

# BILTMORE II CONDOMINIUM MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Volume 13 Issue 3

December 2020

## BILTMORE II CONDO

600 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

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### HOW TO REACH US

- Manager** .. manager@biltmore2.com
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- Concierge/Front Door**.. 305-443-7914
- Concierge**.. Concierge@biltmore2.com
- Maintenance**.....
- Maintenance@biltmore2.com

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday..... 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.



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## IMPORTANT FINANCIAL NOTE

The Board of Directors of the Biltmore II Association would like to notify you that the Annual Budget for the upcoming fiscal year, from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, has not yet been approved. The Annual Budget is made up of two components: the Operating Budget which reflects the day-to-day operating expenses of the Association; and the Reserve Funding which reflects the annual contribution to the Reserves (In addition, an annual budget may have an additional component for Capital Improvements which are new assets being added to the existing Common Property/ Assets).

The Operating Budget has basically been finalized, and we are still working on a new Reserve Study for 2021 that will accurately reflect the necessary projects to be completed next year and their expected costs. There are several new projects that must be included in the Reserves as well as remaining existing projects with updated costs. As a result, while the Board finalizes the new budget, your maintenance fees for January and February 2021 will temporarily remain the same as for 2020. Once the budget is approved, you will need to pay for the difference between the new monthly fees and the fees that you already paid for January and February of 2021.

The Board will keep the owners informed on a timely basis as we complete the 2021 budget.

Thank you

## MANAGER'S CORNER

As the year comes to a close, many of us have begun reflecting on the past 12 months of our lives. We faced struggles and challenges with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Whatever happened, it's important that the year ends on a positive note so that you can begin 2021 on the right foot. Ending the year on a high note is all about perspective. There is a silver lining for every situation. Let's look forward to 2021 with hope and positivity. The New Year is a time for fresh starts.



**Wishing everyone the best for the Holidays and a Happy New Year 2021!**

# TREASURER'S REPORT

(FINANCIAL MONTH OF OCTOBER 2020)

**Collections:** Regarding the collection of maintenance fees, we have three units with late payments for October. Notices have been sent to all the unit owners who are late.

**Income/Expense:** The month of October shows a budget deficit of \$(3,900.12) but a year-to-date surplus of \$27,483.32. The Building Manager and the Maintenance Supervisor have been doing a very good job controlling expenses during the last few months of the year.

**Funding:** The funds available in our operating accounts are \$371,101.38 at the end of October.

As for Reserves, we have \$ 2,586,142.84 of funds available at the end of October, which seems appropriate to cover the expected projects in 2020.



## NEW RESIDENTS

Scot Connor and Emily Gorman  
John Gazitua and Ana Velasquez  
Ricardo and Nora Ferro  
Nicholas Molina and Melissa Gil

## NEWSLETTER CONTINUES IN DIGITAL FORMAT

Coastal Group Publications, our newsletter supplier, continues to provide our newsletters in digital format only. They will be providing a limited number of printed copies, in black and white, which will be placed in the lobby and mailroom. We will continue to distribute the newsletter via email blast and post it on our website.

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## AN ADVENTURESOME COUPLE

By June Frost

Jose and Margarita Donis like to travel, and right now they can't wait for the pandemic to go away, so that they can pack their bags and take off again. Their latest venture that included work and travel was in the United Arab Emirates, and says Margarita wistfully, "I miss Abu Dhabi."

Both are originally from Cuba and came to Miami and New York in the 60's at different stages of their lives. Jose came not knowing a word of English and went to high school in Miami, while Margarita landed a job as an accountant where her boss was kind enough to furnish a dictionary to help with her English.

Eventually Jose graduated from the University of Miami with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and started a job in Richmond, Virginia. He then transferred to Lynchburg. There he worked with a company that designed and built nuclear reactors and at the same time he attended Lynchburg College to study nuclear physics.

Continuing with his studies, he enrolled in the University of Virginia a two-hour drive from work and got a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering in 1971. As luck would have it, he ended up with an engineering company in New Jersey and met Margarita on a blind date. They married in New Jersey.

In 1979 seeking a warmer climate they moved to Miami, and Jose went to work for Florida Power & Light. He says, "In New Jersey we designed and built nuclear plants, in Miami we fixed plants, maintained and upgraded them." He spent 35 years at Turkey Point and then retired. Or so he thought.

"Somebody called me and had a job somewhere in California near San Clemente where they were going to decommission a nuclear power plant. The Southern California Edison Company had a specific nuclear power plant that was shut down, and they decided to tear it down--a process that takes 15 years to complete."

Jose and Margarita lived in a beautiful area on the shore by the San Clemente pier, and work was just ten minutes away. After a consultancy of two and a half years, the first phase was finished, and they went back to Miami. Says Jose, "There was no way I wanted to go back to work after my second retirement."

One day at the end of 2017 he got another call from the same friend who was going to a job in the United Arab Emirates. "They had almost finished building the first nuclear power plant in the Arab world," says Jose, "and he made me an offer I couldn't refuse."

He took a job as a consultant working with a group of about five engineers who all knew each other from the U.S. "There is a lot of networking, so that we always get together...we were needed, because they had to get the plant running," Jose explains. "We get to gather in exotic places like Abu Dhabi and work as a team—each one has a certain expertise. This was a first in the Arab world, because it was the biggest nuclear power making facility in the whole world. You have to have people who are trained to run it."

Jose worked where the plant was located in Ruwais 3 ½ hrs. from Abu Dhabi. No place for women. So he commuted back and forth to Miami. Sometimes Margarita, who is not keen on flying by herself, met Jose in Abu Dhabi. She had her own hotel apartment and a very solicitous staff who even made her Cuban coffee. While visiting Dubai they got to stay at the luxurious world famous 7 star Burj Al Arab Hotel. "We had a great time just staying at the hotel!" she exclaims.



*Margarita in Romania*



*Jose and Margarita in Costa Brava, Spain*

*Continued on page 4*

**An Adventurous Couple** (cont. from page 3)

Abu Dhabi is overwhelmed by foreigners. It was a glamorous life and also culturally very interesting to observe the Arab world and customs. She says, “When you are there, you don’t think you are in an Arab country, everyone speaks English. Everything is very secure.”



*Jose and colleagues at Grand Mosque - Abu Dhabi*

Taking advantage of their strategic location in that part of the world, they traveled frequently to Europe and took Mediterranean cruises. They were also curious to explore out of the way countries like Bulgaria, Romania, Armenia and Georgia.

After two years, Jose completed his assignment training the Emiratis to run the plant. He says, “We gave them a schedule to start up the plant, and they did so right on time.”

Then it was back to Miami and Biltmore II where they have lived for ten years. They have a son and two seven and ten-year-old grandsons who live here. Jose keeps busy in many ways. He plays classical guitar music every day for a couple of hours. “It requires a lot of concentration and practice.” He belongs to the Miami Classical Guitar Society.

And he is a member of our Building Committee, which has many interesting projects. He says, “It keeps my brain busy, and I get to know what’s going on in the building, make a contribution and make sure things are done the right way. As a team we get a lot of work done. And you get to meet people.” Amongst other entertainments Margarita is addicted to word puzzles. “I love it,” she says, “I think it is good for the brain...you have to concentrate and look for the words.”

**DRY SEASON FINALLY ARRIVES**

South Florida has a rare Tropical Monsoon climate, which is relatively rare. Tropical Monsoon climates have monthly mean temperatures above 64°F in every month of the year and feature wet and dry seasons. The driest month sees less than 2.36 in of precipitation. The average temperature for the year in Miami is 77.2°F. The warmest month, on average, is August with an average temperature of 84.2°F. The coolest month on average is January, with an average temperature of 68.2°F. The average amount of precipitation for the year in Miami is 61.9 inches. In terms of rainfall, there are an average of 129.0 days of rain, with the most rain occurring in August with 17.0 days of rain, and the least rain occurring in February with 6.0 days of rain. The South Florida “dry” season usually occurs between mid-October to mid-May. The “wet” season typically starts mid-May and ends in mid-October. Year 2020 is already much wetter than an average year. By late November 2020 over 82 inches of rain had been recorded in Miami – more than 20 inches above the annual average rainfall of 61.9 inches, with several weeks left in the year.

Biltmore II’s basement garage water removal system performed well during the times of heaviest extended rainfall that caused the outside water table to rise around our foundation and above the elevation of the garage floor. Water pressure under the garage floor and outside basement walls is under high pressure and finds its way into the garage, mainly through fissures in cement near columns and seams between cement slabs in the garage floor. Once in the garage the water flows to the nearest in-floor drains that delivers it to the new sump pumps at each end of the garage. The pumps send the water to sediment tanks and then injection wells on its way down to the aquifer lying below the limestone rock upon which our building sits. All parts of the garage floor are not sloped toward a drain, so some puddles of water remain until the water table subsides. Once the inflow stops, staff moves the ponded water to a drain and when the floor is dry, it is vacuumed. Every resident needs to be cautious and safe when walking through the shallow puddles that appear in the garage. We should be encouraged by actions taken by the Association to effectively manage water removal from the basement as several of our Biltmore Way neighbors experience flooded basements with all cars needing to be removed.

*Robert Petzinger*

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## RESIDENT & OWNER FIRE SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

The September issue of the Newsletter informed you about Association fire safety responsibilities in your unit – maintaining and operating the fire control alarm system speakers and sprinkler head(s). This is to inform you about your fire safety responsibilities.

- **SMOKE DETECTORS** - make sure smoke detectors in your unit are working by testing their detection capabilities and replacing the back-up battery if necessary. Test the battery monthly. See the November issue of the Newsletter for more information.
- **FIRE EXTINGUISHER(S)** – make sure you have an extinguisher in your unit (2 extinguishers for penthouse units that have a 2<sup>nd</sup> floor) and know how to use it. Each extinguisher has sufficient chemical spray to extinguish small fires, but once triggered the contents will empty in less than 1-minute, so it is important that you aim the nozzle at the proper point – the base of the source of the flames and not indiscriminately into flames and smoke. Take advantage of the fire extinguisher testing service that is made available annually by the Association for your convenience and at your expense to test and recharge your extinguisher(s).
- **EMERGENCY EXITS** - know the location of the four-emergency fire exits on your floor. Find the nearest one to your unit and inform all guests of its location. Do not attempt to go through the hallway fire doors that will automatically close once a fire alarm signal is triggered. These fire rated doors act to contain smoke and fire within a designated area for a limited time (minutes, not hours) to enable residents to exit safely. Opening the hallway fire doors would defeat their purpose of containing possible smoke and flames.
- **IMPAIRED INDIVIDUAL(S)** - register individuals with impairments with the Management Office so emergency first responders can help those needing assistance to safely negotiate the emergency exit stairs.
- **PETS** – register pets with the Management Office and be sure to take them with you as you exit the building during an emergency.
- **FRONT DOOR** – the Association owns the fire-rated entry doors for all units. Each door's middle hinge has a spring mechanism that, if operating properly, will automatically close the door if it is left open inadvertently. It is a fire safety code requirement that all entry doors be closed and latched when not in use. For the safety of all residents of Biltmore II, DO NOT PROP OPEN YOUR FRONT DOOR! Test your door occasionally by opening it at least 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the way and letting it go. The middle hinge should close the door, so it shuts to a latched position. Our maintenance staff inspects front door operation during its annual inspection. Faulty hinges are replaced by our staff. You can help by periodically testing the door and reporting any problems to the Management Office so repairs can be scheduled.

Robert Petzinger

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## ROOF REPAIR COMPLETED

For several months, TarHeel Corporation, the commercial roofing company that installed and maintains Biltmore II's roof, has been on-site performing annual contractual maintenance and repairing problems caused by the wear and tear that occurs due to the many contractors that perform work on the roof throughout the year. Every unit's air conditioning (A/C) compressor is on the roof – 232 of them. Likewise, the huge common area A/C multi-ton units are on the roof, along with our new diesel/gas emergency generator and the two roof-top rooms that house the electrical and mechanical systems for the elevators. As a result, the roof surface is impacted by heavy equipment components, tools, and foot traffic throughout the year. To oversee roof repairs this year, the Association contracted with Biller Reinhart Engineering Group, experts in structural building matters and a consultant to the Association on many building projects. Images were taken of all known roof problems, including the verified existence of a few leaks. The project has been satisfactorily completed. The leaks were fixed along with restoration of the identified roof surface issues. These repairs cost about \$57K and must either be funded from any 2020 budget surplus or added to the new 2021 operating budget.

## RECIPE FOR LATKES

- 4 medium potatoes
- 1 medium onion
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup matzah meal
- salt and black pepper to taste
- vegetable oil



Shred the potatoes, onion and bell pepper into a large bowl. Press out all excess liquid. Add eggs and parsley and mix well. Add matzah meal gradually while mixing until the batter is doughy, not too dry. (you may not need the whole amount, depending on how well you drained the veggies). Add a few dashes of salt and black pepper (don't taste the batter - it's really gross!). Don't worry if the batter turns a little orange, that will go away when it fries. Heat about 1/2 inch of oil to a medium heat. Form the batter into thin patties about the size of your palm. Fry batter in oil. Be patient: this takes time, and too much flipping will burn the outside without cooking the inside. Flip when the bottom is golden brown. Place finished latkes on paper towels to drain. Eat hot with sour cream or applesauce. They reheat OK in a microwave, but not in an oven unless you cook them just right. If you'd like to try something a little different, add some bell peppers, parsley, carrots, celery, or other vegetables to the batter to make veggie latkes!

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