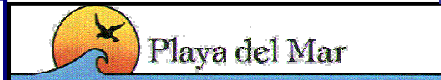




# Playa del Mar Newsletter



Volume 11 Issue 3 Page One

JULY 2007

## PDM BOARD DIVIDED



Your **PDM Newsletter** has done its best to avoid writing about the occasional conflicts between Board members. However, the current conflict has become so intense that it could threaten operations of our building.

This past February, four new board members were elected: Mark Stern, Michael Marsalona, Grace Antonello, and Dan Lecht. On the night of the elections, two board members resigned; the only old board member remaining was Bob Boffa. The two board members appointed were Michael DeMonia and Heide Von Schlieffen.

All seven of our current board members got into office through the efforts of a group calling themselves "Citizens for a Better Playa Del Mar." On the night of their election victory, however, there already seemed to be some disagreement between board members as to who should become president—Mark or Bob. Discontent among the Board seemed to fester over the next few weeks.

## SUMMARY OF MAY 10 "TOWN MEETING"

On May 10, a **Town Meeting** of invited owners and friends was called by Mark Stern, Grace Antonello and Heide Von Schlieffen. The four other board members were intentionally not invited. The purpose of the meeting was to start the process to remove Bob Boffa from the Board. Additionally, the meeting was called to complain that the board had not fulfilled their campaign promises made during the election, namely, changing our management company, attorneys, and accounting firm, as well as conducting a forensic audit.



Mark Stern, who presided over this meeting, said he was attempting to oust Bob Boffa from the Board because the PDM application for purchase of a unit asks if the prospective owner has a criminal record, and Mark contends that Bob answered this question untruthfully.

## OWNERS REACTION AT THE MEETING



There were nearly 100 owners present at the meeting. Most owners said they knew about Bob's past record. They added that Bob Boffa, along with his "allies" (Dan, Michael M. and Michael D) were doing all of the work at a critical time when projects at our building were coming to a conclusion. Owners expressed concern that Bob did not live here all year. They added that Mark, Grace and Heide were doing nothing.

Mark Stern responded by saying he was in the office everyday. Our building manager said that Mark was rarely, if ever, in the building office.

Pat Price, an avid spokesperson for the Citizens for a Better Playa Del Mar, said four board members (Bob, Michael D. Michael M. and Dan) violated the promises made by their platform.

The owners refuted that accusation stating that the attorneys were fired, that Continental accepted a new contract which resolved most of their complaints, and that the State of Florida conducted a review of our assessment accounting and found no problems. (See prior **Newsletters** for details).

At the end of the meeting, Mark asked if owners wanted to oust Bob from the Board. The response was, to say the least, nearly unanimous against taking any actions. Mark said the vote was "about 50-50 – and too close to call."



Most owners called on all the board members to work together and stop the disputes between themselves.. The meeting ended on that note.

**Ed. Note:** As of this writing, there has been no progress by Board Members to resolve their differences among themselves. The residents elected this Board to serve the interests of our building for a better Playa del Mar, not a bitter Playa del Mar!



**SUMMARY OF MEETING MAY 10, 2007****BIG CHANGE IN CONTINENTAL CONTRACT**

Bob Boffa, President of the Board, announced that the management contract with Continental was renegotiated; removing those items seeming to be most objectionable to owners. The new contract eliminates the 5% surplus charge by Continental employees working at our building (Although Continental never charged that fee). Their 2007 fee of \$1,500 per month was reduced to \$1,354.



The change in the new contract drops the requirement that front desk security guards be Continental employees. Lower garage and roving security are currently employees of the PDM—only the front desk was Continental. The office staff of 3 people will be Continental employees in 2007. (Ed. note The new contract now limits 2 Continental employees, the 3rd position will be filled with a PDM employee. There is a 90 day termination clause by the PDM at anytime during the year, should the board decide to take such action. (See Manager's report)



Bob stated that the office staff, who are Continental employees, and especially Keith Tannenbaum, have been critically important in the transition of the old board to the new board, especially with project work still remaining, such as decorating the lobby, resurfacing of the guest parking lot and repairing defective balcony railings, etc. Bob said he has delegated much more responsibility to Keith and the office staff, and will carefully measure their performance. ("There has been a great deal of pressure from an owners group - Citizens for a Better Playa Del Mar - to terminate the office staff, who are employees of Continental. See related article in this newsletter".) However, Bob said he will not dismiss them in haste to the detriment of the on going operations of our building.

**MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY CHANGES**

Bob said he was rescheduling maintenance staff to work staggered work days, providing building coverage on weekends and holidays instead of just Monday through Friday. Bob said he is reviewing all security procedures and systems, including security cameras, staffing, etc.

**DECREASE IN MAINT. AND ASSESSMENT**

A small adjustment decrease in this year's maintenance was voted upon as a result of a decrease in the actual insurance cost (versus the estimated) for this year. This reduction also reflected a reimbursement check we received from Citizens for \$68,000 because our newly completed water-tight roof has been installed.

The assessment levied in May 2007 was decreased from \$3.4 million to \$2.8 million because of a surplus from the prior assessment. (and not doing the decorating)

**EMERGENCY GENERATOR SAGA**

The location of our new emergency generator continues to be a problem. Ft Lauderdale has different agencies providing conflicting guidelines for its location, size and power. Bob said we recently found out that the generator no longer can be placed below the flood line, which is where our old generator was located. Further, new Fire Department rules say that the emergency generator must not have a drop of more than 15% in water pressure for designated water lines in our building. This changes the power and size of the planned generator from the old one. (see Manager's report for update)

**CHANGES ON THE BOARD**

Dan Lecht was voted in as Vice President by a majority of the Board that were present, replacing Mark Stern.

**OTHER ITEMS**

The board reminded those residents who may leave for the season, to leave car keys with the office and to remove patio furniture, turn off their hot water heater and their water.

The building architect has selected the color and design of the exterior awning. It will be an egg shell color for the main entrance, and other awnings will be a Champaign color. (see Manager's report regarding pool awnings.)

Bob announced that interest rate charged by our bank for the line of credit was negotiated down to 1.25% below prime from 1% below prime. (This line of credit is the means by which the prior and current board paid for emergency roof and other repairs after Wilma hit. We are now paying this line of credit off with our current assessment).

**BUILDING MANAGER'S DAILY SCHEDULE**

For those that want to see the building manager personally, (Keith Tannenbaum) his daily schedule is posted on the bulletin board in the mail room. If he is not in his office, he may be walking the property or in a meeting. The office can page him.

**ABSENTEE MANAGEMENT**

Mgr. Keith Tannenbaum reports that Board President Bob Boffa calls in several times a day and is actively involved with contract negotiations, issues of both the owners and the building.



### BUILDING SECURITY CHANGES



The new board of the PDM has established as one of its priorities a full review of the security systems in our building. The review involves hardware, people, training, and procedures. As a part of this review process, a

decision has been made to replace the security people working at the PDM with Vanguard Security, a professional security service on August 1, 2007. This involves all security posts – the front desk, the lower garage, and the roving guards.

The board decided to outsource security to a professional security service to address various complaints of owners.

See Bob Boffa's letter sent to owners for details.

There is almost no cost difference between the former in-house security workers and the new contract with Vanguard. The one year Vanguard contract will cost \$353,000, plus 6% sales tax making it around \$375,000. This includes everything - salary, taxes, benefits and Vanguard's fees.



### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

To assist these people in obtaining new positions, PDM management provided an opportunity for each to apply at Vanguard, Continental, and several condos on the Galt. Front desk security guards are employed by Continental and will be reassigned to other properties. **THANK YOU** to our former security staff for their service over the years!)

### SYSTEM CHANGES



The PDM will install a state of the art security video system. The system will have 32 cameras, and a large flat panel screen displaying the images from these cameras simultaneously. The security guards can "zoom in" with any one camera. The system will record images on a DVD, and it also provides internet access to management and authorized board members for remote viewing when necessary. This exact system is currently used by the Playa Del Sol. It is expected to be installed by the end of August.

### POOL SIDE TELEPHONE

A pool phone will be installed with a direct link to the front desk in case of an emergency.

### PDM PERSONNEL CHANGES

Our assistant maintenance man, Wilbur, has resigned for a new job. Gook luck Wilbur!!

He is replaced by Armando Vasquez. Armando comes to us with 10 years of experience. Also departing was Marline, who worked in our front office with Caren and Keith.



She has been replaced by Geraldine Portuhondo. Geraldine is a PDM employee, replacing Marline who was a Continental employee. Welcome aboard Geraldine and Armando.

### BUILDING LAW FIRM REPLACED



Bob announced a new law firm was selected to replace the existing law firm representing our building with a reduction in legal fees. A new lawyer now represents our building—Randall Roger. He currently handles legal affairs for some 500 condos, including L'Hermitage. He specializes in condo law. Our legal fees are now much less than with the prior law firm.

### SAVINGS FOR THE PDM

**TAXES::** The PDM was charged sales tax for janitorial services by our contractor "Discovery Maintenance" in error. The PDM management realized this is against Florida law, and is expecting a reimbursement of \$21,000 from the contractor in 60 days.



**REVENUE INCREASES-** The contract with the Broward Sheriff Office for placing its equipment on our roof is up for renewal in June 08. The PDM management is checking with other condos to ascertain the revenue and contract length as a basis for our negotiations for the new contract. Preliminary data indicate the PDM could realize a substantial revenue increase.

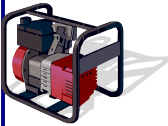
**REPLACE CONTRACTOR:** A contract was negotiated with Kay Restorations instead of SPS to remove our planters in the front of our building so that expansion joints can be installed under them. These broken joints have been the cause of leaks in our garage. This change will save us \$20,000.



### AWNINGS AND POOL CANOPY

Both the awning covering the front entrance, front windows, and the new pool canopy will be installed after the hurricane season—around the beginning of November. The pool canopy color will be turquoise. New umbrellas will be bought. Their style and color are being reviewed at this time.

### EMERGENCY GENERATOR



The new emergency generator, which replaces the one destroyed by Wilma, is expected to be installed and ready for use at the end of August. Our readers may remember the many road-blocks our old and new boards faced which delayed this installation, mostly for requirements set up by different agencies of the local government. We are at the end of this effort. The PDM expects two of the final permits needed (landscaping and structural) to be received within weeks, at which time work on the installation can begin. The new 500 kilowatt generator will be installed next to the southwest corner of our building. It will be covered with a shell and foliage so that it will not be obvious. This emergency generator will run a minimum of 4 elevators, all emergency lights in the stairwells and hallways, and the fire pump. The cost of this project is included with the assessment owners received in May.

### GAS GRILLS



The PDM has ordered 2 more outdoor gas grills for our Promenade, giving us a total of 5 grills. Three older grills will be located on the south Promenade, and the 2 new grills will be placed on north side. The new grills will be about twice the size of the older ones, and contain five burners on each grill. The new grills have the ability to run on natural gas (Ft Lauderdale has natural gas lines available for us to use), or propane gas. The older grills use propane only.

### LOBBY DECORATIONS

Decoration of the lobby areas of the PDM is on hold until exterior work is completed. You have already been assessed for this project. At this time only new exterior lights have been installed by the main entrance.



### VISITOR PARKING AND DRIVEWAY PROGRESS



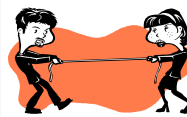
The main entrance and exit ramps, as well as visitor parking decks, were damaged both by contractor's equipment and age. (See prior newsletters for details). The north side of visitors' parking is now being repaired, and expected to be completed by the beginning of August. Then, work begins on the front building access roads and south side visitor parking. Owners who park in the south upper garage will be assigned spaces either in one of our other garages, or the north upper visitor's outdoor parking area. The north side exit ramp will serve as the entrance and exit ramps during this time.

### ISSUES REGARDING OUR BEACH

A new landscape company will review beach trees and bushes with PDM to determine if changes can be made, and its cost.



There has been an ongoing and growing shortage of beach lounge chairs, which has resulted in residents competing with each other to get those few chairs on key weekends and holidays. Some residents place towels on many chairs early in the morning to reserve chairs for themselves and their guests for later that day. And, regular beach goers report there frequently are more guests than owners on the chairs. In one reported incident, for example, one single resident was reported to have had 65 guests on the beach during a peak season afternoon.



Tempers have been lost when those residents, who arrive at the beach later in the morning or afternoon, find there are no beach chairs, but lots of towels on empty chairs, and lots of non residents on other chairs. There have been heated words exchanged on the beach between residents over the chairs.

The main cause of the chair shortage is that residents and their guests do not return their chairs to the sea wall, but rather leave them close to the shoreline where they lost to the sea at high tide later in the evening. Chairs which are broken go to our own repair shop and are fixed as soon as possible.

As a result of this shortage, the board has ordered 30 new beach chairs in hopes that this number will be sufficient to relieve the chair shortage. In addition, the board is considering new procedures in distribution of beach chairs to replace the current procedure which is 'first come, first serve.' This procedure could include a more active role by our security workers in the distribution process, and possible restrictions on the number of beach chairs each unit can use on peak beach days. In effect, this would make residents responsible to supply their guests with their own beach chairs.

**(Ed note:** There has also recently been a shortage of pool lounge chairs during off season. There seems to be varying views for the cause, which include blaming individuals who place towels on pool chairs only to reserve them for later in the day, to the view that there are not enough lounge chairs. Whatever the case, this could be our next "chair" problem.)

### PDM SHOPPING CARTS

A new system controlling the use and return of shopping carts by residents to the garages will be installed in August. Each unit will get a card identifying the unit. This card will have the ability to release a cart in the garage. The inserted card will not be released from the cart rack system until the resident places the cart back into the rack in the garage.



### BIKE RACKS

Renovated bike racks are ready for use. Residents may place their bikes (with the PDM sticker attached) onto the racks and lock it up. If you cannot locate your bike see the lower garage security or maintenance.

### THINKING ABOUT SHUTTERS?



Several owners raised the question as to whether or not they should install shutters on their units at PDM. In an attempt to assist owners, several interested owners invited three companies to make presentations about their products on May 10, 15 and 17 in the Ocean Lounge. Enclosed with this Newsletter is a comparison chart of the three companies: Protective Shutters, ARS and All Weather Control – along with a summary of the pros and cons on roll down shutters, accordion shutters and hurricane impact glass as prepared by the *Sun-Sentinel*.

The one issue of greatest concern was how to protect the outside doors – given the fact that accordion shutters present special problems for doors. The policy of the PDM Condominium Association was that only white accordion shutters were approved for new installation at PDM. However, in light of the door problem, Board President Boffa told the Newsletter that the Board has approved a revision to the policy so that white roll down shutters may be installed on doors; however, only white accordion shutters are approved for windows. Roll down shutters are considerably more expensive per square foot than accordion shutters.



Additional information on the three companies is available in the PDM office, along with cost estimates for the shutters and installation. This information is for use as a guide for PDM owners and there is no recommendation as to which company owners should use. Owners are free to use any company – the chart is simply to assist owners in making decisions.. Summary enclosed with the Newsletter.

Ed. Note: Use due diligence when ordering the roll down shutters for your balcony door. An owner in the four stack was told that the door opening would be compromised by almost 50% and depending on your balcony furniture, you may not be able to move it in or out easily or at all. Check it out

Most insurance companies give a discount for those installing shutters – some as much as 40 percent or more on the wind insurance premiums. Check with your insurance company about possible discounts.

### SCAVENGER HUNT

**PLAYA DEL MAR**  
INPUT/SUGGESTIONS  
NEWSLETTER & COMMITTEES

If you can locate this sign, please drop us a note, some input, a suggestion or just say hello. We can also be reached at [playadelmar@gmail.net](mailto:playadelmar@gmail.net)

### FILING CLAIMS FOR HURRICANE WILMA

Now that the Board has approved the special assessment, including Hurricane Wilma damages, owners can file claims with their wind insurance companies and amend tax returns. The special assessment of \$2.883 million includes the costs of the hurricane – 56% of the assessment (\$1.618 million), with the remaining 44% for the overrun in the 2004 special assessment, cumulative operating deficit, and the unreserved portion of the painting of the building, the front deck replacement and security cameras. Payment of the special assessment can be made over 12 months, beginning June 2007.



To file a claim with your insurance company, you will need to provide them with a copy of the letters from the PDM Board about the special assessment and the amount of your assessment attributed to the hurricane (56% of your total assessment). Since the damage was to the building and not individual units, most policies have a deductible that will pay only \$1,000 in a wind damage claim.

For the amount not reimbursed by your wind insurance carrier, owners can file amended 2005 tax returns and claim this amount as a loss on their federal and state tax returns. Contract your consultant regarding this issue – in some cases, it may not be financially advantageous to file an amended return because of the costs to do so and the amount of refund. This will vary by individual, and should be addressed with your tax consultant.

### MEL HAIMOWITZ

It is with deep regret to report the recent passing of long time resident Mel Haimowitz. He always had an interest in the happenings at the PDM, was an avid card player and when he could, worked out in the gym. His wife, Lee wants to thank the many friends for their overwhelming support and condolences .

## KOKO TOMASEVIC



This familiar face around Playa del Mar is Koko, an employee who has worked for PDM for nearly 17 years. She is responsible for cleaning and maintaining our pool, chaise lounges, and BBQs, raking the beach each morning, cleaning the fountains, supplies for these areas, and now cleaning the glass on the new rails overlooking the promenade deck and ocean.

She says the best part of her job is seeing the sunrise each morning, as she starts her day at PDM at 6 am. Koko loves her job – especially the residents and children – she enjoys seeing them having fun at the pool and beach. Taking her work seriously, she loves working outdoors and interacting with people and the smiles on their faces.



While her job is challenging, she has encountered some unique experiences over the years. One time, after a police chase on the water, she found a kilo of drugs wash up on the PDM beach. Another time, there was a raft containing 11 immigrants from Cuba, who landed on our beach and stashed their clothes in the bushes along the beach (bushes are now gone). The bushes were also a hiding place for homeless persons – and Koko said removing the bushes made the beach more open and beautiful. Hurricanes are worrisome to her, and Hurricane Wilma caused damage to the beach and necessitated the pool and fountains to be drained and refilled – making our facilities unavailable for about two weeks.

Koko is from Serbia (formerly Yugoslavia) and has been in the United States for over 23 years. She is a trained occupational therapist, but enjoys working outdoors at the beach and pool areas. She and her husband Zoran (who have been married for 28 years) have two grown daughters, one grandson, **and awaiting the arrival of twin grandsons in October.**

## Your Newsletter Staff

Our thanks to Harriet H. and Welcome Fred



Rich, Phyllis, Lance, Barbara & Fred

If you see us around, say hi and give us your input.

## WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS AND OWNERS!

### LESSEE

108 Sharon Schwartz  
214 Florence Weiss  
216 Sandra Salerno  
216 Gloria Latella  
409 Laurette Moreau  
508 Pasquale Ruscitti  
1012 Bernard Bercik  
1104 Brandi Conley  
1109 Gary Miller  
1109 Timothy Legge  
2012 Guylaine Fontanie  
2405 Pamela Stern  
2502 Lavkumar & Sonal Panchal

### BUYERS

504 Kenneth Kovacs  
1010 Melih & Hilmiye Eroglu  
1114 Robert Willard  
1207 Richard & Carol Cooper Pinto  
1511 Robert Boffa SR  
1912 Ira Ellen Czerwin  
2302 Miguel & Gretty Garcia

**WE HAVE MANY NEW FACES ON BOARD, SO SHARE INFORMATION WITH THEM TO ASSIST IN GETTING THEM FAMILIAR WITH ALL THE WONDERFUL ADVANTAGES OF LIVING HERE AT THE PDM!**

### REMINDERS TO ALL RESIDENTS

- RETURN BEACH CHAIRS BACK TO THE SEAWALL
  - RETURN SHOPPING CARTS TO THE GARAGE
  - USE THE FREIGHT ELEVATOR PER THE RULES
- OUR SECURITY HAS A LOT MORE ON THEIR PLATE THAN TO TAKE ON OUR OWN RESPONSIBILITIES!**

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide a newsletter that will be up to date and be a consistent source of information to Playa del Mar residents. We communicate regularly with the Board of Directors, share current issues, provide progress reports and stimulate interest in activities at Playa del Mar.