

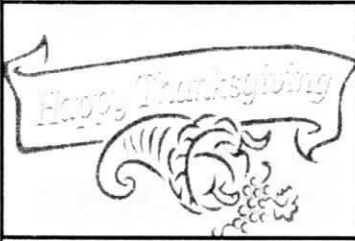


THE ROYAL PARK NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER, 2005

Royal Park Condominium Board of Governors

Harvey Ross, President
Mario Aguiar, Treasurer
Michelle Cristelli, Secretary
Michael Iradi, Governor
Ken Nickel, Governor
Hugh Sharkey, Governor
James Warren, Governor



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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A LESSON LEARNED

As a former teacher, I used to tell my students that I can teach you many things, but it is what you experience that will teach you about life.

I believe Wilma taught us all a good lesson. A lesson on how to prepare for a hurricane . . . , such as what to have and what to do!

I personally got to see neighbors meeting some neighbors for the first time and helping each other. Whether it was barbecuing for each other, getting water and ice for those that could not do it for themselves or just talking together to keep one and others calm during those truly trying days. I only wonder why did it have to take a disaster to make people act this way?

Hopefully, we will not forget this lesson, let's practice what we learned. Say hello to your neighbor in Royal Park, offer to help those that need help and pitch in and give some of your time to Royal Park, after all it is your home.

*Harvey Ross,
President*

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AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL ROYAL PARK'S RESIDENTS

Ever so slowly the effects of hurricane Wilma are disappearing. We, as a community have dealt with a great deal since August. First, Katrina, a prelude of what was ahead of us and then Wilma, a benign name to many of us, gently stirring in the recesses of our mind as we recall Fred Flintstone yelling on top of his lungs and Wilma, girlishly giggling, as she runs to the store shouting, "Charge."

Suffice to say, the Wilma we got to know must have been her alter ego because she showed a complacent South Florida what the word 'hurricane' truly means.

What we did learn as a community was that adversity brings out the best in some people and reveals the overt lack of manners in some.

CHEERS to all the volunteers that cleaned and helped remove branches from walkways, that assisted residents in carrying water buckets up several flights of stairs, that shared grilled food with others, that shared charcoals, that offered ride to grocery stores, that shone car lights to assist the landscaper in the tree removal, that shared their generators. There were countless acts of kindness and then as always, there is the other side.

JEERS. Residents called Royal Park's office, staffed by a volunteer who was in the situation as the callers. The gamut of questions encompassed the sublime to the outrageous. Sample: "I'm a Vice President of a Bank and the Association has insurance why should I, why can't you inspect my unit and call me back, a car is park in my spot, the unit above me has bugs and you must deal with this problem, and thank you for being there."

Reviewing the volunteer's many pages of notes, a common thread emerged from them which I will try to address below.

Number 1.

Insurance. Not to have insurance for your unit is the height of irresponsibility. Period. Statements, such as, the Association has flood insurance and hazard insurance, why should I

have insurance exemplifies a person's disregard for anyone except themselves.

Let's factor out of the equation the hurricane. Your water heater breaks and you live on the 4th floor. You, the unit owner is responsible for the water damages caused to all the units, not the Association. You have a fire in your unit and the smoke causes damages in your and your neighbor's unit. Again, you are responsible for the damage.

Please, do not state the expense as a reason not to have insurance. I paid \$500 for my yearly policy. The insurance cost translates to approximately \$42 a month.

Section 718.111(11)(b)1., 3., Florida Statutes, requires that Associations' have insurance. Statute states the following:

"(b) Every hazard insurance policy issued or renewed on or after January 1, 2004, to protect the condominium shall provide primary coverage for:

1. All portions of the condominium property located outside the units;

3. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding, the terms "condominium property," "building," "improvements," "insurable improvements," "common elements," "association property," or any other term found in the declaration of condominium which defines the scope of property or casualty insurance that a condominium association must obtain shall exclude all floor, wall, and ceiling coverings, electrical fixtures, appliances, air conditioner or heating equipment, water heaters, water filters, built-in cabinets and counter-tops, and window treatments, including curtains, drapes, blinds, hardware, and similar window treatment components, or replacements of any of the foregoing which are located within the boundaries of a unit and serve only one unit and all air conditioning compressors that service only an individual unit, whether or not located within the unit boundaries. **The foregoing is intended to establish the property or casualty insuring responsibilities of the association and those**



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SPECIAL ASSESSMENT YES OR NO?

When you read the newspaper you see numerous articles about condos or Homeowners Associations talking about special assessments ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 to cover the insurance deductible and damages incurred to the Associations' property.

We as the Board, are trying to get our Insurance Company to cover as much as possible to keep our special assessments as low as possible.

Please note that FEMA does not cover condos or businesses expenses or losses, they only give low interest loans through SBA.



THANK YOU

I want to thank all of those that helped put Royal Park back together after Wilma. There are so many and I will not list them all but we know who they are. Just look at the front of some buildings.

But I would be remiss if I don't acknowledge one of our residents, John from Coastal Tree Service for the excellent job of cleaning our property and being there in our time of need.

STOP COMPLAINING—GET INVOLVED

No matter how many people volunteer and help, there are those that do nothing and there are those that do nothing but complain about everything.

"Why isn't this done? How come it took so long to repair the pools? Why aren't the screens fixed? Why is there litter all around? Etc, etc, etc."

Instead of complaining, get involved. If you see litter, pick it up, fix up the front of the building, take pride in Royal Park.

The Board can remedy all these problems by hiring additional men and taking the highest bid to get everything done immediately. **We will just double the maintenance payments to accomplish this.**

If this is what the majority of the unit owners want, please let the Office know by writing a note, stating your name, unit number, building number and that you are willing to double your maintenance payments.



ELECTIONS

Elections for the Board of Governors is coming soon.

Now is the time for action and not cheap talk.

If you don't like what is happening at Royal Park and are always complaining I encourage you to do something about it: Run for the Board.

If you feel like you just want to help Royal Park continue in the current direction: Run for the Board.

Watch for future notices!



HELPFUL HINTS

Buying the turkey: With birds that weigh 12 pounds or less, allow 1 pound per adult family member. With birds that weigh more than 12 pounds, count on 3/4 pound for each serving. For boneless turkey breast, figure 1/2 pound per person. To allow for leftovers, calculate the size bird you need, then buy one that is 2 to 4 pounds larger.

In the store, look for the "sell by" date on the label of fresh turkeys. This date is the last day the turkey should be sold by the retailer. The unopened turkey should maintain its optimal quality and be safe to use for 1 or 2 days after the "sell by" date. For frozen turkey products, look for packaging that is clean, undamaged, and free of frost.

Thawing safely: For a whole frozen turkey, leave the bird in its wrapping; place on a tray in the refrigerator for 2 to 5 days. Plan on 24 hours for every 5 pounds; don't count the day you'll be roasting. For instance, a 15-pound bird for Thanksgiving should start thawing Sunday night. Thawed birds will keep 1 or 2 days in the refrigerator.

The bird is thawed and ready for roasting if the giblets can be removed easily and there are no ice crystals in the body or neck cavities. If the center is still frozen, the bird will cook unevenly. If your turkey is not completely thawed on the day you plan to roast it, place the bird in a clean sink full of cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Do not thaw at room temperature, in the microwave, or in warm water; those methods will allow harmful bacteria to grow quickly to dangerous food-poisoning levels. After thawing, remove giblets and neck from the interior.

Safe stuffing: If you don't have an accurate meat thermometer, consider cooking the stuffing in a covered casserole alongside the turkey rather than in the bird. Prepare the stuffing just before you stuff and roast the bird. To stuff, first measure out the amount of stuffing that will go into the bird, allowing 3/4 cup per pound of bird. That's 11 cups for a 15-pound bird.





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of the individual unit owner [emphasis added] and do not serve to broaden or extend the perils of coverage afforded by any insurance contract provided to the individual unit owner."

Reading the statute we learn that basically, we are responsible for the interior and the Association is responsible for the exterior. If a window breaks during a natural disaster, the resulting damages to the unit is the owner's responsibility, while the Association, in this case, only repairs the broken window. Should a roof be lost, the Association only must replace the roof and the drywall in the unit, because your insurance will be responsible for everything else.

Number 2.

Lift Stations. What are they? Lift stations transfer raw sewage to the treatment plant. However, to perform this task, the pumps need electric. Absence electric, the pumps cannot pump and the sewage remains in the pipes like an old fashion septic tank without the proper drainage fields.

Basic math. A toilet uses approximately 3 gallons of water to flush, multiply this times 671 units and you get the general idea. Add to this a shower and a load of dishes and you can see the problem regarding the sewage.

This is why the board needed for the sewage to be pump out. Some people were upset over the frequency of the pump-out. Please know, it had to be done otherwise sewage would back up in bathtubs, toilets and spill out into the parking lot. This is why when the lift station does not work try to limit your flushing and water usage to as much as possible.

Number 3.

Emergency Planning. When you leave your unit for several months because you live somewhere else, go on vacation, etc., you must make preparation for someone to inspect or take care of your unit prior to your departure. To call the office and asked them to check on your unit, as it happened after hurricane Wilma, clean out the fridge because there is no electric, to send a maintenance person or office staff to investigate damages in your unit, is a major violation under

section 718.115(1)(a), Florida Statutes.

Why? Assessments pay for the maintenance of the common areas, and **your unit is not common area.** The collected funds do not include the cost of using Association staff to monitor or take care of your unit during your absence. Chapter 718, does not permit the spending of Association funds for other than common area expenses. Looking after your unit, checking for damages, does not qualify under the statute as a common area expense. **Your unit is your responsibility, not the Association or mine!** Your job is to hire a professional to look after your unit during your absence. If I ever discover that the office allowed this, I will file a complaint with the State of Florida.

The next question from absent unit owners was, "Please give my friend the keys to my apartment." Absolutely not. The reasons are manifold:

1. How do I know who you are? I have no way of knowing who is on the line. Anyone can say I'm Mrs. or Mrs. and I live in unit . . .!
2. If they are your friend, why did you not provide them with a key before leaving?
3. Overnight mail is about \$8.00.
4. The Association could be sued. Your unit is robbed or damaged during your absence and you state you never requested that the office provide keys to your friend.
5. Who is to say when the damage occurred?

Number 4.

Generators. The Association, as a whole must address and create rules regarding the use and placement of generators.

1. Where should they be placed? Parking lot or back of unit?
2. The time the generators are permitted to be operational? 7 am to 11 pm?

By restricting the use, the nights will be quiet, yet lack of power won't spoil the food and leave hot water for the morning shower. By placing the generators in the parking lot, the fumes will be away from units along with the noise.



A belated "THANKS" to all the Royal Park Veterans'

HOLIDAY SPIRIT



Think of the RED BOX in the office. Show your appreciation and good will to our staff. Stop by and drop into the box any amount you care to give.



These events are planned by the city. Please mark your calendar.

Evening with Santa - This wonderful winter holiday event will take place on **Friday, December 9** at the Collins Community Center. Mrs. Claus will be providing refreshments, the elves will have a craft workshop for all the children and Santa Claus himself will be on hand bringing with him some snow straight from the North Pole.

Santa's phone calls - Santa will be making personal phone calls to children so get your wish list ready. Pre-registration is required and there is no charge.

With Thanksgiving soon upon us, let us give thanks for what we have. In the coming weeks, the Board will need to address our budget for the 2006, the expenses incurred in the aftermath of Wilma, replanting of trees, board elections, insurance claims, repairing of torn screens, painting and the color of buildings, and many more items that always crop up, no matter how you plan. All of this will happen during the Holiday Season that in itself, is stressful enough for us.

Let us remember how we felt during



and after Wilma and resolve that, although, we are of many different opinions, backgrounds, beliefs, and surely, are not all friends, but as adults, we can compromise and work together.

Mediation teaches us that reasonable adults can find a way. Each gives a little, so each will gain.

Have a wonderful and joyous Thanksgiving with your family and friends.

Your Editor.