

No truer words have been written from perspective of both the volunteers devoting their time and energy and those affected by their actions. I cast no blame on the HOA management yet I wonder if there might well be a way to protect the good intentions of these groups and the fundamental civil liberties we hold dear in our country.

Is the solution to separate the management from the press? Do we expect too much from these willing to volunteer? Might this be a non problem that will go away when no letters are offered over time? Perhaps those that follow in service to the community will find the balance.

In the mean time, please do not tread on our rights as articulated and secured by documents archived in vaults in Washington DC.

I am publishing these perspectives in my 35 year old and continuing INK ZONE series. It is available for any who wish to read.

Responses always welcome.



The Ink Zone

Ink Zone # 143

Summer, 2014

I submitted a publication to the local home owners association newsletter as either an article or letter to the editor; it was denied! The piece offered my perspective on a statement run in a previous newsletter. Not a big deal to have it rejected for sure and while my perspective went beyond the focused topic touching briefly on a broader topic of what we do as people living in the forest, the message was not all that profound albeit well researched.

NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

So not getting my point of view published or acknowledged in a Arizona sanctioned Home Owners Association's newsletter is not in its self newsworthy or disturbing. What is, however, concerning are the reasons given for the rejection. Bear with me as I reproduce the e mail exchange edited to remove names and references:

"Do you as editor and President of the HOA accept letters to the editor for publication in the Newsletter?"

Regarding the newsletter accepting any form of Letters to the Editor: that will not be happening. Last year, I had contemplated establishing an forum section which accepted letters, however, the time that it takes to kick out an issue is much longer than I had anticipated. Letters would complicate and extend the time we devote.

We do all the research, writing, photography, interviews, layout, editing, etc. and it takes far longer than I had anticipated when I agreed to be Editor.

Ok, so it is a time issue, perhaps a canned well written article would not require a large investment beyond cut and pasting!

"Thank you for your reply. Alternative points of view are cornerstone to our freedoms in this country. I will consider submitting an article or search for other roads to express valid perspectives".

Thinking that the issue was time , I sent:

"Please find attached an article presenting an alternative point of view to a perspective recently offered in the Portal IV Insight Newsletter. I hope that you will give it fair consideration as it does not require editing or research and as stated, is only my perspective."

While no surprise, I received?"

I received your suggested article. My article on the newsletter was well researched and consisted of facts and quotes, not speculation or opinion. This HOA has had a program addressing this issue for some time, of which I am sure you are aware.

As I mentioned to you before, I will not include letters to the editor. This also pertains to suggested articles of this type. The precedent that would be set by allowing letters or opposing points of view would unleash a torrent of those wishing to have the same rights to place their own points of view in Insight. Additionally, I am not willing to spend any more time than we are already spending.

"Thank you for your response. For the record, my point of view is well researched and well documented and is as valid as any published or offered. I will not challenge your opinion nor will I accept that

mine is any less valid. Also for the record, the precedent is not that there might be different points of view, is it the denial of alternative points of view. I am sure that is covered somewhere in our rights and laws."

So now it is not only time (volunteer jobs are never fun and do indeed take up too much time), it is that it letters received or published would set an unwelcome precedence.

You miss my point. The precedent had nothing to do with mentioning a different point of view. The precedent that I don't want to establish with the newsletter is that, if I accept your article, I would then be forced to accept rebuttals to any article. I am also not prepared to accept letters to the editor, which you have asked in the past. Are you ever satisfied?

I understand and respect your perspective. I may not agree with it, but I can respect it. While there can be distracting dialogues from people here, but it is healthy to have alternate dialogue and discussions. The open meetings are a good forum for that as would be published journals from the association. If the association wishes to publish, they should be willing to listen as well." PS: you and the board are doing some great things for the HOA and the homeowners, all of which are open for praise or discussion." & "No your explanation is not good enough."

At least I know it is not the time, or the content, it is the fear of bothersome comments and criticism. I do indeed understand that fear and how these volunteer jobs sometimes can lead to frustrations. As an old friend once told me"

Few organizations are more demoralizing, humorous, stiffening, and ineffective than the small time politics, practices and policies generated by self empowered novices in small towns, home owners groups and self perpetuation committees.