

HOW ABOUT ASKING US?

”We will introduce a new administrator to you, once she or he is chosen,” or words to that effect, spoken to the residents of my ALF by the Big Boss.

The Administrator of the dwelling in which I dwell is to retire soon. Several candidates are competing for the honorificabilitudinitibus (indeed there **is** such a word, but rarely used most notably by Shakespeare and Joyce.) One of the seekers of the job – naturally, the best - whatever “best” is in this case - will be selected on the basis of their *vitae* and application. Then, a few will be selected to be interviewed (one assumes by the Big Boss.) A choice will then be made among the interviewees, and the Administrator will be crowned when being introduced to the residents – we, the people whom s/he will administer. (And without whom there would be no need for her/his administrative abilities.)

Wait. There’s something wrong here: the scenario I have just described omits a role for the residents - those whose lives are impacted by the Administrator. Not to be included as a stakeholder on the Search Committee (There *is* one, right?) Not to examine the written applications of the contenders? Not to interview them?

While it will be nice to see who will have the say how we live the final years of our lives, it would be nicer – and more important to the residents – to have some input in the selection process.

After all, *we* are the consumers – well, maybe not entirely. As truth may have it, our children are the *real* clients of the ALF, the ones who chose where we live or where we’re put

away. And pay the bill. They, as the real customers of the ALF, should help choose among the applicants - have their thoughts added to the judgment of the “honchos,” “bosses,” whatever.

Is this scenario outlandish? Maybe. Is it unheard of? No. There are other institutions in our social landscape, in which the **affectees** play a role in the hiring of the **affector**.

I have participated in one of them, as the head of a university program seeking a new faculty member. Our search committee included student representatives. The students, after all, were the “customers.” They studied the applications of contending persons and participated in interviewing them. The vote of the students was important in the selection process.

Even in the ginormous world of global business, the Deloitte company, a world-wide network of business services, allows its employees to chose their CEO. Whole Foods allows its employees to oust a boss if s/he doesn’t work out. The editor-in-chief of The Guardian newspaper is selected by the staff. And, in the mid-size community in which I live, the prospective City Manager, while chosen by the City Council, is interviewed by the residents of the city.

Even in the Long Term Care industry such revolutionary ideas like the *Green House Project*, the *Consumer Voice*, *Pioneer Network*, and the development of the concept of “Resident Centered” care are but steps away from residents playing a role in the choice of Administrators.

From the remarks of the Major Domo about the selection of the Minor Domo who is to administer our ALF, it seems that we residents will only have an introduction. Perhaps the Administrator who follows her/him, will be chosen by we, the people, rather than appointed.

