

Take the opportunity to make your voice heard in the community

Ten people who speak make more noise than 10,000 who are silent.

— Napoleon Bonaparte

Those who know me well (and now those that don't) know that I collect, among many things, quotes. I love a great quote as much as I love a really great cup of coffee – and that is a lot!

A great quote cannot only put into simpler words the thoughts or feelings that we may have trouble defining on our own, but it conveys them in a way that allows many others to identify with or relate to the message.

Leo's quote (we go back like that) rings as loud today as it did when he originally made the statement, and especially applies to us in The Villages. With well over 100,000 residents, are you one of the 10, or one of the more than 99,990?

Newcomers and established residents both, are you wondering how decisions are made around here, or why something is done a certain way – maybe in a way very different from the hometown you came from?

Here are several opportunities to make your voice heard:

■ **Welcome Wednesday:**

Beginning Nov. 5, you are invited to join staff and various District board representatives at 8 a.m. at the District office at 984 Old Mill Run, Lake Sumter Landing, to learn about ongoing projects and get questions answered.

Have you heard something "on the street" and want verification? Do you have a question on the "whats and wherefores" behind a project, a board decision, etc.? Come join us on Wednesdays and find out directly from the source.

■ **2014 Government Day:** This Saturday, you have an amazing



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opportunity to meet and greet all of your local government agencies. Representatives from the various District departments and boards, plus representatives from our local county, state and federal agencies, will be available between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at Eisenhower Recreation Center.

Gather information on various services, get questions answered, and, with Veterans Day rapidly approaching, take a walk through history as you view all of the donated historical memorabilia, appreciating the "voices" of those who served our country to preserve our ability to have a voice.

Not only was I unable to walk out of Eisenhower Recreation Center without shedding a tear, but I had a much better understanding of what our servicemen and servicewomen, and their families, gave than what could be gleaned from a book or Mr. Schaufhausen's 12th-grade history class.

■ **Election Day:** Nov. 4: Mr. or Ms. Unknown stated, "If you're not lighting any candles, don't complain about the dark," which I often quote to friends who say that voting doesn't matter. We have learned time and again that one vote does count – so make it be yours!

For those who were unable to take advantage of the early voting period in your county, the polls are open from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. on Election Day. If you do not know where your polling place

is, contact your Supervisor of Elections.

You also can find your precinct and polling place, along with a sample ballot if you misplaced yours, on your county supervisor of election's website (all links are posted on our District website under "Useful Links").

For Villagers, no claim of "inconvenience" is allowed – there are several recreation centers used for polling: Mulberry Grove Recreation Center for Marion County residents, Laurel Manor and Allamanda recreation centers for Sumter County residents, and La Hacienda and Paradise recreation centers for Lake County residents.

The Voter's Bill of Rights (under Florida Statute 101.031(2)) states that each registered voter in this state has the right to:

■ Vote and have his or her vote accurately counted.

■ Cast a vote if he or she is in line at the official closing of the polls in that county.

■ Ask for and receive assistance in voting.

■ Receive up to two replacement ballots if he or she makes a mistake prior to the ballot being cast.

■ An explanation if his or her registration or identity is in question.

■ Cast a provisional ballot if his or her registration or identity is in question.

■ Written instructions to use when voting, and, upon request, oral instructions in voting from elections officers.

■ Vote free from coercion or intimidation by elections officers or any other person.

■ Vote on a voting system that

is in working condition and that will allow votes to be accurately cast.

Alternately, our Voter Responsibilities (also under Florida Statute 101.031(2)) include that each registered voter in this state should:

- Familiarize himself or herself with the candidates and issues.

- Maintain a current address with the office of the supervisor of elections.

- Know the location of his or her polling place and its hours of operation.

- Familiarize himself or herself with the operation of the voting equipment in his or her precinct.

- Treat precinct workers with

courtesy.

- Respect the privacy of other voters.

- Report any problems or violations of election laws to the supervisor of elections.

- Ask questions, if needed.

- Make sure that his or her completed ballot is correct before leaving the polling station.

- Bring proper identification to the polling station. Any one of the following photo IDs will be accepted:

- Florida driver's license

- Florida identification card

issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles

- United States passport

- Debit or credit card

- Military identification

- Student identification

- Retirement center

identification

- Neighborhood association identification

- Public assistance

identification

Note: If your photo ID does not include your signature, you will be asked to provide another ID that has your signature. If you do not bring proper ID, you still can vote a provisional ballot.

As long as you are eligible and voted in the proper precinct, your provisional ballot will count provided the signature on your provisional ballot matches the signature in your registration record. In addition to various state and county-held positions (governor, attorney general, chief financial officer, district courts, school boards, etc.) and constitutional amendments, there may be some positions specific to your

District on which you can vote.

These include Board of Supervisor seats for Community Development Districts 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8, along with a selection of Representatives for the Amenity Authority Committee for the Lady Lake/Lake county portion of The Villages, as well as CDD 1 and CDD 2.

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Jennifer McQueary, our district clerk, and her staff of one, Candice Lovett, do a near-impossible job of not only keeping the calendars straight for 14 different boards (yes, 14!), but also the related agendas and final minutes for each. Take a moment to go to our website, districtgov.org, and see what your board supervisors are working on for your behalf.

Want to see your government in action? Come to a monthly

district board meeting and bring a fellow resident. All dates and times are posted on our website.

With so much information available to us, in so many different formats, it is very difficult to make a claim of "I didn't know." Be curious. Be involved. Be educated.

Jackson Brown said, "Opportunity dances with those who are already on the dance floor," and we all know how much Villagers love to dance!

We encourage your participation and contributions, and look forward to seeing you next time at Our Place – or voting, or at Government Day, or on Wednesday, or ... well, you get the idea!

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