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Village Idiots

by

Tom Holbrook

Many who read this column are convinced that The Villages “powers that be” pay me the big bucks to do nothing but make this place sound like Heaven on Earth but nothing could be further from the truth. I pretty much get to say what I want and I could knock The Villages if I saw something that needed knocking. Lord knows The Villages is not perfect. Why, it was just last week that my power went off on my lanai (that’s a porch for you Northerners,) and I called the Warranty department to see if they could take care of it. And, do you know, that it took them all of two hours to have someone from the Electrical Company who installed the wiring to contact me and arrange an appointment. Can you imagine, two hours. I don’t care if I didn’t call until 4:55 pm on a Friday, and that I’m just one of 22,000 other homes here in this community.... why couldn’t they send someone out immediately? Have you ever heard of such incompetence?

Obviously, I’m being sarcastic. Judy and I have nothing but good things to say about those who daily try to make our living here as comfortable and worry free as possible. This place is unique to any other community, retirement or otherwise, that we’ve seen. Where else can you see people strolling down the middle of the main street on the way to the Town Square knowing that the vehicles will give them the right of way... not because it’s the law but because it’s the friendly thing to do?.

How many other communities have hundreds of golf carts parked beside the sidewalk, people sashaying in and out of the many boutiques and restaurants lining the streets, and music wafting through the air from both the local Villages radio station and the entertainment of the hour from the bandstand on the square?

Where else can you be sitting in Johnny Rockets Restaurant eating a delicious breakfast at 8:00 am and have people come walking in with their pajamas, and/or other sleeping paraphernalia, robes, bedroom slippers, heads adorned with hats made of newspaper, and carrying cardboard signs reading “Village Idiot?” I think I should expand on this somewhat. As Judy and I were enjoying our French toast, some 40 – 50 strange looking individuals entered the door and proceeded to fill most of the tables still vacant. Of course, some of these people would have been strange looking even without the eclectic garb they had on but that’s another story.

Being the curious people that Judy and I are we immediately grabbed one of the scantily clad ladies to find out what was going on and she said it was the monthly get-together of the “Village Idiots Club.” That piqued our interest and more questions followed. After I told them their names would appear in this column they opened up and spilled the beans. It seems the Village Idiots are a haphazard lot that got together a couple of years ago and have been doing nothing ever since. I snagged one of their calling cards

which say on the front, **“Certified-Bona Fide, Registered, Village Idiot, And Proud Of It!!** After eating, Judy and I walked around talking to several other idiots and determined the following facts: Membership to the Village Idiots is open to any idiot residing in The Villages confessing to at least part time lunacy. They hold meetings when the mood strikes them and they have no officers, no organized recruiting program, no roll calls, no attendance records, no dues, no meeting minutes, no committee reports or civic projects. One of the members said their club has absolutely ***NO REDEEMING SOCIAL VALUE***, whatsoever.

Some of those attending who agreed to talk with me were, Jane and Boob Stem, Gerry Langer, Marge Gorman, Neil & Shirley Murphy, Annie Westin, Bill and Maggie Stone, Nancy & Gary Prater, Judy and Jim Chaffin, Helen & John Srodek. Others, for obvious reasons, requested their names be withheld to protect the innocent.

I sought out the one who seemed to be giving inspiration and direction to the group by proposing a toast. They give a toast by each member holding up a piece of toast and declaring in unison, *“Toast.”* The Head Idiot, Boob (Bob) Stem stated the theme of this month’s meeting, which was announced only hours before, was *“Looking for Fall.”* Each member was asked to carry a pair of binoculars created from toilet tissue rolls and look for signs of Fall. I asked Boob how it felt to be the head idiot and his exact comment was, *“This is a life long ambition realized.”* He said he was elevated to the position because he evidenced the *“least mental alertness”* of anyone in the group. I asked one of the members if anyone was ever kicked out of the group and she said from time to time they give SAT equivalent tests with 11 questions and if anyone answers three or more correctly they are asked to leave.

I asked Boob if he had any words of wisdom to those who might read this column and he raised his hand and pontificated the following, *“It is never too late to have a happy childhood.”*

What better place than The Villages to have it?

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