that they may now turn their attention to the buffalo problem and find a way to maintain their presence for all of us to enjoy? Maybe a double fence could remedy the problem?

We have seldom heard of any problem that has touched the hearts and saddened so many Villagers as the loss of the beloved buffalo. Please realize how very important these animals are to our community. Every time we pass by an "empty field," we are reminded of our recent loss and wonder if there is not something that could be done to rectify the situation.

Jack & Sherry McGraw

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## Vinyl Siding Repair Firms

New Look Exteriors, Steve Justice  
9860 SE 145th Place, Summerfield, FL  
352-288-3040

Brix & Stix, Terry Poortenga, Vice President  
P.O. Box 384, Oxford, FL 34484  
352-330-1817, 352-516-0505 cell  
[www.BrixandStixFraming.com](http://www.BrixandStixFraming.com)

Scott Smith Roofing  
2105 NE 19th Avenue  
Ocala, FL 34470  
(352) 867-0044  
(877) 296-0898

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## Recycling in Lake County

The June 14, 2008, issue of the Orlando Sentinel carried a story about recycling. It was entitled: "County Finds Green Mine in Recycling" and told again the story of the recycling success in Lake County.

According to the Sentinel: "The county handles up to 1,000 tons of recycling a month. Selling that to private customers can bring in about \$100 a ton," or about \$100,000 per month, or \$1.2 million a year.

If the bulk recyclable materials is separated into more valuable components, the take could be up to \$160 a ton, or \$160,000 per month, or \$1.9 million per year.

For all recycling operations, the county nets about \$600,000 per year after paying for the processing and other costs. With a new sorting system now being considered, the county **"could net close to \$1 million" annually.**

Debbie Fore, the coordinator of recycling for Lake County, said that recycling has become more profitable as more companies adapt to the specialized uses of and market for the recycled materials.

Aside from the profit, recycling keeps 1,000 tons of materials a month from



going into the county's landfill or from being burned in county incinerators.

Coming back to the situation in The Villages, we think we could also do this

There are profits to be made from recycling materials.

The problem is that someone other than Villagers is making that profit now.

We need to get an accounting from the developer as to the expenses and revenues being generated by our recycling program. If there is profit to be made here, then Villagers should participate in that.

We might be able to eliminate the \$1.47 to \$2.00 per month recycling charge and even reduce our basic trash charge per month.

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## Buffalo Should Be a Part of The Villages

Letter to the Editor:

First of all, thank you POA for being the resident's voice. We appreciate you. And also a huge thank you to the Morse family and any others responsible for making The Villages one of the nicest places in the world to live. And you need to know how we appreciate what you have done.

I cannot tell you how very upsetting it is to find our buffalo gone. We as a community must do something about this.

Personally, I would like to tar and feather those of you who had the unmitigated gall to sue the Morse family or The Villages. Those of you who are guilty of putting your hands through a fence where there are wild buffalo with new born babies are brain dead. On top of it, you think you have the right to sue for being injured when it is totally your fault.

I say we print the names of these people in the paper so everyone in The Villages knows just who these people are. If there was a monetary settlement they should be made to give it back and apologize for their ignorance.

K A Knutsen

**Editor's Note:** The developer's decision to ban the buffalo was, perhaps, premature. He should have publicized the problem, issued warnings and a disclaimer, improved the fences where the buffalo roamed, set up designated "safe feeding/viewing" areas, and made the effort to continue a really nice feature of The Villages.

## Letter to the Editor: We Need Tunnels! But, Who Pays?

My wife and I have the thought that if there is going to be a tunnel built to the new shopping area south of Rolling Acres Rd. it should be paid for by the companies being there. They want our business; with a tunnel we could get there. If Morse put it in, the cost would be given to all of the residents of this retirement community. That should be also for any other bridges or tunnels built for businesses.

Dale and Ramona Lamb

**Editor's Note:** The POA believes that if a tunnel is put in, the businesses that benefit from the increased traffic should pay the cost, as they now do for parking lots Residents should not be charged for the cost of a tunnel just so we can patronize businesses that will be the beneficiaries of our purchasing power.

But, a more fundamental question is whether we want to have tunnels that will open up our streets and recreation trails to increased golf cart traffic from outside our community. This will bring in people who don't pay the amenity fees that will be needed to pay the cost our recreation trail maintenance. If Water Oaks or Stonecrest, for example, want to access our community by golf cart, then those communities should be charged an annual flat fee for their residents to use our residential recreation trails and parking facilities.

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