

# The POA BULLETIN

The Property Owners' Association of The Villages



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Champion of Residents' Rights Since 1975

October 2008

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## **Important AAC Vote For Us on Nov 4th**

The important Amenity Authority Committee (AAC) vote is set for Tuesday, Nov 4, for residents north of highway 466 in the VCCDD administrative area. This vote is to elect members of the AAC who will officially take office after the vote is tabulated.

This will be a landowner election. This means that a person does not need to be a registered voter to vote; the only requirement is that a person voting is a landowner in the VCCDD area north of highway 466. Thus, foreign nationals and persons maintaining their official voting residence outside The Villages will be able to vote, as long as they own property in the VCCDD area. The only restriction is that just one vote is allowed per household. So, for those households with two or more adults, residents must decide among themselves which person will cast the single vote.

Please also note that this landowner election may not necessarily be at the same location as the general election. CDD2 residents, for example, will vote in the general election in the Savannah Center and in the landowner election in La Hacienda Recreation Center. Residents should watch the Daily Sun for details on specific voting locations.

Voting will be within the four residential districts north of highway 466 (CDDs #1, #2, #3, and #4) and the portion of Lake County within The Villages. Each of these areas will vote for and elect only one supervisor. The total complement on the AAC will be five elected supervisors. A sixth supervisor will be appointed by the VCCDD to represent its interests on the AAC.

The supervisors will have decision-making responsibilities for all amenity questions for the VCCDD administrative area. This will include the setting of the monthly amenity fee cap, charges for any amenity services or facilities, charges for the RV storage areas, facility usage rules, facility renovation questions and related financial reserves, and maintenance or improvement questions for the recreation trails along Buena Vista Blvd., El Camino Real, and Morse Blvd.

This election is especially important since it represents the assumption of decision-making responsibility for the residents. In the past, the POA has commented often about the problems with Taxation Without Representation. That was because the developer elected the supervisors of the VCCDD who then made all the decisions for residents in the area. Residents had no vote on

these many issues affecting our daily life. With the formation of the AAC, and its assumption of the decision-making authority, residents now have the ability to elect our own resident representatives who will make the decisions on our behalf. This is a significant achievement for Residents' Rights in The Villages.

The AAC, however, only addresses amenity issues for the VCCDD area north of highway 466. In the SLCDD district south of highway 466, residents do not yet have decision-making authority or the ability to elect their own representatives. We are hoping that a comparable agreement can be fashioned soon for the residents south of highway 466.

The POA suggests that residents watch the Daily Sun for information on the voting procedure and the various candidates. Also, both the VHA and the POA plan candidate information nights in their meetings over the next month. All candidates will be invited to the POA general membership meeting on Tuesday, October 21, to meet residents and explain their position on various issues.

One of the initial important decisions facing the AAC will be the question of whether to widen and asphalt the recreation trails along Buena Vista Blvd., El Camino Real, and Morse Blvd. Residents have complained for a long time that these trails were too narrow and much too bumpy for safe and comfortable travel. These are now between 10 and 12 foot wide and made of cement. This contrasts with 16 foot wide asphalt recreation trails south of highway 466. The settlement damages were based upon calculations of money needed for specific uses, including the refurbishment, maintenance, and establishment of reserves for the recreation trails north of highway 466. However, it will be the responsibility of the newly-elected AAC supervisors to decide how to actually spend the lawsuit funds.

The AAC meets now on the Wednesday before the second Friday of the month at 1:30 p.m., usually in the Savannah Center. Residents should consider attending these meetings to see our government in action. Remember that this is our government and decisions affecting our enjoyment of amenities are discussed and decided in these meetings. If you want to know what is going on in your community, this is the place.

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## **Status of the Hospital Project**

The POA investigation of the medical care provided by the emergency room (ER) of The Villages Regional Hospital (TVRH) is proceeding.

The initial investigation by the certification agencies uncovered no deficiencies in policies or procedures that would have justified revoking or suspending the certification of the hospital.

Our investigation now turns to the question of the quality of the medical care

which may have been less than accepted standards by the professional staff. This part of the investigation is under the direction of the Florida Department of Health and its investigation unit for medical professionals.

We have discussed the problems, and forwarded basic information, to the appropriate officials in the Department of Health. We originally thought that the basic information package we presented to the Department would be sufficient for purposes of the investigation. However, the Department informed us that any complaints about the professional staff in the hospital must come on a special form from the primary complaining person.

We have received over 150 letters from residents about their experiences in TVRH. About 130 recount problems with the ER. We have identified 32 of these which we considered to be more serious or notable. To move the investigation along, we plan to contact the writers of these 32 cases to seek their help in continuing the complaint process. A three-page Department of Health form needs to be filled out, and we will help with this process however we can.

The investigation process could go on for some time, during which we may not hear about any progress. If and when we hear, we will report back to residents in the Bulletin and in our monthly meetings.

As we said in the previous issue of the Bulletin: The POA recognizes that there are dedicated staff and caring personnel working at TVRH. It is possible to get reasonable and acceptable care at the hospital.

It has been reported that the hospital has had over 50,000 visits to the Emergency Room in the short life of TVRH. The overwhelming majority of patients have received satisfactory care.

In spite of this favorable record, there is no valid reason for the negative stories reported to us - or for us to accept the possibility that we might be one of the negative stories in the future.

To summarize the negative stories we have received in the over 130 letters and emails, we note the following complaints about TVRH's ER from residents:

- inattentive care,
- mis-diagnosis,
- rude staff,
- lost tests and paperwork,
- poor communication in English,
- overworked staff,
- poor training,
- questionable triage,
- understaffed departments,
- lack of on-call specialists,
- poor nutritional support,
- inadequate facilities, etc.

Let's get these issues out in the open and discuss them as a community. If there are problems in the hospital, then let's discuss them and see if we, as a community, can fashion a solution.

One of the obvious problems that cries for a solution is the problem of paying

enough to attract quality staff. We often hear about understaffed departments, including the ER, and poorly trained, overworked, and under qualified staff. If money is the problem, someone needs to tell us that so that we can consider solutions on a community level.

One of the possible solutions would be to sell the naming rights for the hospital in a bidding situation to the highest bidder. We estimate that these naming rights could bring in \$2-\$4 million, or more. It is possible that the developer would like to name the hospital after his father and the founder of The Villages as the Harold Schwartz Memorial Hospital. After all, it was the strong will of Harold Schwartz that got the hospital built in the first place. He insisted on having a hospital "right here" for the benefit of residents. We think the community would support naming the hospital after Mr. Schwartz, and the payment realized could be earmarked for staff recruiting, training, and salaries.

Why can't we do this?

It would be constructive if LRMC and TVRH would focus on these problems rather than voicing indignation at our questions about their performance. Let's focus on solving problems and operating issues rather than denying that problems exist.

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## **POA Nominations Open in October Elections in November**

The POA annual elections are coming up soon. All officer and director positions will be up for a vote by active members in the November meeting.

Nominations are opened at the October meeting. Elections will be held at the November meeting. Officers and directors are sworn in at the December meeting. The term of office begins in January.

Please take a moment to consider how you might participate in the activities of your POA. We need more people to take an active role in the POA by volunteering for these officer and director positions. You may find that the time commitment is less than you think and the rewards are truly satisfying on a personal basis. See the form on page 10.

So, please consider running for one of these positions and joining the other officers and directors in helping to make The Villages an even better place in which to live.

If you want more information, please call or talk to any officer or director at the phone numbers listed on page 15.

## **Letters to the Editor: Acronyms**

In the last issue of the POA Bulletin the article describing "What Are All Those Acronyms Anyway??" was tremendously helpful in clarifying the divisions of The Villages government and their functions. I now know which meeting dates are of importance to me. Also the "Your CDD Meetings" column that included the POA and AAC meeting dates is very useful. Great Work.

Maureen Nelson

## **Letters to the Editor: Area Guest Policy # 1**

I don't know how the POA stands on this issue, but in the recent VCCDD Recreation News column I read about the proposed guest ID card program. I want to be on record as saying this is the dumbest thing the District has ever come up with. I don't see why we have to pay amenity fees for people who come into our facilities any time they want to. The fact that anyone living in the area can come here with just an ID issued for them is ridiculous. I remember when there was a rule you couldn't live inside a 50 mile radius to come into our facilities.

The VCCDD is opening a whole new can of worms with this kind of rule. What's to prevent anyone from moving out of the Villages and getting an ID card to come visit some friends here and spend quality time using the facilities 365 days of the year. 20,000 general guest ID's are now given out during the year and this is plenty, we do not need another 20,000 using an area guest card. We already have a development outside the Villages advertising that they can come to the Villages and use the amenities any time they want to all year long if Grandma and Grandpa are there.

Having a sponsoring resident in attendance is no real way to control the usage of the so-called in-area guest pass. Who's to say who the sponsoring person is

and what their relationship is and how do you control it. Who comes up with these ideas? A person in Leesburg that was mentioned in the column? I think we do enough by letting guests have the run of this place without having to go out and look for more people to overrun our facilities. I can't believe the majority of residents would go for this. I for one can't see it and I certainly don't want to pay amenity fees for 40,000 strangers running around using facilities that would, in time, be filled to capacity.

Mike Stevko

**Editor's Note:** We share your concern and want to see a better-thought-out policy.

Incidentally, to see the popularity of our facilities, just consider that 60,000 people crowded into Lake Sumter Square to hear Sarah Palin speak. We think there were more non-residents than residents in the Square that day.

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## From The POA Website Forum: Area Guest Policy # 2

**Sep 8:** I think of myself as being a fair and unselfish person, at least I try to be, yet I cannot agree with the current practice of giving in-area relatives of Village residents a 365 day pass, renewable each year, to use all of our facilities. We paid more for our houses to have these facilities available to us as well as paying a monthly amenity fee. We are allowed to have guests for a 30 day period and they can use our pools, tennis courts, etc., during that time. If they lived in the area they could use our amenities all year at no cost? This makes no sense. We lose tee times, leave dance and exercise classes because they are too crowded, cannot get a pickle ball court, and yet non-residents are contributing to these over crowded conditions without any limits or cost to them. I agree that all Village residents should be allowed to have guests use our facilities, but no one should be able to use them for more than 30 days each year. We must all get behind this issue. Please help!!

**Sep 14:** For The Villages to allow relatives who live in-area complete access to our amenities 365 days per year with automatic renewal is a slap in the face to the majority of Villagers.

This never used to be allowed. The answer must lie in the fact that several higher ups in Villages management must have children and grandchildren living in the area. So, presto - hey, what the heck. Change those rules! Now in-area relatives can use everything we can, all year round. Just what we need - more crowding at peak times and now, at off-peak times.

And guess what? Watch what happens when that giant monstrosity called Freedom Pointe, being built on El Camino Real, is finished. There will be 500 more people living in The Villages, using crowded amenities in an already densely populated and long ago built-out area!

In-area relatives should have special passes with a mutually agreed upon number of days per year of guest usage. Wouldn't this satisfy everyone?

Come on, everyone! Do we really want lots of teenagers or younger grandkids having the ability to use just about any amenity they fancy any day they want, all year long? There have to be limits.

Villagers pay for these amenities through our monthly fees. So VILLAGERS should have the final say in how this will work. I am getting fed up with the Developer and his allies always deciding how our fees are spent. Believe me, the important issues are ALWAYS decided by the Developer.

I have nothing against frequent visits by in-area relatives. Just not 365 days per year access.

I hope that [we] can get a group of like-minded people together to protest this provision and maybe obtain many signatures on a petition. Keep fighting and fighting till some changes are made.

Also, has anyone ever wondered if employees of The Villages and their families have free use of our amenities? Is this a "perk" that The Villages offers their employees for free while we pay?

**Sep 14:** I would suggest that you attend a CDD and Amenity Authority Council (AAC) meeting regularly held in The Villages. If you did you might hear answers to your questions such as annual guest passes to "immediate family members" living in the tri county area. In case you weren't aware, the sponsoring resident MUST accompany the guest each time to pools, golf, etc. That in itself limits usage. This has been a policy for a long time now and not something dreamed up recently by "the family."

A note of interest, Village employees who are non-residents can golf the championship courses but not at our resident green fee rates. Even non-residents of The Villages can call day of play and obtain an OPEN tee time on our CHAMPIONSHIP COURSES, once again at a higher rate than residents pay. Executive courses are for residents only and the fee, 10.00/person, I believe, is high enough to discourage GUEST use when some championship courses (18 holes) can be played for a few dollars more in the summer.

I hope this helps and once again attend the meetings (CDD, VHA, Amenity Authority Council) I mentioned to get the facts. I've found meeting times are in the Daily Sun.

**Sep 14:** There is a committee of residents currently addressing this same issue along with several other issues regarding in-area guest passes. One of our proposals is to continue to issue the 365-day pass but it can only be used 30 days out of each year. Currently, the resident obtaining the in-area guest pass must be with their guest anytime they use the facilities, regardless of the age of the guest. There are also disciplinary actions proposed which will discourage abuse. These are up to and including loss of use of facilities for the sponsoring resident and revocation of the pass. Once again, this committee is made up of residents and I am on the committee. Even though I do not have



anyone that lives close to The Villages, I pay for the amenities because I live here and I am concerned about the usage. We definitely encourage input from everyone. I hope this helps your concern.

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## **Letters to the Editor: Golf Cart Speed**

I see yet another article in the paper of a golf cart accident, in this case with a very serious injury. Speed is a factor in many if not all of the accidents and it is only a matter of time until there is a golf cart fatality !

I use my golf cart daily and see golf cart drivers: (1) turning left from the right hand golf cart lane, (2) disobeying the "golf carts merge with vehicular traffic" signs, (3) driving in the crosshatched areas at intersections, and (4) carts pulling out into the automobile lane to pass another slower cart with automobiles coming up from behind forcing the auto to slow-up. This may be perfectly legal, however not very prudent

On two occasions, while exiting a tunnel, I have seen a golf cart go straight by at full speed - down one grade and up the next (no intent to turn into the tunnel). If one were to pull out of the tunnel into this guys passage - it would be VERY serious.

I have learned by observation that all golf carts in The Villages have only one speed and that is WIDE OPEN! I have noted many times while meeting another cart going around a curve that the other cart is actually leaning away from the curve in an overturning tendency. Slow down !!!

I don't know if these observations are just the "ignorance of the law" or that of an "arrogant /I don't care attitude with a need for speed.." I do believe that it would be nice to know that all golf cart drivers have at least been exposed to the "rules of the road."

The time has come to propose a quasi-licensing of all golf carts in The Villages. Hopefully, all the [local] law enforcement agencies can work together to make this golf cart community a safer one.

Each golf cart be affixed with a high visibility sticker as a means of identification. The numbering system could be the lot number of the owner. The sticker would be available only upon registration with the proper authorities and paying a registration fee due annually. A "rules of the road for golf carts" could be printed and given to applicants at a MANDATORY class session. Hopefully, this could be coordinated with the golf cart safety clinics given once each month.

At the same session the cart should be inspected by proper authorities. If the cart is not in compliance with ALL FLORIDA STATUTES the cart would remain

un-licensed. A fine could be levied to the owner of an un-licensed cart (because The Villages and law enforcement must work together).

There may be an argument that law enforcement cannot ticket a golf cart (an un-licensed vehicle). However, I believe that The Villages has the right to impose whatever laws they deem necessary for the safety of their residents with the co-operation and help from law enforcement.

A registration fee would be imposed for this process. With an estimated 30,000 golf carts in The Villages at \$5.00 each this would be \$150,000 per year. I believe such a system could be administered for such a fee, especially after the first year. If not, a \$10.00 fee is not unreasonable - this would be \$300,000.00 per year.

I noticed a reader's comment in one of the local papers regarding the golf cart speed issue. The quote is: "ridiculous to ticket a golf cart for speeding." I guess by this person's logic that it would be ridiculous to ticket an automobile for going 60 MPH down Morse Blvd. The same reason holds true for both !!! IT'S AGAINST THE LAW!!!!

I am in hopes that this note can at least get the ball rolling and by all entities working together we can make this a safer place for all.

We are blessed to live in a place where we can have everything accessible by golf cart. Let's not ruin it!

Earl Donaldson

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## From The POA Website Forum: One Sumter

**Sep 16:** As you know, on November 4, all of you that are registered to vote here in Florida (and Sumter County) will be voting on the Proposal to reverse One Sumter. A yes vote on this Proposition is a vote to return things to the way they were prior to August 31, 2004, regarding the election of Sumter County Commissioners.

First off, we need to establish some background information. Prior to 2004 Sumter residents could only vote to elect the Commissioner for their District. After the passage of One Sumter, Sumter County residents vote to elect all Sumter Commissioners, independent of the District the resident lives in. Since One Sumter was enacted, Sumter County tax rates have decreased from 9.565 mils to 5.439 mils for tax-year 2007 (a 4.126 mil reduction) as Commissioners have been elected that are working more cooperatively and are more sensitive to those constituents that are providing the greater

proportion of Sumter County tax revenues. As you probably know, Sumter County residents living in The Villages now provide about 85% of Sumter County tax revenues.

There is every reason to believe that if the Proposal to reverse One Sumter on the November ballot is approved by voters you will see your Sumter County tax bill increase over future years. If you want to see if this is a big deal and whether or not it might affect you do the following. Look up the "taxable value" for your home, which you can find on the "2008 Trim Notice" you recently received from Sumter County. Multiply that value by \$.004 (4 mils) which is the tax rate reduction we've seen since Commissioners were elected under One Sumter. For example, if your "2008 taxable value" is \$400,000 a tax rate increase of 4 mils could represent an increase in your Sumter County tax of \$1,600 --- every year! At least I think this is a big deal!

So what is the concern? The One Sumter proposition is presented on the November ballot in a very clever way. In order to keep One Sumter you must cast a NO vote. However, most people (over 80%) that go to the poles vote yes on propositions and amendments that are presented, often without knowing the consequences. So, in this case it is critical that Villagers residing in Sumter County become educated on this issue so that they understand the consequences of their vote on One Sumter and hopefully vote NO.

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## **Letters to the Editor: More One Sumter**

Both Messrs. Dick Hoffman and Larry Croom, Editor & Chief of the Daily Sun, enthusiastically promote One Sumter as being a no-brainer.

However, color me cynical but I, like many of my contemporaries wish we had a nickel for every political or corporate leader that told us their program was a no-brainer only to discover that the only "no-brainers" were the people who planned and implemented and enthusiastically promoted the failed program.

Messrs. Hoffman and Croom promote the many benefits of One Sumter. But, being the cynic I am, I wonder if these success stories are "because of" or "in spite" of the One Sumter arrangement?

I really don't know both sides of the argument because the Daily Sun only carries Dick Hoffman's version of why One Sumter is good. And so it would seem to me that the POA Bulletin ought to invite articles from experts who are either opponents of One Sumter or proponents of One Sumter to explain their factual reasons as to why a voter should vote for or against this particular ballot initiative?

It would also be helpful to hear from residents of The Villages.

This fair and balance approach offers Village residents an opportunity to view the issue from all sides. Thus resulting in allowing us to make a more informed choice on November 4th.

Dennis Petrucelli

**Editor's Note:** The POA has not taken an official position on the One Sumter debate. All the arguments for One Sumter reduce to two points as follows: First, property taxes finally came down after One Sumter was approved, implying that taxes wouldn't have come down had One Sumter not been approved. We think taxes would have come down either way, so the pro One Sumter argument doesn't work for this in our opinion.

Second, it's argued that commissioners under One Sumter are more responsive to the residents of The Villages who constitute a majority of voters in the county. This is a bit of an emotional and Red Herring argument since the "responsiveness" is really to the developer of The Villages and not necessarily to the residents. Commissioner candidates learn very quickly that they have to seek developer approval, or the political machine of the developer (newspaper, TV, and radio, as well as the direct and indirect workforce) will savagely attack any candidate not favored by the developer. We liked the idea of having two or three independent commissioners as a backstop to the demands of the developer. We would credit good intentions, furthermore, to the independent commissioners rather than the devious intentions with which the developer characterized the last independent commissioners.

Even under the old system, we think an updated re-districting based on population would provide at least three of the five commissioners for The Villages.

Before One Sumter was implemented the commissioners were often debating with each other over various issues. This was good government. The issues were aired and alternate views considered. Unfortunately, The Villages Daily Sun almost always slanted the reporting so that residents reading the Sun never got the benefit of hearing and understanding both sides of the arguments. The developer's way or the highway was often the only way that residents ever heard of.

Under One Sumter, there is a modest amount of debate. But not much deviation from the developer's best interests. We liked the old way in which commissioners could argue what was best for all county residents without having to kowtow to the interests of the developer or face retribution from him for opposing his views or interests.

So, Dennis, it is a tough decision for you on this issue. The One Sumter proposal has emotional appeal; but, there is a certain rational and attractive appeal to having a system of independent checks and balances.

We have several examples to cite if you want to call the editor to discuss this in more detail.

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## ARTICLE 10 TITLE

The AmeriPro ad shown below is out-of-date because the free Wind Inspection program sponsored by the state of Florida has ended. However, your insurance company may still offer a discount for having this inspection, so residents should consider paying for this inspection themselves. Your insurance agent can provide a list of local inspectors. The AmeriPro ad is still valid for its full home inspection services.

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### From The POA Website Forum: Villages Hospital

**Sept 8:** The POA vendetta against our hospital continues but is really becoming comical. You claim to have 133 negative letters about treatment in the ER out of a total of over 50,000 visits. That is less than 0.3%. It appears to me that 99.7% of the users have no complaints. Also, your summary list of complaints is really laughable: "poor nutritional support," "poor communication in English," "inattentive care," etc. What a joke! What are you trying to do anyway? Somehow put the hospital out of business? Now that would be a real help for our community wouldn't it? I find it very appropriate that the POA Bulletin spent a good deal of print on telling members how to file complaints, because that is what they do best.

**Sep 16:** Very True. The latest paper read like a little kid spitting out lies about why he did no home work. As a former statical (sic) analyst it was obvious there (sic) original sampling was flawed. Now having encountered more opposition than expected they set about demanding the clearly impossible. NO hospital in the US can meet the demand goal by these whiners. Bad service in emergency rooms is global. I've worked in 8 states before retiring here. 30 minute ER guarantees are meaningless in Detroit, Honolulu or The Villages. Everywhere you wait till your injury is the most life threatening in the ER before you get helped. This is also a small town, I bet this constant attack helps to encourage more ER doctors to hurry here to accept low paying Medicare patients as the vast majority of their clients! The POA had my respect for spending effort on the plumbing issues and a few other legitimate items, but this has reached a level of incompetence that really destroys it all. I wish I had there (sic) home addresses to dump my trash on, at least they'd have a real complaint to whine about then. Apologize, declare victory whatever but drop the moronic witchhunt! The prey left years before you started hunting anyway. Last, if they don't want to be known as whiners: STOP WHINING!

**Editor's Note:** Buddy, just keep drinking that Kool Aid....

If the hospital is operating efficiently and there are enough doctors on duty, why would you have to wait 4-8 hours? Let's try that again: If the hospital is operating efficiently and there are enough doctors on duty, why would you have to wait 4-8 hours? It looks like the hospital is not operating efficiently or there are not enough doctors on duty. Why would you blindly accept that as OK?

And, please re-read the past Bulletin articles on the hospital. We are addressing the situation in the emergency room, not other hospital activities. Also, we acknowledge that waits are the rule in most hospitals. But, we are seeing 2-4 hour waits for people with obvious heart attack and stroke symptoms. That is unacceptable. These patients need to be seen immediately.

So, when you have your heart attack or stroke, and you go to TVRH, just hope that the articles in the POA Bulletin have provoked an improvement in what will be your treatment in the hospital. And, if you survive, please be gracious enough to tell the POA "thank you." And, if you don't survive, at least you won't be able to whine about the poor service....

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## **The Vinyl Siding Committee Needs Your Help**

The POA Vinyl Siding Committee needs to have a full-scale inspection, evaluation, and report done of the vinyl siding problems in The Villages by a qualified building inspector. This person could serve as an objective expert witness.

The cost for all of this could be in the range of several thousand dollars. For this expense, we are asking any homeowners who have benefited through the efforts of our Vinyl Siding Committee to consider donating to a special fund which would pay this expense.

We are asking that homeowners who can afford to do so to please contribute either \$10, \$50, or \$100, or more if you can, to this fund. The POA will match donations up to \$1,250 on a dollar for dollar basis. Just send your donations to The POA Legal Action Fund, Vinyl Siding, at POBox 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158.

Please rest assured that we need your help to pay for this inspection, and anything you can contribute to this cause will be greatly appreciated. Remember that our Vinyl Siding Committee members gave generously of their time and effort to help residents identify their vinyl siding problems. Now, we need you to help us pay for this expert witness and the inspection report. Thank you.

The POA Vinyl Siding Committee

## Vinyl Siding Repair Firms

We have found that the following companies have done acceptable if not good work for residents in the repair of their vinyl siding problems, etc. We cannot guarantee their work, but we have heard from residents that they are pleased with the results.

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

Brix & Stix, Terry Poortenga, VP  
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

## Letters to the Editor: Are Local Schools Worth Our Taxes?

I recently received my 2008 Trim Tax notice. The question I have is this: under the school tax section there is listed a public school tax which state residents pay; however, there is an additional tax from the local board for the Villages, Florida, which I believe is a tax for the Villages Charter school. This represents a second charge for school taxes. My question is, why are Village residents supporting a charter school since residents have no children attending the charter school? Any information you may have on this issue to clarify why Village residents pay for a charter school would be appreciated.

Alex Velez, Jr.

**Editor's Note:** First, schools are looked at as benefiting the community, thus the rationale for everybody paying. Second, we need good schools to attract the workforce needed in this area. If we had no good schools, we might not be able to attract the doctors, accountants, managers, etc., needed in businesses all around here if they didn't have a good school to which to send their kids. Third, we need to train the local workforce to handle jobs in Belks, Publix, The Villages, doctor's offices, McDonalds, etc. There are many parts of a well-functioning community; schools are just one of the key components.

**Response from Mr. Velez:** Thank you for your response to my question. However, in light of the recent articles in the Orlando Sentinel on the tax implications and ramifications of the potential effect upon the residents of the use of Chapter 190 by the developer of The Villages, I remain curious as to the thought process involved in your answer. I also believe that a strong public education system is key to a strong community and country.

However, the operative word is "public," not private. As a Florida resident I do pay that tax for the public schools which I do willingly so that others may have the same opportunity that others have provided me with their tax dollars. However, I do take umbrage with your answer that I should pay for a private school because "... we need good schools to attract the workforce needed in this area." I would think that if Mr. Morse wants to attract families to this area, perhaps he should simply pay better salaries to the workers and provide those same amenities to draw them here. As of now, I am being taxed twice for the same community benefit.

In essence, I and the rest of the residents are subsidizing The Villages Charter School through scholarships to the families who come to work here at a cost that should be borne by the developer. Does that mean that we are also providing an untaxed income benefit to those families who come to work here? What will our conscientious IRS agent think of this?

If Mr. Morse wants to offer a "free" private education to students, perhaps he should pay for it? By the way, who paid for the cost of the initial building as well as its ongoing upkeep, maintenance, teachers pay and long term benefits? I think I know the answer to this question, so a follow-up...since I am paying the costs, where can I access the budget for the The Villages Charter school? Who controls it?

I am afraid that something is seriously amiss here and as a resident, I and many others are bearing costs that should be borne by Mr. Morse.

Can you please direct me to sources that may answer my questions.

Thank you for your anticipated help.

Alex Velez, Jr.



**Editor's Note:** For information on school finances, go to:  
<http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/fl/other/5145#finance>

Also, why not call the school directly to discuss your concerns with the administration. The high school number is 259-3777; the middle school number is 259-0044. Please let us know how your talks go.

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## ARTICLE 15 TITLE

What I miss most about the recycling program, as we had it in Boca Raton, are the yellow bins for paper products and the blue bins for cans and glass. They were provided by the recycler, made of heavy plastic material, easy to hose down and to carry, and free.

In The Villages, unfortunately, many people ignore this program citing that clear bags are too much of an expense, which I don't understand since we are buying bags for whatever we bring to the curb anyway. Moreover, there's this concern about the profiteering with the recycling program. Nobody is going to provide this service gratis.

Recycling isn't for us. It's for our grandchildren and their children who won't waste nearly half the trees and earth's precious resources as their past generations. Let's forget our wallets and think of future generations and not about whoever is making a few bucks on our trash.

Ray Souliere

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## Organization Meeting For East Side POA Auxiliary

We have talked to many folks on the east side of highway 441 who prefer not to drive at night to and from Laurel Manor Recreation Center for the monthly

meetings of the POA. These folks have voiced a desire to have POA meetings during the afternoon hours in the Paradise Center.

Well, let's have an organizational meeting to see if there really is enough interest in starting up an East Side Auxiliary group.

Please meet with us on Tuesday, October 14, at 2 p.m., in the Paradise Center, Henry Fonda room in the auditorium building.

The first agenda item will be to see if enough people show up to demonstrate real interest. Then, we can talk about the idea from last year about starting an East Side Beautification Committee. No coffee or donuts - but, good neighbors talking about their community and their neighborhood.

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## **Letters to the Editor: Daily Sun's Agenda**

Recently, a Villager was invited to be one of 10 people in the country, chosen to go "Backstage with Obama" at the Democratic National Convention in Denver.

Unfortunately, the Daily Sun chose to not report this honor for one of our own even though many of our local media, including The Leesburg Daily Commercial, The Ocala Star-Banner, the Orlando Sentinel, ABC News, NBC News, WESH TV in Orlando, FOX TV in Orlando, etc., reported the event.

We think the Sun chose to not report the event because it was about Democrats.

The Sun was alerted to the story before the event and given full information afterwards. But, the Sun made the conscious decision not to report the story. Sun officials never said why, and they repeatedly ignored phone calls offering information or questioning why the story was not printed.

The person slighted by the Sun wrote this to the POA Bulletin:

One of my biggest frustrations is the local media's lack of acknowledgment that we are a diverse community with differing political opinions and values. Our intelligence and sense of fair play did not retire when we did. We may have views different from the developer but that does not make them less valid or less worthy.

The Daily Sun has an agenda. As one of their reporters told me, "Don't make the mistake of thinking that this is a newspaper. There is one overriding agenda, and that is to promote the developer's own interests - political and financial and the two are tied together."

Managing the news by not reporting events, (an additional example is the recent Villages Town Hall meeting featuring former US Senator Lincoln Chaffee), because they differ from the developer's politics, is self-serving in the extreme. I don't think it's too much to expect that our hometown newspaper should be inclusive by recognizing and respecting other viewpoints. This can only help promote the important sense of community here in "Florida's Friendliest Hometown" where everyone should feel as welcomed and validated after they signed on the dotted line as they did before. It should reflect the beauty of diversity and opinion which is a hallmark of a democratic society; a place where residents' accomplishments are honored and individual achievements and interests celebrated, regardless of their political connotation.

Marsha Shearer

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## Bulletin Delivery

We need your help on delivery of the Bulletin.

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 return of the homeowner. This will be a big help to us. We greatly appreciate your help. Thank you.

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 and address and 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 to all for your help.

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The POA put out a call in the previous two issues of the Bulletin for a new generation of leadership to guide the POA in the years ahead. We have gotten a good, but not great response. We think it is important for interested residents to consider becoming more active in the POA. So, we decided to print here the Interest and Activity form that we developed for residents to tell us about their interest in specific activities of the POA.

Please take a moment to review this form on the right. If you would like to become more active in the operations of the POA, please fill out this form and then return it to us at: POA Interest and Activity, POBox 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158.

[\[Click Here To View And Print Form\]](#)

If you have questions, please call any of the officers or directors listed on page 15 of this Bulletin.

We will contact you afterwards to discuss this further with you. Thanks in advance for your interest in becoming more active in your POA.

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## Letters to the Editor: Oak Forest Dr. is a Smoother Drive

This is in response to the article last month by Bob and Judy Hendrychs. If you can send them this: Your problem as I see it, and I traveled your street twice now, its not because it's a short cut but because it's a smoother ride. A way to go is a petition to pave the cart path. You'll get a lot of signatures from the people that [don't] use El Camino [same problem]. A wider, safer and smoother path will add to the community. They wouldn't have to widen it around the tunnels or short entrances and exits to gates.

Al Gaconnier

**Editor's Note:** Making the recreation trails wider and smoother, with an asphalt surface, was a specific issue identified in the court records of the class action lawsuit against the developer. Funds are available for those uses. The final decision on how to spend all of that funding will be made by the AAC (Amenity Authority Committee) when the elected supervisors of the AAC take office after the November elections. The POA is keenly interested in seeing the

recreation trails widened for the benefit of all Villages residents.

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## **Letters to the Editor: Oak Forest Drive**

I agree with the Hendrychs position [in last month's Bulletin]. Those of us who live on and just off of Belvedere are experiencing the same sort of problems. Traffic is unbearable. People use this street as a cross-over from Route 466 to Buena Vista. Some view it as a raceway. The line from the Belvedere gate backs up and extends all the way beyond the Public Library on some days. The VHA looked into this situation a year or so ago and deemed it not to be a problem. Surprise!

Little can be done to eliminate traffic on Oak Forest Drive or Belvedere primarily because they are both public thoroughfares.

So, once again residents are stuck because the Village Planners have not done such a thorough job of planning.

Dennis Petrucelli

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## **POA Hall of Fame**

The purpose of the POA Hall of Fame is to honor those past POA members who have contributed significantly to this organization.

Any POA member, past or present, living or deceased, residing in The Villages or not, can be nominated for this honor.

The process starts with a nomination form which is reprinted in this issue of the Bulletin on the right. The form is also available at the POA's monthly meetings or from any POA officer or director.

Nominations can only be made by current POA members. The form contains the nominee's name, and separate lines are provided for an explanation of why this person deserves to be in the Hall of Fame. This explanation is very important. Nominations each year must be returned to the POA by the November General Membership meeting (Nov 18 this year).

The nominations will be reviewed by a Hall of Fame Nominations Review Committee. The POA Board of Directors will review all nominations and make a final decision. The most worthy candidates each year will be selected for induction into the Hall of Fame at the annual POA Holiday Party in December.

Members of the Hall of Fame will be honored for their dedication and selfless contribution to the POA. Popularity will not be the deciding factor.

The POA is approaching the 33rd anniversary of its founding on November 20, 1975. We have had many members over these 33 years from which to choose Hall of Fame candidates. Let's make this a wonderful celebration of your POA and some of the really dedicated people who have served in these 33 years to make the POA the great organization that it continues to be.

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## **Our Monthly Column: October Gardening in The Villages**

**by Anne Lambrecht  
Master Gardener**

It's still pretty hot out there and the husband still refuses to jump into a fairy ring, even with promises of fairy shenanigans during our last full moon. He's just no fun at all. Seriously, it's the time of year to start getting your fall and winter gardens shaped up. Of course, because it's been so hot outside, you might have no idea how many weeds have accumulated in the yard!

Remove spent summer annuals that have completed their life cycle to prepare beds for the cool season varieties. Before planting these cool season annuals- when it's cooler- organic material should be added to the soil to aid in healthy growth so they are strong when the winter comes. Once planted, use time-release fertilizer such as Osmocote or Dynamite. One shot will last you all throughout the winter.

Go ahead and trim leggy and dense growth from shrubs. But stop once the cooler weather comes in late December and January.

Divide daylilies, rain lilies, amaryllis and other bulbs and share them with friends or put them in new beds. Dig up your caladium bulbs: once we have our first cold spell, dig up the bulb before you lose track of where they are by following the stem into the ground. Store them in a ventilated paper bag in your garage. They don't mind the heat. I label mine "red" and "white". You will never get all of them since they multiply so wonderfully, but the University of Florida suggests that the bulb left in the soil will deteriorate faster over time and further deteriorate since they are not resistant to nematodes, those little pesky invisible "worms" in your soil. Speaking of caladiums, did you know the Caladium Capital of the World is right here in Florida? Here is their website: <http://www.happinessfarms.com>. They have a caladium festival which my husband gets out of going to each year since it's our anniversary weekend (the end of August).

Houseplants: if your houseplants spent the summer outside, begin to prepare them for moving back indoors. Scout for lizards, bugs, etc that you want to remain outside. Begin to reduce watering. When repotting, clean the pots with bleach solution (1 cup bleach to 1 gallon water). This will kill any fungus or bacteria that could infect your other houseplants.

Plant trees and shrubs: most trees and shrubs do well when planted in the early fall. This gives them a chance to establish their root system before the cool weather slows them down and before fast spring growth and summer heat. If your plant has not been doing well in the spot where you put it, now's the time to move your plant to another spot in the yard.

Water citrus weekly during extended dry spells. If citrus trees dry out, they soak up an excess amount of water too quickly and when rain does come, it will cause the fruit to split. Do not fertilize young citrus after October 1st. This is because you don't want the tree to flush out new growth and possibly get zapped by the frost come winter. Older more established citrus may be fertilized more frequently to replace nutrients lost with the growing fruit.

Check your irrigation system: test cycle to check operation and adjustment of your system. Check for heads being blocked by dirt or foliage. Because we had turned off our system during the summer, many of our sprinkler heads were completely covered up by grass.

Don't forget to mulch. It'll make the yard look nice over the winter. If possible, use organic mulches such as pine needles, pine bark nuggets or Melaleuca. I switched over to mini pine bark nuggets: they're cheaper than pine needles and the place looks nice.

At this time of year, when the shadows are long, we transplants from the north are thinking pumpkins and chrysanthemums. Your chrysanthemums will do well out in your garden as long as they are not too hybridized. In other words, the more "plain" and basic the plant, the better it will do in the garden. Once you've enjoyed them, you can buzz cut the top third to half off and plant in a well composted hole, protected from the scorching sun, water and fertilize well and cross your fingers that it survives. In four years only one that I planted has survived and it's so pretty. It's an orange/yellow color. The white, pink, multi colors do not transplant well.

You've no doubt been noticing a riot of dancing color out there in the garden. I've got hundreds of butterflies decorating my world like confetti. One reason is that this year I planted a purple passion vine. The Gulf Fritillaries (orange) and the Zebra Longwing (State Butterfly) found it and laid eggs all over it. Then the larvae grew and ate the entire vine all up (it'll come back in the spring). If you

have plants that the caterpillars like as well as the adults, they will hang around. They tell their friends.

You will also start to notice migrating birds.

There are many garden club, native plant groups and county plant sales and festivals going on in October. Call your County Agricultural Extension Agent for information: Sumter County- 352-793-2728 and Marion County 352-671-8400.

Remember there are four seasons in Florida: Summer, Hurricane Season, Love bug Season and Snowbird Season.

But right now I'm thinking about Halloween. I love Halloween. It's the only time of year you can be someone else and get away with it. So I'm going to put on my Bubba teeth and get my costume ready. Husband doesn't do costumes, either.

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## Where to File Hospital Complaints

Please continue to send to the POA your stories about your experiences with the Emergency Room at The Villages hospital. We have thus far received over 150 stories or complaints describing the experiences and/or issues of Villagers with the ER. Thanks to all those who have chosen to tell us their stories.

We are still accepting stories, so please send us yours. These stories, all 150 of them, are a worthwhile assessment of the services of TVRH's ER. Please, tell us your story and help us address this issue.

The more stories we gather, the more comprehensive will be the review that we will be able to make. And, we may just make a difference in the quality of services provided by the hospital. We will protect your identity. We will ask you specifically for permission, if later needed, to share your detailed story with any of these investigating and review committees.

Based on many of the comments received, we can see that most people are unclear on the best way to file a complaint. So, here is the listing of who, what, and where:

· **For comments about The Villages Regional Hospital, contact:**

Mr. Tim Menton  
Administrator of TVRH  
1451 El Camino Real  
The Villages, FL 34748  
Phone: 352-751-8000



· **For comments on LRMC or to Mr. Menton's boss, contact:**

Mr. Lee Huntley, CEO  
Central Fla. Hospital Alliance  
600 E. Dixie Highway  
Leesburg, FL 34748  
Phone: 352-323-5762  
[lhuntley@leesburgregional.com](mailto:lhuntley@leesburgregional.com)

· **For comments about procedures, policies, staff, and medical care in general, contact the state agency:**

Holly Hunter, Secretary  
Florida Agency For Healthcare Adm.  
1717 Mahan Drive  
Tallahassee, FL 32308  
Phone: 1-888-419-3456  
<http://ahca.myflorida.com>

· **For comments about procedures, policies, staff, and medical care in general, contact the federal agency:**

Mark Chassin, MD, President  
The Joint Commission  
One Renaissance Blvd.  
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
Phone: 630-792-5000  
[www.jointcommission.org](http://www.jointcommission.org)

· **For comments about the actions of specific doctors and/or nurses, go to:**

Dr. Ana M. Viamonte Ros, Secretary  
The Florida Department of Health  
2585 Merchants Row Blvd.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
Phone: 850-245-4444  
<http://www.doh.state.fl.us>

Please copy the POA on correspondence to coordinate our activities on these matters.

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# Complaints About Medical Personnel

The Florida Department of Health is the agency to which complaints about medical professionals (doctors, nurses, dentists, etc.) should be filed. Each person with a grievance needs to fill out the three-page form available at this internet website address:

[http://www.doh.state.fl.us/mqa/enforcement/frm\\_general-meducf.pdf](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/mqa/enforcement/frm_general-meducf.pdf)

This form covers the following areas:

- Quality of care
- Inappropriate prescribing
- Excessive test or treatment
- Mis-diagnosis of condition
- Failure to release patient records
- Insurance fraud
- Impairment/medical condition
- Advertising violation
- Mis-filled prescription
- Patient abandonment/neglect

The POA urges residents with any complaint about service at TVRH to file a formal complaint. By doing so, the hospital's staff will be put on notice that substandard care is unacceptable. Please file a complaint if you have had any bad experiences with TVRH. Otherwise, problems may continue.

If you want copies of the complaint form please go online or call or email the POA and we will bring those forms to you. And we can help in the process of completing the forms. Just let us know ... we can help.

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**The POA  
PO BOX 1657  
Lady Lake, FL 32158-1657**

Contact Information : POB 1657, Lady Lake, FL 32158  
Phone: (352) 259-0999

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