

THE DRIFTWOOD TIMES

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October 2021

The Driftwood Vacation Villas Condominium Association

The Driftwood Ocean Villas Condominium Association

The Driftwood Breakers Condominium Association

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From the Manager's Desk

Never in my wildest dreams would I have predicted that I would be sitting here writing this newsletter 33 plus years after I first accepted the job of General Manager at the Driftwood. I took over this position in September 1988 from Sam Pascal, a name I know many of you still remember. My background was in hotel management, not time share, so I really had no idea what I was getting into. Talk about jumping into the fire, I felt myself drowning in paper and trying to understand the whole concept at the same time. It didn't take too long to get up to speed but the problems facing the resort at the time were enormous. There were large deficits in all 3 associations, no reserves at all and a

few lawsuits being tossed around, one of which was served the day I began at the Driftwood. Things got better from there, they had to! Working with the Board of Directors we slowly, over a few years, brought the associations back to good financial status. In fall of 1991 we nearly lost the Breezeway building to a strong nor'easter storm that tore down half the old wood wall from in front of the building. Then Board President for Ocean Villas, Jim Byron, and I stood underneath the building a few days later to see the hole that had opened up, large enough for someone to stand on my shoulders and touch the undercoating of the living room floors in 109 & 110. Thankfully, we had a wonderful, determined contractor in Pelican Pete's Marine Construction. Pete brought his entire crew to the property and working in the dark, drove wood planks into the ground in front of the building to stop it from eroding any further which kept the building from collapsing. This event and other similar, but not so damaging storms caused the Board to begin the permit process for the seawall. At the same time, former Breakers board member, Anthony Masi & I were working on obtaining the historic designation for D & E Buildings. In July of 1994, after appearing before the Division of Historical Resources for the State of Florida we found out we had been added to the National Registry of Historic Places. It was a very happy day for all of us who had worked on the project. Even happier was the call I received from Mike Walther of Coastal Tech just a few weeks later letting me know all the permits were in place for the building of the seawall. Mr. Walther stated that receiving the historic designation was what got us over the hump in the permit process which had taken 2 years to obtain. Over the next months the bids were obtained for the work and the contract was awarded to Shoreline Foundation. In the late spring of 1995 and through-out the summer and early fall, Fred Maxwell, supervisor on the job, saw that the work continued on this project. In August, Hurricane Erin came through, but the wall, even though not secured yet with its anchors, stood tall and prevented any erosion on the property. We knew then we were going to have the protection we so desperately needed to save Waldo's little piece of paradise. So many times, in the 26 years since then we have commented on how that wall has saved the property. Hurricanes Frances, Jeanne, Wilma, numerous tropical storms and other weather events have come and gone and while we sustained major property damage in the 2004 hurricanes the wall has stood and saved the buildings from being wiped out completely. Fred Maxwell continues to visit us and is always welcomed with open arms for the work he did that summer

In 1997 & 1998 we began the renovation of the interior of the Breakers rooms. With the support of the owners the rooms were brightened up to have a more "beachy" feel. We followed that up with a renovation of the interiors of the Vacation Villas units in 2000 and Ocean Villas completed the cycle in 2002.

We thought we were in pretty good shape to move through the decade until September 4, 2004 when Hurricane Frances sat on our coast for nearly 48 hours just hammering the Driftwood and the entire area. The damage was significant to all buildings except the cottages and B Building. We thought we might be able to open up B Building fairly quickly. However, 3 weeks later Hurricane Jeanne, following the same path as Frances, but much stronger, struck and when

done B Building too was heavily damaged. It was a devastating time for all of us, but we carried on, and with the help of Phyllis Milliner, then our insurance agent, and now true Driftwood lover and owner and President of Ocean Villas, we went to work to obtain the best settlement possible. We rebuilt. We were so lucky to have Antol Restoration on the property, who were able to bring large crews to keep the work moving forward. We opened the cottages in December, the lower Breakers in January 2005 and B Building in February. The upper Breakers took longer because the damage was so much worse, but it came on board by late spring. A Building studios were done by June, though no elevator until July. The Breezeway and Waldo's were among the last to open up but they made it in just short of a year. The city originally wanted the Breezeway torn down and then rebuilt, but John Dean, Architect, Ruth Stanbridge, of Vero's Historical Society, Mike Walther of Coastal Tech and myself appeared before City Council and convinced them to issue a variance for the building based on its historic significance to Vero Beach and Indian River County. Just as Antol Restoration was finishing up their work on the exterior of the buildings Hurricane Wilma came through on Halloween 2005 tearing the roof off the Breakers oceanfront rooms and the roof area over the elevator in A Building. Antol had more work to do. They finished everything in early 2006 and we have been incredibly lucky since then as far as storms are concerned, several scares, but no hits. I hope and pray that this continues.

2007 through 2009 were fairly uneventful years at the Driftwood. John Dean, the architect we hired to help preserve Waldo's legacy and who coined the term "Waldotexture" for this project, brought many new and interesting pieces of "art" to place around the property. Even though John is no longer with us, having succumbed to a brain tumor in 2014, his restoration area, set up behind the Gatehouse, continues to restore and add interesting pieces of "Waldotexture" throughout the resort. In 2015 the John Dean Memorial Garden was finished in front of A Building and since then more than 300 bricks have been placed in the garden in memory of so many people who have loved the Driftwood over the decades.

In 2010 the Vacation Villas board hired an engineer to help with the planning of the structural restoration work in A Building. It took 2 full years to finish the planning and hiring of the contractor for this work. With good support of the owners the work began in earnest in 2012. The entire concrete and steel slab for the oceanfront part of the building on all floors was removed and replaced. The steel columns through-out the building, which had been encased in wood, were reinforced and large concrete columns were built in place of the wood which provided much more strength to the building. This was a noisy and difficult project but nearly all the owners were understanding that this work was vitally important for the future of the building. We continue to repair spalled areas every year, it is a never-ending job.

The big project in 2014 was the complete interior renovation of the Breakers units. This included not only new furniture but new granite countertops in the kitchen and baths, new impact windows in all units, new draperies,

appliances, the addition of the kitchen cart, new lighting throughout the rooms, new carpeting and tile flooring in the kitchens and baths. The overwhelming response to the work was positive and has held up well since then.

The interior renovation of the A & B Building studios was discussed in depth by the Board of Directors in 2018 & 2019. A sample room was completed in late 2019. An architect was hired to compile the costs for this work which was complete in March 2020, just as COVID started impacting everyone. The costs, under the best of the conditions, would result in a special assessment of more than \$1400.00 per unit week. The Board of Directors, recognizing the high costs and aware that COVID was already impacting the resorts financials negatively, tabled the project in April 2020. Instead, they forged a much more modified plan for the 2 buildings that included new Luxury Vinyl Tile flooring, impact windows in all units, new draperies and new sofas & chairs. That work will all be completed this fall and the Board is now discussing the next steps to take to update the units, hopefully to include split system HVAC in A building as was done in the sample room A202, and the slow but steady remodel of kitchens & baths in both buildings.

Many other projects were planned and completed over the years. I know that Waldo would be very pleased that the Driftwood still exists to this day. It has been a pleasure to be the General Manager all these years, yes there have been events that made things more difficult (2 hurricanes in one month comes to mind) but overall, the 33 years of my life spent here have been rewarding. The staff have been loyal and more than I could ever have asked for, oh, so long ago. The Boards of Directors have always been supportive, I would be remiss if I didn't mention Peter Tingom, President of Vacation Villas for the last 35+ years, who has lent his support and encouragement throughout my tenure and Leon Volkert, President of the management company, who has guided me throughout my career both here at the Driftwood and for many years before that. His faith in me and kindness in the most difficult moments has been the driving force behind my success here. But the time has come for me to step aside from this job and let someone else take over the reins. I know that I am leaving the position with the resort in much better shape, physically and financially, then when I took over. Amy Raymond, our Assistant GM will be taking over the GM's position and I know that she and the rest of the staff that remains will continue to do their jobs to the best of their ability. Amy has been with us here for over 20 years, so she understands the property and knows most of our owners very well. My hope is that you will continue to support the Driftwood and its dedicated staff. I have faith that you will!! Thank you all for all the support and encouragement over these 33 years. I'm not disappearing just taking a smaller consulting role in the management & accounting areas so please make sure you stop and say "Hello" if you see me around the property.

In the Breakers this fall the Board has approved the restoration to the part of the building that faces Ocean Drive, this is a much-needed improvement and I know it will look great when finished. The Board also approved replacing the remaining 2nd floor balcony railings for units 3022-3024 this fall and also the walkway railings in that same area. Hopefully the remaining 2nd floor walkway railings from 3026 to 3030 will be completed in 2022.

Vacation Villas had new mattresses and box springs delivered over the summer for both A & B buildings. In addition, we continued the install of LVT flooring in A Building, it will be complete in just a few weeks. When this work is done closet doors are also replaced in those units. Impact windows were installed in the remaining windows on the first floor of A Building. That completes that entire building. B Building was completed in 2020, except for a couple of decorative windows at B125 & B126 which will be shuttered should we have a hurricane.

In Ocean Villas we have replaced part of the boardwalk deck in front of Waldo's. Replacement of much of the boardwalk in front of E Building is expected to be done in 2022. The Board will be reviewing, again, the replacement of the hard goods for F & G Building. These furnishings have held up well since the renovation in 2002 but it's time for replacement. Unfortunately, with the difficulty in shipping and product availability due to Covid this may have to wait until 2022.

Later in this newsletter you will see a recap of the proposed 2022 budgets. All associations will see an increase in fees next year of between 2.1% and 3.5% depending on the association. Insurance costs have increased substantially, along with the cost of labor and products. For instance, refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers and microwaves have increased by as much as 20-30% since early 2020.

We are finding more & more rooms left in really horrible condition at check out by owners & RCI guests during the summer months. The length of time to properly clean most rooms in the summer is frequently twice the amount of time it takes during the fall, winter and spring months. Between the dirt that is ground into floors, sand found in tubs, sinks, couches, chairs, even in freezers, garbage piled up throughout the rooms and so much more that increases the time required to clean, I just wanted to let owners know that chances are if your room isn't ready on time, it's probably because of this. Frankly, it's disturbing to see the condition of the rooms left by some owners. I would hate for the Driftwood to start charging extra cleaning fees to those who leave the rooms in such condition as other resorts are now doing, including the Reef Ocean Resort just a few blocks north of the Driftwood. In addition, piling things outside units, making egress down hall ways difficult, seems to be getting worse and creates hazardous conditions for those walking in those areas. We want everyone to enjoy their time here but not at the expense of others.

Another reminder, the interval calendar dates for Friday & Saturday check in 2022 are not the same. Friday to Friday units have a week 53 in 2021 which pushes the start date of week 1 in 2022 to January 7th, while Saturday to Saturday units' week 1 begins January 1. Please refer to the last newsletter or our website for the correct dates for your week(s) next year.

Again, thank you all for the many, many years of support and encouragement. I hope to see you around the property in the coming years, but if not, please know that it has been a labor of love, nearly always a pleasure and absolutely always a challenge, taking care of Waldo's creation. May it be a part of your lives and the Vero Beach community for many years to come. - **Jeanne L Radlet, General Manager**

While all members of the three associations' Boards of Directors have indicated their desire to serve again in 2022, anyone else who is an owner in good standing may ask to be added to the ballot for the Board of Directors at the annual meetings by informing Amy Raymond at the resort prior to November 25th.

The Budget Meetings and the Annual Meetings of Driftwood Vacation Villas Condominium Association, Inc., Driftwood Breakers Condominium Association, Inc. and Driftwood Ocean Villas Condominium Association, Inc. will be held on Saturday, December 04, 2021 at the Costa De Este hotel next to the Driftwood on Ocean Drive in Vero Beach at 9 AM. These meetings occur concurrently.

PROPOSED MAINTENANCE FEES & TAXES FOR 2022:

BREAKERS:

2 Sleeper

\$418.43 - 2.1% increase

4 Sleeper

\$695.76 - 2.1% increase

6 Sleeper

\$1018.73 2.1% increase



VACATION VILLAS:

B125, B126

\$652.49 3- .5% increase

All Others

\$632.88 - 3.5% increase

OCEAN VILLAS:

D228 & Cottages

\$580.85- 3.5% Increase

All Others

\$828.30 - 3.5% Increase

