

Things that could only happen to Peck.



The Mushroom House

In 2015, Lee Ann and I bought a beach house to remodel in Biloxi, Mississippi. We were successfully doing Air B&B, until we received a Citation from the city. To my surprise, short-term rental was illegal in Biloxi.

I went before the City Council trying to get my house approved for Air B&B. I presented my case with pretty posters to show how my house improves the neighborhood. Three women, from a subdivision three miles from my house, stood up—objecting to any short-term rental. One of the women said, “If you grant Mr. Peckenpaugh his request, it will be like mushrooms in your yard. First there’s one, then twenty!”

During my chance for rebuttal, I mentioned that I was remodeling another house in the women’s subdivision, Edge Water Park. When I sat down the women were seated behind me. One of them taps me on the shoulder and said, “No hard feelings, but where is the house you’re remodeling in our subdivision?” I said, “On Balmoral Avenue.” She said, “Oh I pass that house every day.”

The council denied my request and I was pissed. All I could think of was those three bitchy old women and the mushrooms. I decided if they pass my house every day, I’ll give them something to look at. We hadn’t painted the outside of the Balmoral house yet, and Lee Ann had been wanting me to paint some sample swatches. I picked up several different colors of paint and started painting mushrooms on the front and sides of the house.

I was hoping my work would look like mushrooms to everyone, especially to the three women. While I was painting the house, a woman walked by pushing a stroller, and she had a young kid walking beside her. The kid looked at my house and said, “Look mom, Mushrooms!” I felt good the kid was my art critic.

A month later, the Biloxi City Council met again to discuss short-term rental. When the meeting was over, I thought it would be a good idea to meet the Councilmen for my area. I introduced myself to one, and he asked, what street my house was on. When I said Balmoral he said, “You don’t have that mushroom house do you?” I said, “You know about that?” He laughed and said, “I’ve had several calls about those mushrooms.”

A few weeks later the Balmoral remodel was finished, and the mushrooms were covered with a new coat of paint. But, we still call it the Mushroom House. I liked the fact that my mushroom paintings made an impression!

