

2022 Annual Newsletter

www.thecolonyvabeach.com

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2022 President's Letter

Dear fellow Colony owners:

I hate to write a note like this. I really do. But the circumstances/behaviors that your Colony staff has encountered and dealt with during this extraordinarily difficult and short-staffed year make it a necessity.

Our dilemma: we want every visitor to have a wonderful stay but find it difficult — **no, impossible** — to deliver when we can't hire employees. As I'm sure you have heard, many industries, but especially resorts, hospitality and restaurants can't find enough employees who want to work.

On the one hand, many people, recognizing our problem and

asked to help, pitched in and partnered with us. To those many owners and renters, we **owe you our profound gratitude and thanks.** Because of your understanding attitude and teamwork, we have been able to work our way through the busy summer crush. The hiring drought isn't over yet but we hope to see it begin to improve.

To those few others, whose toxic behaviors and often abusive language demonstrated a complete inability to recognize the well-intentioned efforts of your Colony staff, we ask and hope that they will rethink and readjust their actions and behaviors, **because it will not be tolerated going forward.**

If blame is to be placed, blame me. I take responsibility. But above all, please recognize and

acknowledge that, without the tenacity, dedication and grit of your General Manager, Monique Roberts, there would not have been a 2021 season at the Colony.

We always try our best but please forgive us our shortcomings.

Respectfully submitted,
Dick Denecker
President of the Board

The Board made the decision earlier this year to **halt all "make-up weeks" until we have a housekeeping staff in place.** We stopped them in 2021 hoping to restart them in 2022 but will remain **HALTED GOING INTO 2022** as it has become impossible for the three staff members (which includes the general manager) to continue doing the job of 20+ people on any given Saturday and keep up with all of the office duties that are required. Our manager has had no choice but to prioritize getting the building cleaned, laundry washed, prepped, bagged

and ready for each Saturday to avoid vacations being ruined or cancelled. Until the staffing shortage improves (or whatever you want to call this post-covid no employees available or choose to not be employed situation we are dealing with), the following procedures must be changed **GOING INTO** this 2022 season:

Just to make it crystal clear on what was required to make this 2021 season happen - the 3 staff members were cleaning all early check outs starting Friday, depending when they checked out, through Friday night till 2 AM, sometimes all night and all day on Saturday till 11 PM and even later.

The Colony has not been able to fill all of the positions here with quality people that you can depend on. It is like nothing we have **"ever experienced"** in over 21 years current management has been here. A lot of it has to do with the extra \$600.00 initially being paid to everyone that was collecting unemployment as they were/are

making more than if they were actually working. That alone has made it impossible to compete with. Now there is a 4th stimulus check that is supposed to be going out. Although they stopped the extra \$600.00 in extra payments, they have implemented different new programs in cities across Virginia and most states that the unemployed can now qualify for programs such as water, rent and electricity paid/subsidized for those who are still drawing unemployment. This is not helping the staffing situation as they still are better off financially by not working.

We are also experiencing issues with scheduling work with outside contractors as they all seem to be backed up for weeks due to being short-staffed for the same reasons we are. Then there is the "2021 SHORTAGES OF EVERYTHING" issues.

We will continue to be positive and keep the mindset "this too shall pass".

Now that we are at the end of 2021 and the staffing shortage issue has not gotten any better, there are some hard decisions that have to be made concerning "What Normally Has Been The Standard & What is expected from all of us when coming for our weekly vacations."

Pulled from the headlines:

*Half of small business owners (50%) say it's **gotten harder** to find qualified people to hire compared to a year ago and still even with considerable pay hikes cannot fill these positions!!*

*INSIDER transportation Denver's airport held a job fair to plug its huge labor shortage. An Exec said he'd hoped **5,000** people would come - but only **100** showed up!!*

*Yahoo! Received **no applications** for an assistant manager despite raising the **salary to \$70K** a year-*

*Restaurants raising pay rates to \$20 hourly for dishwasher - still **cannot fill the position** -*

*You know things are bad when In July 2021, Hilton Hotels announced that in the U.S., it will **cut its daily housekeeping services** and **will no longer offer food room service, or valet parking** in a lot of its locations- it will clean every 5th day*

automatically “IF” enough staff is available-

Chew on this pulled from the headlines-

*The New York Times reported this past weekend on the fallout from Price’s announcement. On the plus side for the company, dozens of progressive-minded businesses became clients following the **big announcement of the \$70,000 minimum wage.***

This last snippet from The New York Times article is **not even realistic** for any business - except for them, I guess if they actually did this.

After reading those snippets taken from the headlines, we will **NOW HAVE TO DEAL WITH REALITY** & what changes we will have to make for the upcoming 2022 season - none of which are easy.

We ask you to expect less and do more!

New Procedure on how Towels & Linens will be handled in 2022-

With the current staffing difficulties (specifically housekeeping) we simply do not have the man-power to collect, wash, fold, bag, prep and restock each unit in the entire building.

We are requiring that you bring your own towels and sheets **and only if you do not have a full or king set at your house then maybe use a set from the closet** as you would not have to take the time to wash, dry, fold and restock the linen closets before checking out BY 10AM on Saturday.

If you choose to not bring them please be aware that anything used from the linen closet will be **YOUR** sole responsibility to make sure that everything has been restocked, washed, folded and put back.

Our suggestion is to simply purchase a set of KING/FULL sheets if you do not currently use them at your home as the FEE if everything is not restocked would be more than simply investing in an extra set.

Suggestion: you can use queen and or king size sheets on the full beds as you can simply just tuck the excess in for one week if you do not want to purchase some or do not want the hassle of having to get up extra early in order to have everything washed, dried and folded.

If not restocked there will be a \$100 fee that will be charged.

All owners will now be responsible for cleaning the units upon departure before checking out for the next set of Guests. There will be a \$150 cleaning fee which will only be charged if the next guests come down with a complaint and/or pictures CLEARLY showing it was left dirty. This is a standard requirement / process when renting a house on the beach, or

else a cleaning fee is charged at the end.

The units here are the size of houses. On that note, we did want to point out that 90% of the owners left the units in ""extra good condition"" (but items that need more attention will be the bathrooms, kitchens, floors will need to be cleaned, sand swept up, mopped, microwave & fridge wiped out of all spills). All of the units now have a mop and bucket in each room and there is a scrub brush and can of Comet in each bathroom to make it easy.

Unfortunately, some specifically left the bathrooms like you would expect a "gas station bathroom" to look like. We wanted to again emphasize that there is a cleaning brush and can of Comet in each bathroom and you must clean them before checking out if you do **not want** to be charged additional cleaning fees.

Under normal circumstances, before any of the issues we are now dealing with, you were

expected to clean up obvious bathroom issues one may have been experiencing during the week and never leave them as several units left the toilets "disgusting" (in plain language). There are many owners who checked in that can back up that statement when they arrived and the bathrooms had not been cleaned.

Unfortunately, this is the **ONLY WAY**, logically, to get through and plan for the upcoming **2022 SEASON**.

To answer some peoples' next logical **question "will we be refunded the cleaning fee?"** Sorry, but the answer is emphatically, **NO!**

The news is already warning us to expect that electricity, natural gas and coal prices will double this winter. We, at The Colony, are budgeting based on these projections and fully expect our utility bills to double.

As you already know gasoline has doubled in price compared to the same time last year in Dec 2020.

Also, construction material prices "actually went to the moon" but the price for all items continues to increase weekly, it seems, especially groceries!

BACK TO BACK WEEK OWNERS - Fire Marshall Ruled that everyone must be out of the building between 10AM - 4PM. (the Saturday transition while the building is being prepped).

Unfortunately, this past summer when trying to prep the building during several of the weeks we had numerous owners who own two weeks back to back who caused so much havoc and chaos that we were instructed by the **Fire Marshall's office** that, while the building is locked, being prepped, and cleaned for the next set of guests that everyone must be **OUT OF THE BUILDING** by 10:00 AM.

Please start thinking NOW about how this time slot, which

is 6 hours long, will be handled by your family.

We suggest making a day of shopping at the outlets, a movie, mall or beach plans for that 6 hour window until we are ready to check in at 4:00 PM.

Again, remember, you will need to be out of the building by 10AM as required by the Fire Marshall's Office and return when we are checking back in at 4 PM. Obviously, all of your items will be left in the unit until we open the doors at 4 PM. Please be sure to take with you any medications you may be scheduled to take during that 10AM-4PM period.

RENTALS: VERY IMPORTANT ALL UNITS THAT ARE NOT RENTED THROUGH THE OFFICE ARE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

If not rented through the office, the owner on record must sign an agreement that they understand that they are

responsible for any and all damages or surcharges such as cleaning fees, sneaking pets in, checking out excessively late or too many people in the unit. The owner on record must provide a \$1500.00 refundable damage deposit by credit card for **EACH** unit before your renters/guests will gain access to the unit. **We will still be collecting the \$600 damage deposit at check in but** in many instances, the \$600 damage deposit that is collected by The Colony from the rental guests is not enough to cover all of the damages and surcharges. Any additional charges not covered by your renters will automatically be deducted from the owners damage deposit on file in the amount of \$1500.00.

The Colony will no longer tolerate the abuse of owners who privately rent to people. All owners who are doing private rentals are going to be held personally responsible.

When The Colony rents the units we have first-hand knowledge and make sure we ask the right

questions and make everyone fully aware of the procedures and what is expected of them when staying here. We will also be tackling the new requirements of bringing their own linen and towels, and informing everyone that the units will need to be cleaned before they leave.

Check out will still be 10 AM as the staff will still be going through the units and doing work orders that could not be addressed this past season on Saturday like they normally would be. There will still be cleaning that will need to be done in the units in addition to cleaning all of the common areas that are normally done at that time (this work had to be put off and done late Saturday night this past season).

Check in is 4:00 PM -

We Want To Wish Everyone a Wonderful Time During this Thanksgiving & Christmas Holiday Season and a Prosperous & Healthy 2022.

NOW, MOVING ON TO OTHER STUFF:

First of all, and most importantly, we wanted to send out special thanks this year as this has been a very difficult and unprecedented 2 years with the Covid pandemic which shut us down at the beginning of 2020 and then hit us with the new phenomenon of staffing shortages.

The Board feels it is very important to send out a special THANKS to everyone for their help with the sand issues, taking the trash out, checking out on time, no early bird arrivals etc.

Last year was the last physical mailing of the annual newsletter. We sent out a small post card this year to alert you the news letter has been posted to the website (www.thecolonyvabeach.com) and what the 2022 maintenance fees will be. This will be more efficient, cost effective and environmentally more friendly.

PLUMBING ISSUES:



The cast iron pipes have started to fail by cracking and leaking causing a plethora of issues. This is an on-going issue. We will tackle them as needed.

Copper Pipes:

Have also started to fail which mainly run above the faux ceiling in the kitchen from the bathrooms - This also will remain an on-going issue.

Cast iron tubs:

Small leaks starting to appear causing water to run down between the walls to the unit below that will all need to be replaced.

Pipes still being clogged from items being shoved down the garbage disposals. We are working on having all of them removed during this winter season and hard piped as this will take care of most of the clogged pipe issues at the kitchen sink.

These plumbing issues can only be addressed "economically" within our yearly budget as they pop up. This will be our focus until we have replaced all of them throughout the building.

"THE FOLLOWING IS PETE AND REPEAT"

Many have questioned how a unit is chosen when the carpet is replaced with ceramic tile. What plumbing issues we are having is the major factor when we do updates as this is the most economical way to get it completed.

We will go through each unit like we normally do and we will only replace what has to be replaced.

The demographics at The Colony have changed and are continually changing. The Board feels very strongly that it is important to go over what is expected of us as owners:

The Colony is set up with **starter items** in the unit so you do not have to immediately go out and get toilet paper and trash bags, but you are **expected** to BUY **ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES**:

- *Toilet Paper
- *Trash Bags
- *Paper Towels
- *Dishwashing soap
- *Cleaning pods for the dishwasher
- *Soap for the washing machine
- *Beach Towels (Colony towels are not to be used at the pool or the beach)
- *Coffee
- *Salt & Pepper

Please stop approaching the staff asking for these items and then get upset when you are informed of the policy "we do not provide extras".

With that statement made, many of the owners are very gracious and leave a lot of what they purchased in the units when they check out on Saturday. The Manager has instructed all of the cleaners to simply leave it in the unit for the next guests' use.

We as owners are **NOW REQUIRED** to clean and leave the units "clean as humanly possible" before our departure to avoid cleaning fees. The refrigerators should be wiped and cleaned out, beds are supposed to be stripped of all linen but **NOT THE BEDSPREADS**. We as owners are supposed to be picking up and running the sweeper over the carpets if you have children and there is **excessive debris** on the floors through out the week. We should be making two separate piles (1 pile for wet towels 2nd for linen) **INSIDE** the unit. Please do not place outside in the hallways.

We as owners, including the Board, are **required to take our**

trash out- daily, if needed. **Please do not use the 33 gallon trash cans without a liner and then go down and dump all of the loose trash in the garbage cans outside. This causes ants, roaches and flies X10.** It is not OK to think you can leave 5 bags of trash in the unit on a Saturday. If everyone only left 1 bag of trash that is 39 bags of trash that need to be taken out. It is not possible to take that amount of trash out in a 6 hour period on Saturday nor do we have enough trash cans to hold it all at one time!! We have trash picked up daily and everyone needs to take their trash out daily, if needed. Something new this past summer? Please do not place your trash in the hallways.

Dishes:

All dishes must be cleaned and put back in the appropriate cabinets.

- **NO-** you cannot leave them in the dishwasher because of the many who are just loading the

dishwasher **without detergent** and then when the cycle ends housekeeping discovers they are dirty and it has to be run again. This is wasted time, energy and water which **ALL COST MONEY-**

PLEASE DO NOT MOVE FURNITURE AROUND IN THE UNITS (still having issues).

The main problem this creates is that we **do not have the staff or the time on Saturday** to rearrange and move furniture back and forth.

SAND IN THE POOL & UNITS (EXCESSIVE & still having issues)

This has **ONLY BECOME AN ISSUE IN THE LAST 4 YEARS**, so we want to remind everyone, "PLEASE RINSE EVERYTHING OFF INCLUDING YOURSELVES" before re-entering the swimming pool or entering the building.

Last year The Board unanimously voted for a new policy concerning this.

NEW POLICY:

NO BEACH ITEMS ARE ALLOWED IN THE BUILDING - NONE (there are still a few summer owners who are still refusing to follow these rules)

*YOU WILL NEED TO FIGURE OUT WHERE YOU WANT TO STORE THEM BUT WE SUGGEST THAT YOU STORE THEM IN THE TRUNK OF YOUR CAR - When returning from the beach, you have to walk right past your vehicles with the way the parking lot is set up and it is a very EASY solution to resolve this issue.

When returning from the beach everyone needs to rinse off before jumping into the pool.

Please **SHOWER off** after being at the beach before entering the pool by using The City of VA Beach's **multiple shower stations**

located right in front of The Colony on the board walk.

POOL DECK & POOL

No EXCESSIVELY large blow up beach toys are allowed in the pool or on the pool deck area. Example: *10x4 foot blow up whale *5x5 foot toddlers wading pool which was later found in one of the hallways, not rinsed off and full of sand.

We have a very small pool and pool deck which does not accommodate everyone staying here at one time.

Please remember, the pool deck is for everyone's enjoyment.

GARBAGE DISPOSALS:

Until they are all removed -

"What to put in" VS "What **not** to put in".

The building is at the age that it cannot handle the normal things you can put in a garbage disposal as you would at one's private home. *(we all scrape plates at*

our own homes to avoid costly plumbing issues)

CHECKING OUT ON TIME- CHECK OUT IS 10:00 AM SHARP -

The only way this wheel turns on Saturday and we are checking in on time for the next set of arrivals is everyone doing what is expected. The "SATURDAY HOUSEKEEPING STAFF" (which is totally different than the full housekeeping staff) have a small window to clean the ENTIRE building so we can check the following owners in **on time** that are eagerly waiting to start their vacations as you were when your week started.

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM - 6 hours is not very long when you are talking about cleaning the ENTIRE BUILDING-

HOW TO AVOID A LATE CHECK OUT FEE:

*Make sure you are 100% checked out no later than 10:00 AM -

* You are completely out of the unit - * All of your items are completely out of the unit - *The keys have been turned into the office -

Turning your keys into the office before 10:00 AM **then going back up to your unit** and finishing packing up your items and still going up and down on the elevators after 10:00 AM **is not considered checked out!**

There is a \$50.00 late fee if not out by **10:00 AM sharp** - \$5 for each **minute after 10:00 AM you are not checked out -**

UNFORTUNATELY- This language had to be added as some people **that were late** checking out decided "if I am going to be charged \$50.00 then I will just leave when I want" & short of physically putting them out or calling the police ended up not checking out until 11:30 AM on Saturday!!

**"WE DO NOT WANT THE
\$50.00!!!"**

Maintenance fees are due **January 1st** each and every year. You have until the 21st of January before the fee is past due.

REMINDER - EACH WEEK BEGINS AT 4:00 PM - PLEASE- NO EARLY BIRD ARRIVALS

Each week begins at 4:00 PM and we have had issues with overly eager early arrivals. Please remember there is no access to the building until we are officially checking in.

Guest parking is issued on a first come, first served basis at the time of check in.

We wanted to say "Thank You" to everyone for honoring and listening to this request which has been in the last two year's newsletter. It is very much appreciated as there has to be set procedures and protocols in place to make everything run efficiently for the **entire** ownership at The Colony.

REMINDER- WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM OWNERS WHEN ACCIDENTS HAPPEN WHILE VACATIONING HERE AT YOUR CONDO?

As owners, when accidents happen while you are here on vacation you are expected to handle these issues and any logistical decisions that you make in the best interest of your family. The Colony is not a money tree with deep pockets and is not financially responsible when these unfortunate situations happen. As owners, it is like "suing yourself". We seem to be living in a time where no one takes personal responsibility for anything. As an owner you are expected to handle these types of unfortunate situations when they happen.

ONGOING UPDATES:

- We have many bathrooms in which the tubs and the tub area are in need of repair. We will address these issues as we are able. Eventually they will

be updated by replacing the tubs, re-tiling the walls and adding new ceramic tile to the floors. This will be an ongoing project.

- Sofas are replaced as needed, and love seats will now be replaced with two recliners.

Bylaw Article XV Changed

When you are selling your units a "guarantee of payment" by an individual will now be required at each closing. The Bylaws had to be amended to give The Colony recourse to deal with fly-by-night LLC time share companies that have found a loop hole to avoid paying maintenance fees.

"Guaranty of Payment"

No transfer of title to any Condominium Unit to a Business Entity shall be valid unless the transfer of title is accompanied by an unconditional guaranty in which a Guarantor shall guarantee the full and prompt payment of the Maintenance fee

identified in Article VII, as well as any other dues, fees, charges, or assessments owed by the Business Entity in its capacity as an Owner of any Condominium Unit. For the purpose of this Article XV, a "Business Entity" shall be defined as any corporation, limited liability company, partnership, or trust. In the event the Business Entity fails to pay the Maintenance Fee identified in Article VII, or any other obligations owed by the Business Entity in its capacity as Owner of any Condominium Unit, and the failure to pay is not cured by the Guarantor, the Board shall have the right to pursue the Guarantor in the same manner as the particular Owner of the Condominium Unit. For the purpose of this Article XV, the term "Guarantor" shall mean either the seller of the Condominium Unit and/or one or more of the principals possessing an interest in the Business Entity, and each Guarantor shall be subject to approval by the Board, which

may not be unreasonably withheld.

Credit Card processing fee:

We now charge a flat rate of 3% for all fees that are paid using credit cards.

OVER CROWDING IN THE UNITS:

The policy has never changed. It has always been a maximum of 6 people in the unit.

Extra people mean extra water, extra towels, extra A/C. These costs must be passed on. If you are going to have a 7th person, then the proper way to handle this is to call the office and get it approved. There are always "extenuating circumstances" that cannot all be covered in this letter. The proper protocol is to call the office and explain the situation. The office will work with you.

ELEVATOR DOORS:

Still a huge issue - Please, do not get on the elevator until everyone in your party is

ready. Please Do not push the call button for the elevator until your **ENTIRE PARTY** is ready to actually get on the elevator. When you hold them for too long they **will automatically try to close** and people automatically try to physically pull on the doors to stop it, "which breaks them".

REAL ESTATE AMOUNT FOR TAXES FOR 2021 IS \$99.79

****NEW****

PETS: 1 DOG ONLY 40LBS UNDER - will be strictly enforced.

Owner's Pet must now be **registered before checking in**. Please email the office at thecolonyvabeach@aol.com

Subject: Registering Pet
Please include: Name - Unit/Wk - small pic of your furry family member and how much it weighs.

Only 1 Dog Allowed!! We have been very flexible on this issue but unfortunately, we will

STRICKLY enforce THE 1 pet policy going forward.

Not sure why so many damages from pets have arisen over the last 3 years, but we have many units where the carpets have been shredded and clawing at the sliding-glass doors have stripped the tint on SEVERAL of them. Too many PEE PEE spots on carpets to even mention. People still using potty pads!

We love animals but the animal **must be the owner(s) who is actually physically staying here, in house at The Colony. Neither Guests nor Family who are staying as guests are allowed to bring a pet.**

Cats have too many special needs. We have some carpets and chairs that were used as

scratching posts and it is just too much for management to monitor.

Only 1 small dog is allowed 40 lbs under.

NEW IDEA UNDER CONSIDERATION-

VIP Program Owners Only - just hand you the keys!!

The cost will be a \$300 refundable deposit when you sell/transfer your unit and are no longer the owner of record.

More details to follow, so please check back on The Colony website in February for in depth information.

Happy Thanksgiving & Merry Christmas, and, above all, A Healthy and Prosperous 2022.