

HEAVY OUR HEADS

(NOTE: As we are all the Association, the editorial 'we' is used throughout.)

From the exhaustive Strategic Planning Committee Report of last year, the thoughts that come to residents' minds when asked to describe life behind our gates are: 'peaceful', 'quiet', 'home', 'beautiful', 'safe & secure', 'friendly & relaxing'. For three of us, though, it has been a nightmare of sleepless nights, self-doubt, personal humiliation, and private pain. Families, too, have been drawn into the anguish, powerless to help, innocents. For two of these residents, the time and energies that had



fueled volunteer activities are now frittered away, unspent. And for one, soldiering on in spite of public rebuke, it's tough to get up in the morning and answer the volunteer's call.

We removed one resident from the Members Forum for violating 'policy' with no right to appeal, permanently. The cause of the ban is not to be litigated here; that was the

purpose of the appeal. But suffice to say the Forum's own rules were *misapplied*. This resident was known to regular visitors to the Forum, with input voluminous, and while controversial at times, well-researched. It was clear this neighbor enjoyed the efforts of community discourse, a pleasure and purpose now denied for violating Forum policy. Some miss the color and turn-of-phrase, but most the depth and logic it added to all debates. As one Board member who recently made a motion to reverse the decision, to consider it with an eye towards 'grace' noted, 'Even murderers can get a second chance'.



Another member of the community and former Board member is known for donating tens of thousands of dollars worth of personal labor and materials to residents here. We removed this neighbor's post from the Members' Forum without warning, due to use of the word 'sell'. The gauntlet the resident ran following that was well-documented on social media, and the posts were not the community's finest moments. These events have left some nerves in the community frazzled, and has

caused many to question why they serve here.

Finally, in a development affecting a holiday project with community-wide impact, we slandered a neighbor also known for volunteering time and effort *in absentia*, for behavior said to have taken place a year earlier. Note that all parties named as 'offended' by the behavior deny this happened, and have protested the claim. This resident and spouse could not endure the injury, and quit the project, and as leaders, effectively terminated it. When we confronted this resident, we insisted the wording of the original message was not the intent, and blamed *another* resident. We have not apologized as of this writing, though many demand it.



'Policy' and 'rules' have guided the actions here. Yes, *all* volunteers here are hard-working, and *all* are committed to the success of Magnolia Point. We think *all* see it as a place of 'peace', 'quiet', *home*, *a place that's friendly & relaxing*'. We accept that some of us can misjudge 'the optics', can be indelicate and even plodding at times. We are even willing to forgive some for this. Let's hope they, that is, *we* want it.

We must more carefully weigh the potential impact of decisions directly affecting individuals, and exhaust every means of minimizing the impact on a member's life. We should consider more carefully the importance of an individual life vs. 'policy' when distinctions may not be black-and-white. We should apply with a fair hand only those policies in public view and have them available for review by any other resident who requests it. We say, "If the way to enforce is in doubt, let's wait until we figure it out."

Our neighborhood, while always bright and generally vibrant, looks to many to be fraying a bit around the edges. Committee Chairs are a vanishing breed, volunteers for committees are dwindling. Even the 18 Hole Ladies League has stopped reporting here. Our population of those willing to step up is never big enough to sustain such losses for very long.

EDITOR
"Heavy is the head that wears the crown" - Henry IV

