

# THE DRIFTWOOD TIMES

**April 2009**

The Driftwood Breakers Condominium Association  
The Driftwood Ocean Villas Condominium Association  
The Driftwood Vacation Villas Condominium Association

The Driftwood Resort  
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### ***From the Manager's Desk.....***

Some years we never want March to end because the weather is so beautiful, the area is bustling, the baseballs are flying all over the Treasure Coast and the employees are bringing home great paychecks. Some years we never want March to end because there are so many wonderful owners and guests here during that time and we don't want them to leave. But *some years*, like this one, we were most anxious to see it end because it has been the most difficult March the resort has ever endured. We still had many of our regular owners here and that helped so much as we battled for the rental business in the area, trying so hard to not lose a single person who walked through the door. We know that many of our owners who choose to rent their units do so to help offset the cost of the annual maintenance bill and hopefully to put a few dollars in their pockets as well. This year we just tried our hardest to make sure every unit in the rental pool had at least a few nights rented.

For the most part, we were successful, but the difference is that in prior seasons we never had to discount a room; we were nearly always full throughout Spring Training, and we had many nights when we turned away business in late February and March. Not so this year. We knew it would be a difficult season when the Dodgers chose last year to leave Vero Beach, their spring training home for 60 years, but we were pretty sure the beach area would be okay. We anticipated having new guests, ones that were unable to stay on the beach in prior years because we were full. What we didn't anticipate was the economy going into freefall, as we all know. We had far fewer advance reservations, far fewer walk-ins and far more people looking for a "deal" of some kind. Overall, our rentals were down more than 25% from 2008. Vero Beach and Florida in general suffered from a 30% decline in tourism during this winter compared to last year, so we did a bit better than that. As I write this in early April it appears this month might be better, and we certainly hope that's the case.

The Board of Directors and the management company were very concerned last fall when the economy went sour that we would have great difficulty collecting maintenance fees from our owners. We recognize that when a family faces financial distress discretionary income is the first area to get cut in a budget. Anything to do with vacations certainly qualify as discretionary income, so the concern was justified, as we had no way of knowing how many of our nearly 4500 owners had been and are being affected by this slowdown. It was, therefore, extremely gratifying to find that by the end of February we were only a few percentage points below our collections for 2008. With the first billing in January,

we added the offer of a payment plan on bills for any owner struggling with payment in full at one time, and many owners have opted for this plan. We are happy to do this for any owner and always have been. We do ask that any payment plan be established prior to do the due date of February 28 to avoid late fees and interest. We would like to thank all those owners who have paid their fees this year and every year and appreciate very much the faith that is placed in both the Board of Directors and the management company to keep the Driftwood the special place it has always been. We will survive this slowdown in the economy because of our owners. Thanks again.

I neglected in the fall newsletter to send out a very important thank you to two of our owners here. Last summer, Gary and Eleanor Simon donated a bench that is located on one end of the Breezeway boardwalk. It is a beautiful hand-carved bench with etchings of the Breezeway Building and Waldo Sexton. On the other end of the Boardwalk is another bench donated by Anthony Masi with another Driftwood scene carved on it. Mr. Masi also donated a few smaller benches for the boardwalk and a second large hand-carved bench for the area next to the shuffleboard courts. We thank the Simons and the Masis for their generous donation. They are wonderful additions to the ambience of the Driftwood Resort. Their donations were particularly well-timed, because we spent quite a bit of time improving the exterior gardens and walkway areas throughout the resort in 2008.

The wireless internet service which was installed last summer is up and running property-wide. It took almost six months to iron out the problems, but the reception is very good around the resort now and we have had many compliments on it from owners and guests alike. Of course, as with any wireless connection, there are "hot" and "cold" spots on the property, but on the whole the service covers all buildings. Of course, there are times when it runs a bit slower than others, but this is when many people are accessing the network. It is amazing how many people bring their computers with them now, I wonder how we were all able to survive without them!! If you bring your laptop, make certain you ask for a user name and password at check-in or you will be unable to access the network. AdvanTech, the company that installed the service for the Driftwood, was very tenacious about the project. It was a very difficult installation, because of all the oddly-shaped buildings, different heights and various types of construction. It required far more antennae than originally thought. Scott Foster, the president of AdvanTech, worked many hours on this installation and coordinated with one of the Board

members, Anthony Masi, to work out some of the kinks in the system, and we appreciate all his hard work.

Last fall we completely renovated the Ocean Villas swimming pool and deck area. The renovation took a little over two months but the pool looks beautiful and the area is much improved. The pool had not had a complete renovation since its installation in the mid-1960s, so it was long overdue.

As stated earlier, we have spent much time in the last year improving the exterior areas of the property. The garden and wall area between the A Building parking lot and the Breakers has been renovated and now includes a stairway to both lots in the middle of the wall. The courtyard area behind B Building and the gardens outside of E113, E108 and the south side of Waldo's building have also been redone. The best improvement of all is the area around the sea grapes on the north end of the Waldo's pool area. A new "pseudo" brick wall was installed and an artifact with a sculpture of a dolphin was also erected in that area, which looks great. Pavers from the Waldo's pool renovation were saved and have been added as accent to the walls around the Breakers pool. We have added new statuary and continue to update the gardens around the property, including a large bell installation outside 3025 at The Breakers. We have also continued our efforts in adding accent wrought iron and other pieces throughout the property. This is just a sampling of the updated areas. We hope you like all the spots. Make sure you take a walk all around the property on your next visit so that you see them all.

A couple of accounting comments need to be reiterated since we just went through our intense billing cycle at the beginning of the year. Please do NOT send post-dated checks unless you indicate so with a note attached. We receive far too many payments to watch for dates on checks and the bank will reject them outright, especially if they are from out of the country. Also, please, if you own in more than one association, do NOT include payment for all units on one check. Kemper CPA, our accountant, has asked us again to remind our owners that the three associations which comprise the Driftwood Resort are completely separate business entities, with separate bank accounts for all funds. If you own more than one unit in the SAME association, it is fine to write one check for those units. Also, if you want to list your units for rental, you MUST provide your social security number or Federal ID Number (FEIN) on the rental agreement, or we cannot list the unit. We are required by the IRS to send 1099s to all owners who gross more than \$600 in rental revenue, and we must have either a

social security number or FEIN to do that. Thanks for your help in these matters.

A very difficult and sensitive issue which is gaining more and more momentum is the problem of smoking in rooms on the property. Many of our owners wish all the rooms were nonsmoking, and yet many other owners purchased their units with the knowledge that they could smoke in them. In many ways it is a catch-22 scenario and impossible to please everyone. The Board of Directors will be discussing this issue at upcoming meetings. One of the reasons for this concern occurred one Friday evening in February when a guest put a cigarette out on one of the wood boards between the balconies of 110 & 225 in the Breezeway building. A small fire ensued, which thankfully was doused by Waldo's Assistant Manager, Joe Smith. Only a couple of boards were burned, but the building had to be evacuated for an hour or so, and getting a phone call telling me that there was a fire in the Breezeway was very frightening. The four board members on the property at the time and myself all came to the same conclusion: we need to address this problem in much more depth. We will be discussing making the Breezeway building and Waldo's building completely non-smoking areas because of the wood construction of the buildings and their listing on the National Register of Historic Places. I will keep you updated on this topic but I would ask that our owners and guests who smoke do so outside their units so that the next tenant is not forced to deal with the odor that always comes with smoking.

Our Sales Assistance Program, which was begun last fall, is well under way now and many sales have taken place. The old program, which included unit numbers, names and addresses, had become very unwieldy and inaccurate. We had numerous complaints from potential buyers that contact information was either incorrect or the owner no longer wanted to sell and we knew we needed to do something to make the list easier to administer. It was also a concern that so much personal information was available to anyone on the Internet. Last fall, every owner on the list was notified of the new program and invited to participate. The list now has approximately 200 unit weeks on it and includes asking price. Amy Balash was the contact in the office for this program, and while she is no longer in the office on a regular basis for this work, she has agreed to maintain the lists until a new person is hired. Meanwhile, both Janelle Roseway and I are handling the program. We have had over 40 sales occur since the program's inception, so it's a win-win for the buyer and the seller, considering the slow economic times. This list will be on

our website on the internet soon at [www.thedriftwood.com](http://www.thedriftwood.com) but is available at the front desk now.

We will be buying new sofa beds for all the units on the property before year end. Also, the recliners in the Breakers will be replaced with leisure chairs and ottomans. The recliners in the cottages will also be replaced. We are slowly replacing the coffee and end tables in A Building with new hand- made tables by one of our local artisans, the new tables match the dining room tables and chairs which were replaced last year. We are also repairing the concrete and tile mural in the Breezeway area, this work has already begun and looks great.

I usually say goodbye to all our long term winter owners and guests at the end of this newsletter but that list is becoming longer and longer and I am sure to miss someone so instead I will just say, "Farewell to all, see you next time." We also wish our good friend and owner of many weeks, Barbara Battle, a speedy recovery, and to Rick, Susan & Chase Russell, Bill & Sandra Boone and Linda Heist, don't skip again next year, we missed you. And Sandy--Lynn loves the salsa, she should have enough till your next visit! That's all for this report, hope to see all of our owners this year.

Jeanne L. Radlet, General Manager

### **2009 Board of Directors:**

#### **Vacation Villas**

Peter Tingom, President  
Myra Langbehn  
Bill Warneke  
Lois Katzin  
Leon Volkert, Secretary/Treasurer  
Phyllis Milliner  
Anthony Martino, Vice President

#### **Ocean Villas:**

Myra Langbehn, President  
Charisse Henderson  
Patricia Yahn  
Phyllis Milliner, Vice President  
Leon Volkert, Secretary/Treasurer

#### **Breakers:**

Tony Martino, President  
Wayne Milliner, Vice President  
Leon Volkert, Secretary Treasurer  
Patricia Yahn  
Myra Langbehn

### **UNITS UP FOR AUCTION:**

#### **VACATION VILLAS**

The following units in Vacation Villas are available for auction:

<u>Unit#</u>	<u>Week#</u>
308A	02
202A	16
208A	17
105B	19
101B	35
105B	42
209A	51

"A" units are studio units, which sleep 4 and have partial kitchens.

"B" units, except B101, are also studios but a full kitchen. The minimum bid on any of these units is \$700. B101 is a 2 Bedroom, 1 Bath townhouse with full kitchen and has a minimum bid of \$1500. These units are all Saturday – Saturday occupancy.

#### **OCEAN VILLAS**

The following units in Ocean Villas are available for auction:

<u>Unit#</u>	<u>Week #</u>
E108	01
E113	23
E112	34
E113	37
F117	37
F119	52

E113 & E108 are one-bedroom units with a partial kitchen and face the courtyard and have a minimum bid of \$1000 each. E112 is a one bedroom partial kitchen unit and faces the ocean and has a minimum bid of \$1500. E Building units are on the National Registry of Historic Places. F117 and F119 are 1 bedroom cottages with full kitchen and Jacuzzi in the units and have a minimum bid of \$1200 each. Ocean Villas units are Friday-Friday occupancy.

#### **BREAKERS**

The following units in Breakers are available for auction:

<u>Unit #</u>	<u>Week#</u>
3026	02
3009	34
3007	37
3021	38
3026	39
3011	43

3021 & 3009 are both two bedroom two bath units with full kitchen. 3021 is park side and 3009 is poolside. The minimum bid on either is \$1800. 3026 & 3007 are one bedroom, 2 bath units with full kitchen. 3007 is poolside 1<sup>st</sup> floor, 3026 is poolside 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and either have a minimum bid of \$900. 3011 is a 1 bedroom, 1 bath unit with full kitchen and is 1<sup>st</sup> floor oceanfront and has a minimum bid of \$1500. Breakers units are Friday-Friday occupancy.

### **BIDDING PROCEDURES**

If you are interested in bidding on any of the above referenced units please send envelope to Jeanne Radlet at the Driftwood Resort, 3150 Ocean Drive, Vero Beach, FL 32963. **Mark the outside of the envelope "Bid on Unit \_\_\_\_"** and include the unit number on which you are bidding. The bids must be received prior to May 14, 2009. The bids will be opened on May 15 and the results announced at the Board of Directors meeting on May 16. If you are bidding on more than one unit please indicate how many you actually wish to purchase and list the units in your order of preference.